

Former AFN National Chief and Co-Chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples *Georges Erasmus* endorses Miles Richardson for National Chief

Vancouver - In the days before the July 25th Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief election, **former National Chief of the AFN and Co-Chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Georges Erasmus** has endorsed Miles Richardson in his bid to become the next National Chief of the AFN.

Former National Chief Erasmus served as President of the Dene Nation from 1976 to 1983 and gained national attention for his testimony to the Berger Inquiry, warning of irreparable impacts to his People's way of life and asserting his People's sovereignty as a nation. He served as AFN National Chief from 1985 until 1991. He foreshadowed the conflict at Oka and Ipperwash, warning Canada to the fact that violent political action could be a consequence of failing to address his generation of leaders' concerns. After Oka and the end of his tenure as National Chief, he was asked to serve as Co-Chair the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the most detailed investigation of the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples in the country's history and which continues to be widely regarded as outlining the path for a just reconciliation. Erasmus also served as Chair of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and Chief Negotiator for the Dehcho First Nations in their land claims and self-government negotiations.

"Miles Richardson is someone I have known and admired for many years. He is totally dedicated to the issues of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada and has spent many years in the struggle to have our rights recognized and implemented," says Georges Erasmus. "He is one of the most honest and up-front leaders that I have ever known. He is an excellent negotiator that recognizes all sides need to feel that they are getting something for a deal to happen. He is a great communicator that can get any message he wants across. He is totally committed to any project or position that he assumes or is given. He has the knowledge and experience to be a great Assembly of First Nations National Chief. I am pleased and happy to endorse Miles Richardson for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations."

Richardson's platform is centred on three core action areas that are fundamental to a proper Nation-to-Nation relationship and meeting the needs of First Nations:

1. Recognition and affirmation of First Nations inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights.
2. Closing persistent socio-economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.
3. Ensuring First Nations reap a fair share of economic activity in their respective territories and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

"Georges Erasmus has been a remarkable leader for his People, the Dene Nation, and for First Nations across the country," said Richardson. "He has truly been a powerhouse for our Peoples, for recognition of our sovereignty and nationhood. He helped define the place of the AFN as powerful vehicle for our Peoples' voices and played a profound leadership role in facilitating what was perhaps the most thorough examination of the relationship between our Peoples and Canada in the history of our shared time on these lands. To this day, RCAP is still widely respected for laying essential steps on the path for resetting and redressing the relationships between our Peoples and Canada."

Richardson continued, “I am deeply humbled to have Georges Erasmus’ support. With his support, following on the endorsements of two other past National Chiefs, Matthew Coon Come and Ovide Mercredi, we are seeing strong momentum build from coast to coast to coast. I’m feeling confident this momentum will continue to grow as we move into the convention and that together we will bring the change our Peoples need.”

For more information and details on the platform, please visit <https://milesrichardsonfornationalchief.com/platform/>

Other endorsers to-date have included **Chief Clarence Louie** of the Osoyoos Indian Band, Chair of the International Inter-Tribal Trade and Investment Organization **Wayne Garnons-Williams**, **Chief Ava Hill** of the Six Nations of the Grand River, former National Chief of the AFN and Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec **Matthew Coon Come**, Indigenous youth leader and former Mrs. Universe **Ashley Callingbull**, and former Chief of the Mispawistik Cree Nation and National Chief of the AFN **Ovide Mercredi**. These endorsements can be viewed on his [website](#) and [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

The election for the next National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations will take place at the 2018 AFN Annual General Assembly in Vancouver on July 25th, 2018.

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