



2011 Language Champions Honoured at First Nations Languages Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VANCOUVER – The lifelong dedication of eight B.C. First Nations Language Champions was recognized today at the First Nations Languages Conference in Vancouver. The bi-annual, two-day conference is co-hosted by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council.

The Language Champions for 2011 are:

- **Verna Williams (Ts'aa Gabin)** – Nisga'a language, Nisga'a Nation, Gitlaxt'aamiks
- **Gracie John** – Dakelh language (Southern Dialect), Saik'uz First Nation, Vanderhoof
- **Clara Camille** – Secwepemctsin language, Canoe Creek Band
- **Stephen Brown** – Xaad Kil language, Old Massett Band, Haida Gwaii
- **Cecilia DeRose** – Secwepemctsin language, Esketemc First Nation
- **Kathy Robinson (ʔuʔaʔukʷis)** – čišaaʔatɥ and diitiidʔaatɥ languages, Tseshaht First Nation
- **Nuwaqawa Evelyn Windsor**– Hailhzaqvla language, Heiltsuk Nation, Bella Bella
- **The late Earl Claxton Sr. (YELKÁʔTE)** – SENĆOʔEN language, Tsawout First Nation, Saanich

"We are so proud of our Language Champions," said Tracey Herbert, Executive Director at the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council. "They are a truly inspiring group of people who have dedicated their lives to keeping their languages alive for the next generation of speakers. We must continue to support their work."

"Tsi:thólé Si:y:a:m I honour the achievements of our Language Champions," said Tyrone McNeil, FNESC President. "Their examples inspire all of us who are working to revitalize our First Nations languages and I am glad to have the opportunity to recognize and honour their hard work and dedication to their people."

Language Champions are chosen bi-annually for their outstanding contributions to First Nations languages in British Columbia.

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About the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council

The First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council is a B.C. Crown Corporation with the mandate to support First Nations in their efforts to revitalize their languages, arts and cultures.

The Council has distributed more than \$21.5 million to B.C. Aboriginal communities since 1990.
For more information, please visit: www.fphlcc.ca

About FNEC

Established in 1992, the First Nations Education Steering Committee is an independent society led by representatives of BC First Nations communities. FNEC is committed to achieving quality education for all First Nations students in British Columbia. For more information, please visit: www.fnesc.ca

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