



AROLAND FIRST NATION

P.O. Box 10 | Aroland, Ontario | POT 1B0
Phone: (807)329-5970 | Fax: (807)329-5750
Toll Free #: 1-877-335-3033
www.arolandfirstnation.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AROLAND FIRST NATION MOURNS THE PASSING OF FORMER CHIEF WILLIAM MAGISKAN

Aroland, ON: – Aroland First Nation Chief Dorothy Towedo, on behalf of the Aroland First Nation Council, sends condolences to the family, friends and community of Aroland First Nation following the passing of William Magiskan. He will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by all.

Following the wake services that took place today, funeral arrangements are as follows: Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 12:00 pm at the Johnny Therriault School in Aroland First Nation. It will be live streamed here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86377261941?pwd=QnFDTXdpRmZFQVZGaUNhZHBsQ0pOQT09#success> (Meeting ID: 863 7726 1941 and Passcode: 295021).

The following is part of his tribute:

Former Chief William Valentine Magiskan, who championed First Nation rights for more than two decades as leader of the Ojibway homelands of Aroland First Nation #242, died suddenly on Sunday, November 29, 2020 at the age of 68 years. As a result of movement of the Aroland Indian Association, members of the Megan, Matawasagon, Therriault, Gagnon, Magiskan families and with their guidance—Chief William Magiskan set forth his political career. Chief William Magiskan successfully negotiated the AFN#242 Reserve Status within the ‘Six Pack Agreement-Nishnawbe-Aski Nation’ in the early 1980s. This agreement brought the First Nation new housing, water, sewer much needed community infrastructure. He worked tirelessly to improve the living conditions for the people. He ensured the community was not separated as many members were not deemed status but they were family. He successful ensured the families were going to be kept together and the community was going forward as one. When the Canadian government attempted to turn over land which was not environmentally protected and cleaned—he advised the people to not accept the contaminated land.

Chief William Magiskan recognized Entrepreneurship is about developing innovative solutions to the people’s complications. He was also a driving force of the First Nation’s economy and envisioned the first nation’s community owned company which provided much needed employment through the housing programs. He also recognized the need to access medical attention for the members and developed a transportation company to ensure access to medical services.

Chief William Magiskan was instrumental in the establishment of the Matawa Tribal Council his vision was to support the nine member Ojibway and Cree First Nations within the James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Robinson-Huron Treaty area. He was aware of the commitment of service required and fulfilling the community’s needs continuously. Chief William Magiskan also ensured the needs of the children were kept

a priority. The need to protect the children was ensured by participating in the early development of the Tikinagan Child and Family Services. He ensured the valuable principle of First Nation family was made a key cornerstone of life in the community and the services available to its members.

Chief William Magiskan spent the early part of his life hunting fishing and trapping on the Kapatongwa Lake, Melchett Lake and Ogoki Lake traditional lands. He then was educated at the Aroland Indian Day School and then in Thunder Bay. The ordeal of "Taking the Indian Out of the Child" government concept only provided resilience and survival. He became to be known as a seasoned leader in the defence of First Nation rights, specifically, encouraging the younger generations to learn the language, the culture, and the traditions. Most of all to "defend them the entire rest of your life" as he would say. He was known as a spokesperson for the respect and protection of First Nations' traditional territories and resources.

Chief William Magiskan carried the natural responsibility of protecting the lands. He was an honored and respected elder of the Ongongumi Kitchinishnabek. He brought his knowledge of the local history and wisdom of the homelands and ensured it was included in the 'INAAKONIGAN' AFN#242 Consultation and Accommodation Protocol.' This is a framework developed for proponents to care, honor and respect the homelands of the people of Aroland First Nation to ensure the lands were kept for use for all, and the generations to come. With others, he carefully provided the input of integrity of the mapping our traditional and local ecological knowledge.

Chief William Magiskan also cherished lifelong friendship and all who he crossed and shared paths with. He recognized your importance and always respected you with his Nishnawbe humor and unique smile.

Chief William Magiskan is predeceased by his father William Magiskan and mother Nora Whitehead Magiskan, brothers: Abraham, Andrew, Joseph, Isaac, George Kashkish and sisters: Ivy Magiskan Gagnon, Emma Towedo and Emily Meshake. He also had many many beloved sister-in-laws, nieces and nephews, cousins, friends whom he loved each of them dearly who has also travelled to the spirit world.

Chief William Magiskan is survived by Anna Marie Magiskan (Philip Towedo), Terry-Lynn Gagnon (Lyndsay Gagnon), Jason Magiskan, Earl Elkin (Shannon Kashkish), Edward Magiskan. Grandchildren: Axel, Jordan, Cher, Wynona, Becker, Colby, Summer, Melinda, Earl Jr. Great grandchildren: Kyler, Corben, and Alice. He was also a respected Godfather to many of whom he honored and cherished deeply.

Chief William Magiskan is also survived by his brothers Daniel (Maggie), Ivan (Judy) and sister Victoria Karhunan. He also had many, many family members whom he loved greatly. How he loved to share the upbringing of the family. Together they were the fiber of our Nation, he loved the village and often reminded to get back to our old ways of community.

A community warrior sets out for the everlasting homelands. The heart of the People and the drum prepares your journey. Your love for our homelands, the village and her people will never be forgotten along with your dedication, commitment, strength and service. WE HONOUR YOU.

Memorial contributions may be made either to the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Canadian Diabetes Association. A Community Tree Planting Memorial Service will be planned according to the Ojibway/Oji-Cree culture and traditions of the community.

— 30 —

For more information, please contact Anne Marie Majiskon at (807)329-5970.