

## ***Expression of Condolence for The Honourable Murray Sinclair by Toronto City Council***

**Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow**

**Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie**

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the Honourable Murray Sinclair C.C., O.M., M.S.C, K.C. – a prominent Indigenous leader, lawyer, judge, Senator and Chief Commissioner of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who passed away on November 4, 2024, at the age of 73.

Murray Sinclair whose Ojibway spirit name, Mazina Giizhik, means “the One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky,” was Anishinaabe and a member of the Peguis First Nation. He will forever be known for his dedication and commitment to serving others, with a statement from the family reading “Mazina Giizhik committed his life in service to the people: creating change, revealing truth, and leading with fairness throughout his career.”

Mr. Sinclair leaves behind a powerful legacy as an advocate for Indigenous people and a champion of Indigenous rights in Canada. As Chief Commissioner of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (2009-2015), Mr. Sinclair played an instrumental role in the Commission’s final report which led to its 94 Calls to Action. He brought Indigenous issues and the shameful legacy of Canada’s residential school system to the forefront, leading the way toward truth and reconciliation in Canada.

In his younger years, Mr. Sinclair worked with the Selkirk Friendship Centre and was elected regional vice president of the Manitoba Métis Federation. He went on to attend the University of Winnipeg and graduated law school at the University of Manitoba in 1979. Mr. Sinclair was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1980 and spent the next decade as a practicing lawyer, focused on civil litigation, criminal law, and human rights. Mr. Sinclair also served as legal counsel for several institutions including the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, the Manitoba Métis Federation, and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

In 1988, Mr. Sinclair was appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba, becoming the first Indigenous judge in the province and only the second

Indigenous judge in Canada. Throughout the 1990s, Justice Murray Sinclair was appointed co-chair of Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and was director of the Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquiry. Both inquiries resulted in landmark findings, with recommendations that continue to impact our justice and healthcare systems. He was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba in 2001, becoming the first Indigenous judge to be appointed to that court.

In 2016, Mr. Sinclair was appointed to the Senate of Canada and served on several standing committees, while continuing his advocacy for Indigenous rights.

In 2018, Mr. Sinclair conducted an independent investigation into the Thunder Bay Police Services Board (TBPS), at the request of the Ontario Civilian Police Commission. His investigation determined that the TBPS' repeated failures to address the concerns of the Indigenous community constituted an emergency. He also uncovered systemic racism and validated long-standing concerns held by the Indigenous members of the Thunder Bay community.

In 2021, Mr. Sinclair retired from the Senate and was appointed the 15th Chancellor of Queen's University.

Throughout his life, Murray Sinclair was the recipient of many awards and honours. He was invested as a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2021 and was appointed as a Member of the Order of Manitoba in 2024. In 2022, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Cross – Civil Division for his work on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He received an Indspire Award in 1994 as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017. In 2002, he received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal. In addition to several international awards for peace and human rights, he also received many honorary degrees for his work on Indigenous justice and law.

The powerful impact of Mr. Sinclair's life's work will be felt by Canadians and those around the world, for many generations to come.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to Mr. Sinclair's family, including his children Dené, Niigaan, Gazheek, Kizhay and, Miskodagwaaginikwe. We also extend heartfelt condolences to the Indigenous Peoples and communities across Canada and to all those whose lives he touched through his work.

November 13, 2024