

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Appointment of New Chairperson and Commissioners of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Ottawa, June 10, 2009 – The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) welcomes the appointment today of The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair as Chairperson and Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild as Commissioners.

Chairperson Justice Murray Sinclair is a member of the Three Fires Society, and a Third Degree Member of the Midewiwin (Grand Medicine) Society of the Ojibway. Manitoba's first Aboriginal judge, Justice Sinclair brings to the TRC his many years of commitment advocating for Aboriginal rights and expert knowledge of Aboriginal culture and the administration of justice.

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair was appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in March of 1988 and to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba in January 2001. Shortly after his appointment as Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in 1988, Justice Sinclair was appointed Co-Commissioner, along with Court of Queen's Bench Associate Chief Justice A. C. Hamilton, of Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Commissioner Marie Wilson has dedicated her career to living and working in a cross cultural environments within Canada and internationally, as an educator, award-winning journalist, broadcast trainer, program director, and regional executive in both the public broadcast and public service sectors. She has a wide breadth of experience working with Aboriginal, church and political organizations at the operational, executive and political levels, and is fluently bilingual in English and French. She also has deep personal knowledge of the residential school legacy through her immediate family and community ties.

Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild is from Maskawacis Cree Territory of Treaty No. 6. He was the first Treaty First Nations person to receive his law degree from the University of Alberta in 1976. He is a strong advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and a former residential school student. Chief Littlechild organized a coalition of Indigenous Nations that sought and gained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. He was re-appointed by the E.C.O.S.O.C. President to represent North America and has completed his second and final term as the North American representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

With the appointment of the Commission, the TRC looks forward to launching its mandate activities as soon as possible.

The TRC's mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The Commission will document the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience. The aim of the TRC is to guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect.