



For Immediate Release

A Harris Library would be an insult

UOI OFFICES, NORTH BAY (March 24, 2010) – Anishinabek leaders say naming Nipissing University's new learning library after former Premier Mike Harris would be an insult to First Nation citizens across the province.

"The Ipperwash Inquiry made it very clear that -- while he didn't personally pull the trigger -- Mike Harris's actions as Premier of Ontario contributed to the circumstances that led to the shooting death of Anthony Dudley George on the night of Sept. 6, 1995," said Patrick Madahbee, Grand Council Chief of the Anishinabek Nation. Dudley George was a citizen of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, one of 40 member Anishinabek communities.

"This is a very cynical attempt to whitewash the political record of a man whose legacy will forever be stained with the blood of one of our citizens," said Madahbee. "This would be an insult to the Anishinabek and all First Peoples in Ontario if Mike Harris' name is attached to the library in any way."

Madahbee was commenting on reports that Nipissing University in Harris's home town of North Bay was planning to name a new Learning Library after the former premier, a move linked to a recent \$15-million donation to the Faculty of Education by financier Seymour Schulich.

"From a First Nation perspective, it would be more appropriate to name a rifle range after Mike Harris than a library," said Madahbee. "His contribution to our collective knowledge is anything but a positive one."

The Union of Ontario Indians -- corporate arm of the Anishinabek Nation -- is playing a lead role in the Ipperwash Inquiry Priorities and Action Committee (IIPAC) process, working with other First Nations organizations and the province to implement the 100 recommendations of the Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry.

Dudley's brother, the late Sam George, who pursued the truth of Dudley's death and dedicated his time and energy to public education said in an October, 2008 Toronto Star interview: "I don't believe yet in my heart that all people are treated equally in our country," he said. "You can never change history, but you can start to correct it."

There is now a Facebook group created by students and alumni of Nipissing University and Canadore College. Grand Council Chief is encouraging our citizens to post their concerns publically.



The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 40 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

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