

# NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

## PASSING OF THOMAS BERGER SADDENS NTI

(April 30, 2021 Iqaluit, Nunavut) Aluki Kotierk, the President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) today offered her deepest condolences to the family of the late Thomas R. Berger who passed away on Wednesday.

Thomas Berger was very important in getting the federal government to change its policies and recognize that Aboriginal rights and title must be dealt with. This was through his role as legal counsel for the Nisga'a Tribal Council in the famous *Calder* case, which went to the Supreme Court of Canada. This case led the federal government to begin to negotiate land claims agreements with Indigenous peoples, including Inuit.

"The *Nunavut Agreement* was achieved through years of hard negotiating after the federal government finally agreed to recognize our traditional and current use of our lands and waters including the offshore," President Kotierk said. "Thomas Berger's role in bringing about this change in the federal approach was critical."

President Kotierk added that Thomas Berger had been brought in as a Conciliator in 2005 because of the federal government's failure to fully implement the *Nunavut Agreement*. "He made some important recommendations, and had a clear understanding of why Inuktitut, in a jurisdiction where the public majority are Inuit, should be the working language of the workplace and language of instruction in our schools."

"May we honour his legacy by bringing life to his 2006 Conciliator's Final Report," President Kotierk said.

<https://www.tunngavik.com/files/2021/04/2006-03-01-Thomas-Berger-Final-Report-ENG.pdf>

-30-

**For further information:**

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