

# NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

**NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK INC. (NTI) IS SADDENED TO HEAR THE PASSING OF DONAT MILORTOK – NAUJAAT ELDER, COMMUNITY BUILDER, POLITICAL LEADER, AND A LIFELONG DEFENDER OF INUIT RIGHTS.**

(April 28, 2023, Iqaluit, Nunavut) It was with heavy hearts that NTI learned this week of the passing of Donat Milortuk of Naujaat. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family, friends and community.

Donat's life was filled with many accomplishments from which Inuit in Nunavut can take pride and inspiration. He was an early leader and advocate in the efforts that, decades later, would culminate in the creation of Nunavut. He mounted this lifelong effort despite being one of the earliest students at the Sir Joseph Bernier residential school in Chesterfield Inlet. After surviving residential school, he returned to what would become Repulse Bay to help his parents live on the land.

In 1969 Donat became the first Council Chairman of Repulse Bay. In the 1970s his activism for Inuit rights and political undertakings spanned the community, regional and national levels. He became a land claim fieldworker for Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and then for the Land Claims Commission. Donat was a founding board member of Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) and went on to help lead TFN as vice-president and president. Donat was integral in establishing the negotiation team for the Nunavut Agreement.

Donat continued this activism well into his later years, including speaking out in support of the protestors who shut down the Mary River Baffinland iron mine a few years ago. He won a council seat in his hometown in 2017 and again in 2019.

Throughout his life, Donat's main goal was to have Inuit rights fully recognized by the federal government. He was a fierce advocate for Inuit management of wildlife and the land itself. Thirty years ago, the Nunavut Agreement was signed – an Inuit accomplishment that Donat fought hard to help realize.

NTI joins his family, friends, and community in mourning Donat's passing, and in celebrating a life that continues to inspire Inuit.

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