



96-078

Northerners will miss great friend and supporter

YELLOWKNIFE (October 21) -- The North has lost a great friend and a great person with the death of the Honourable Jim Bourque in Ottawa October 19, says Premier Don Morin. Mr. Bourque, 60, died of a heart attack while visiting the city on business.

"This is a great loss for myself personally and for all northerners," said Mr. Morin. "Jim worked very hard on behalf of all of the people in the North. He was honest, well liked, and well respected. Everyone who knew him knew him as a fair man who believed in the rights of all people, who treated everyone with respect from trappers to world leaders, and who had a deep love of his family."

Born in Wandering River, Alberta, Mr. Bourque began his career in 1955 as a Park Warden in Wood Buffalo National Park, and served in a number of positions and locations with Renewable Resources throughout the Northwest Territories.

From 1982 to 1991, he served as Deputy Minister of Renewable Resources, and played an instrumental role in promoting the fur industry. In 1984, he founded the Fur Institute of Canada, and served as Chairman of the organization for four years.

His reputation and love of the North led to a role in constitutional development and unity efforts in the North, heading the "Bourque Commission" in 1993. The commission's report served as a base for the current constitutional discussions in the western Territory.

Among his other life's accomplishments, Mr. Bourque served as co-director of policy for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1994, and as President of the Métis Nation from 1980 to 1982.

Throughout his life and his career, Mr. Bourque was an advocate of Traditional Knowledge -- that is, knowledge and values which have been acquired through experience and observation from the land, and from spiritual teachings handed down from one generation to another.

He was working on a project aimed at promoting those efforts at the time of his death.

In recognition of his long service to people and the country, Mr. Bourque was appointed to the Privy Council in July 1992. Councilors to Privy Council are appointed for life by the Governor General at the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

The flags on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, and at all territorial and federal buildings in the Northwest Territories, are being flown at half-mast this week in his honour.

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**Northerners will miss great friend and supporter: Page 2**

"I remember Jim telling me once how it was so easy to lose perspective sitting in his office in Yellowknife, and that he loved getting back out on the land and onto Great Slave Lake to remember what is real, what this world is all about," Mr. Morin said. "I have always remembered that, and I will remember Jim for the simple joy he took in the land, and for his belief in the people of the North.

"There was only one Jim Bourque. We will miss him."

A memorial service will be held in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly at 2 p.m. on Friday, October 25. For those unable to attend, plans are being made to have the service televised live. Specific details will be announced later this week.

Mr. Bourque was a resident of Yellowknife at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife Sharleen, children Arthur, Valerie and Edwin, and his grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, Mr. Bourque's family has requested that donations be sent to the Canadian Diabetes Association in his memory.

For more information, contact:

Val Mellesmoen
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NEWS/NORTH, Monday, October 21, 1996 A5

Jim Bourque dies

The North lost one of its most beloved Metis sons with the sudden death of Jim Bourque Saturday morning. He was in Ottawa attending meetings when stricken by an apparent heart attack.

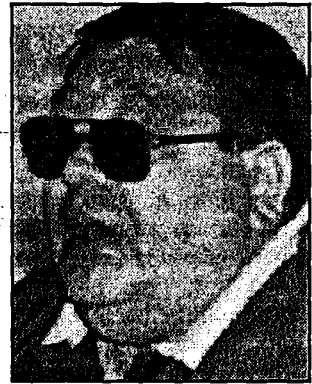
Bourque, who was as comfortable on a trap line as he was in corporate boardrooms around the world, embodied the best of the Metis spirit.

Early in his career as a wildlife officer, he was stationed in various communities across the north. His other roles were as president of the Metis Nation, deputy minister of Renewable Resources with the territorial government and a constitution builder with the Bourque Commission.

His leadership was marked by an understanding of the ambition of the pioneering spirit and a deep regard for the peace and security of living off the land.

He is survived by his wife Charlene, their three children and grandchildren.

A memorial service is expected to be held in Yellowknife this week.



Jim Bourque



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

BOX 1375, YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T. X1A 2P1 PHONE (403) 873-3505 FAX 873-3395

PRESS RELEASE

Metis mourn former President Jim Bourque

OCTOBER 22, 1996, YELLOWKNIFE—The Executive, Board of Directors and staff of the Métis Nation - Northwest Territories join the Bourque family in their grief over the sudden passing of James Bourque while on business in Ottawa.

“Jim had a gift for bringing together people who had opposite points of view. He was an excellent statesman, and this is evident in his involvement in the politics of the Northwest Territories and internationally,” said President Gary Bohnet. “He was as comfortable in the bush as he was in the boardroom. He is lost to us at a time when we most needed his guidance, especially now with his constitutional work becoming a reality.”

“Jim was a Métis who dedicated his life and work towards the well being of all Aboriginal people,” said Vice-President Michael Paulette. “He was a great father and loving husband, an individual who cared for people. He always saw the best in people no matter what their circumstances were.”

“I had the pleasure of working with Jim from 1979 to 1980, during his term as President of the Metis Association. He was a very diplomatic person with an extremely positive attitude, and always seemed to have a compliment for those he encountered,” said Secretary-Treasurer Joyce Pittman. “Jim always had time to speak with young people, knowing that they were the leaders of the future. He demonstrated that respect and family are the basis of Métis culture, and important to the well-being of the people.”

In lieu of flowers, donations should be made to the Diabetes Education Program, Box 10, Stanton Regional Hospital, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2N1.

A memorial will be held October 25, 1996:

at the Great Hall in the
Legislative Assembly
at 2 p.m.

For more information,
call (403) 873 3505:

Gary Bohnet
President

Michael Paulette
Vice-President

Joyce Pittman
Secretary-Treasurer

A10 YELLOWKNIFER, Wednesday, October 23, 1996

The North mourns

Jim Bourque dies, but his influence lives on

Richard Gleeson
Northern News Services

It will be a long time before history can fully measure the impact Jim Bourque has had on the Northwest Territories.

Bourque passed away in Ottawa Saturday at the age of 60, the victim of a heart attack.

His influence, which has as much to do with the way he conducted his life as his accomplishments, shapes the North today as much as it ever did.

The words and the tone of those whose lives Bourque touched resonate with respect.

"If young people ever needed a role model to look up to, he was the one," said Premier Don Morin. "He always treated people with respect, and got it back in turn. He was an honest man."

"There's a lot of people crying across the territories," said Susan Fleck, a long time friend of Bourque's, who worked as his executive assistant during his final years with the territorial government.

"He couldn't walk into a community in the North without being stopped on the street by people who knew him. He was an incredibly humble man, for all his accomplishments."

The list of those accomplishments is a weighty one.

From 1991-92 he chaired the Commission for Constitutional Development, better known as the Bourque Commission.

The duty took him to communities across the North for a series of public meetings. That dialogue began the daunting task of forging a constitution, a project now near fruition.

In the mid and late 80s, a time when the fur industry was almost wiped out by European, American and Canadian anti-fur lobbyists, Bourque was northern trappers' most powerful advocate.

He founded the Northwest Territories Fur Institute and served as its chairman for five years. He was the driving force behind the establishment of aboriginal fishing and hunting rights.

Bourque waged these battles as deputy minister for the department of renewable resources, a post he held from 1982 until retiring in 1991. A year later he was appointed to the Privy Council.

"It was a real challenge to follow him," said Joe Handley, a brother Metis who knew

Bourque for 11 years and was his successor at renewable resources.

"He was very well liked by his staff. He had a simple and clear way of expressing himself that earned him respect in the communities, out on the land and among the most senior politicians."

Before being appointed a deputy minister Bourque served a term as president of the Northwest Territories Metis Nation.

Frank Laviolette of Fort Smith was one of his keenest supporters in the Metis leadership.

"There was a lot of disagreement among the Metis leaders then, especially in the west," recalled Laviolette. "But he brought them together."

Metis Nation-president Gary Bohnet noted, "Jim had a gift for bringing together people who had opposite points of view...He is lost to us at a time when we most needed his guidance, especially now with his constitutional work becoming a reality."

Though he shaped history in the boardrooms of Yellowknife and Ottawa, Bourque was always a man of the land.



Jim Bourque

He embraced the teachings of his Cree grandparents. Through his life he spoke of the importance of aboriginal traditions, and the lessons the land holds for all.

"He was happy on the land, he liked the land; and he was also good in the office," said Laviolette, who helped Bourque relocate two herds of bison from Wood Buffalo National Park after an anthrax scare in the early 60s.

"He always did the best he could, not only for the Metis, not only for aboriginals, but for everyone," said Laviolette.

He and the four remaining others who were part of that relocation project will be travelling to Yellowknife to be part of the memorial service for Bourque Friday at the Legislative Assembly, starting at 2 p.m.

Flags in Ottawa and the NWT are at half-mast this week in honor of Jim Bourque, and hearts are hanging across the North.

OBITUARY / James W. Bourque

Native activist remained faithful to his roots

Canadian Press

OTTAWA — James W. Bourque, an aboriginal activist appointed to the Privy Council in 1992, has died in Ottawa. He was 60.

Mr. Bourque, who died Saturday, was born in Wandering River, Alta., and learned at an early age to hunt, trap and fish. He remained faithful to his roots throughout his life.

“At an early age, Jim combined the knowledge from his Cree heritage with his Ukrainian heritage and developed the principles that guided him for the rest of his life — they were respect, sharing and responsibility,” Andy Swiderski, a family friend said.

Mr. Bourque became president of the local Hunters and Trappers Association in Fort Chipewyan, Alta., at age 18.

He was president of the Northwest Territories Métis Nations from 1980 to 1982, deputy minister of renewable resources in the Northwest Territories from 1982 to 1991 and chairman of the commission for constitutional development until 1992.

In 1984, he founded the Fur Institute of Canada and served as chairman for four years.

He was also named co-director of policy for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1994.

In recognition of his long service to his people and country, Mr. Bourque was appointed to the Privy Council in July of 1992.

“Despite his many accomplishments, Jim remained a humble man,” Mr. Swiderski said. “He treated every person with respect. Whether he was in a trapper’s tent or an embassy in Europe, this respect was returned.”

Mr. Bourque leaves his wife, Sharileen, children Arthur, Valerie and Edwin, and his grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on Friday at the legislative assembly in Yellowknife.

A12, Globe and Mail, Wednesday, October 23, 1996



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

BOX 1375, YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T. X1A 2P1 PHONE (403) 873-3505 FAX 873-3395

TRIBUTE TO JIM BOURQUE

BY GARY BOHNET

OCTOBER 25, 1996

GREAT HALL, LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

THANK YOU.

SHARLEEN, VALERIE, ARTHUR, EDWIN . . . ELDERS,
FAMILY MEMBERS, HONOURED GUESTS, LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN . . .

TODAY WE ARE GATHERED TO REMEMBER AND PAY
TRIBUTE TO JIM BOURQUE -- HUSBAND, FATHER,
BROTHER, GRANDFATHER, HUNTER, TRAPPER,
STATESMAN, ROLE MODEL, FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE
... TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US, THIS MAN WAS
SPECIAL ... I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANY WORDS OF
TRIBUTE WILL TRULY DO HIM JUSTICE ... BUT I JUST

WANT TO SHARE SOME THOUGHTS WITH YOU ABOUT THIS GREAT MAN.

IN OUR OWN LIVES, FEW PEOPLE INFLUENCE OUR ACTIONS, OUR IDEAS, AND OUR VALUES ... IN OUR COMMUNITIES, FEW PEOPLE ARE LOOKED TOWARD FOR WISE COUNSEL ... IN OUR TERRITORY, FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE TRUST AND RESPECT OF ALL NORTHERNERS ... IN OUR GREAT COUNTRY, FEW PEOPLE CAN SERVE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS AND STILL MAKE TIME TO SERVE AND BE WITH THE PEOPLE AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL. IN OUR INTERNATIONAL BODIES, FEW PEOPLE CAN COMMAND THE RESPECT OF THOSE ACCUSTOMED TO HAVING POWER ... WHO IS THIS PERSON WHO MEANS SO MUCH TO SO MANY???

JIM BOURQUE WAS THIS PERSON ...

I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF JIM'S VALUES ... YOU SEE, JIM HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND RESOURCES ... HE DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO ENSURING THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS

SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES ... TO ENJOY THE OUTDOORS, THE LAND, WATER, AND WILDLIFE.

IN HIS CAREER, HE ROSE THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES, BUT HE NEVER FORGOT ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE FIELD, BECAUSE HE WAS A WILDLIFE OFFICER AND SPENT MANY, MANY DAYS ON THE LAND ... WHEN TRAPPERS SPOKE ABOUT HOW THEIR LIFESTYLE HAD BEEN THREATENED, JIM KNEW ... BECAUSE HE WAS ALSO A TRAPPER ... WHEN ELDERS SPOKE ABOUT THE NEED FOR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, JIM KNEW ... BECAUSE HE RESPECTED HIS ELDERS AND SPENT A LOT OF TIME WITH THEM...

JIM BOURQUE ALSO HAD A GREAT DEAL OF TIME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ... HE TOOK A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THEIR EDUCATION ... I REMEMBER WHEN HE WOULD COME INTO OUR OFFICE ... HE WOULD ALWAYS TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO TALK TO OUR YOUNGER STAFF MEMBERS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES ... AT MEETINGS, YOU WOULD ALWAYS SEE HIM TALKING TO OUR

YOUNG PEOPLE ... MANY OF OUR YOUNG WILDLIFE OFFICERS HERE TODAY PROBABLY GOT THEIR START IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BECAUSE OF JIM BOURQUE ... TO THOSE OF YOU WHO WORKED WITH HIM, HE HELD EACH OF YOU IN HIGH REGARD ... HE LOVED THE OUTFIT...

HE WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT HIS CAUSE, BUT REASONED IN HOW HE WENT ABOUT ACHIEVING HIS GOALS ...

ABOVE ALL OF HIS TRAITS, I WILL REMEMBER HIS HUMILITY ... JIM WAS A HUMBLE MAN ... THE THING THAT STRUCK YOU ABOUT JIM WAS THAT HE WAS SO GENUINE ... HE TREATED EVERYBODY WITH RESPECT ... HE MADE EVERYBODY FEEL IMPORTANT ... HE BROUGHT THE GOODNESS OUT IN PEOPLE, BECAUSE TO HIM, THEY WERE IMPORTANT ... HE LIVED BY HIS WORDS ... HE WAS A STRAIGHT SHOOTER ...

I SAID EARLIER THAT A FEW WORDS OF TRIBUTE COULD NOT DO HIM JUSTICE ... AND IF YOU KNEW JIM, YOU WOULD ALSO KNOW THAT HE NEVER SOUGHT RECOGNITION FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE ... HE NEVER

SOUGHT THE LIMELIGHT ... AS A POLITICAL LEADER, HE WAS KNOWN FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER ... AS PRESIDENT OF THE MÉTIS NATION FROM 1980 TO 1982, HE GUIDED OUR ORGANIZATION THROUGH TURBULENT TIMES ... HE BELIEVED IN UNITY AMONG ALL MÉTIS ... MANY OF THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS MÉTIS ENJOY TODAY ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF JIM'S LEADERSHIP...

FOR ALL HIS ACHIEVEMENTS, HE RECEIVED THE ORDER OF THE SASH ... THIS IS THE HIGHEST HONOUR THE MÉTIS NATION CAN BESTOW UPON ITS MEMBERS ... I STILL REMEMBER JIM'S REACTION ABOUT THIS HONOUR ... HE NEVER EXPECTED IT BECAUSE JIM FELT THAT HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS WERE HIS RESPONSIBILITY, HIS JOB ... BELIEVE ME -- JIM BOURQUE DID HIS JOB WELL, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT HE SHARED WITH MANY OF US ... HE WAS AN INSPIRATION AND AN INFLUENCE TO MANY, MANY PEOPLE ...

MANY OF YOU KNOW THE PUBLIC FIGURE ... BUT JIM WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST A FAMILY MAN ... HE LOVED THEM DEARLY ...

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, WE WERE SPEAKING ABOUT HIS SON EDWIN, WHO WENT INTO BUSINESS WITH HIM ... JIM SPOKE ABOUT HOW HIS SON WAS BEGINNING TO MAKE SOME GREAT STRIDES IN THE BUSINESS ... I COULD SEE THE PRIDE IN HIS EYES WHEN HE SPOKE OF HIS FAMILY ...

AS MÉTIS PEOPLE WE LOOKED UPON JIM BOURQUE AS A GIFT ... A GIFT TO EACH OF US, A GIFT TO OUR OWN COMMUNITIES, AND A GIFT WE WERE FORTUNATE TO SHARE WITH ALL NORTHERNERS AND ALL CANADIANS, AND BEYOND ...

ALTHOUGH JIM MAY BE TAKEN FROM US, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THIS -- JIM'S CONTRIBUTIONS LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS, OUR MINDS AND OUR INSTITUTIONS ... WHEN YOU SEE PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS WORKING IN A RESPECTFUL MANNER TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES, JIM IS THERE ... WHEN YOU SEE

YOUNG PEOPLE RESPECTING THEIR ELDERS, JIM IS THERE ... WHEN YOU SEE LEADERS TREATING EVERYBODY AS BEING IMPORTANT, JIM IS THERE ... WHEN YOU SEE OUR BEAUTIFUL NORTHERN WILDERNESS, JIM IS THERE ... WHEN YOU LOOK AT HIS FAMILY, JIM IS THERE ... GOOD HUNTING, MY FRIEND ... WE WILL MISS YOU DEARLY.

END



FAX MEMO

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To: John Holman
Metis Nation
FAX: 873-3395

From: Val Mellesmoen
FAX: (403) 873-0169
PH: (403) 669-2302

Date: November 6/96

Subject: Speech as per your request

(FAX includes 6 pages)

Regards
Val

(Photo is @ Security Desk @ LA)

MEMORIAL: JAMES BOURQUE
OCTOBER 25, 1996

OCTOBER 19, 1996 WAS A SAD DAY FOR THE NORTH. WE LOST ONE OF OUR BEST FRIENDS.

TODAY IS A DAY TO CELEBRATE HIS LIFE, AND I KNOW HE WOULD LIKE THAT.

JIM BOURQUE WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST PEOPLE I HAVE EVER KNOWN. A LOT OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE SAYING THAT TODAY.

HE TAUGHT ME A LOT PERSONALLY, AND HE SET AN EXAMPLE FOR ME AND FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH BY JUST BEING HIMSELF -- AN HONEST, CARING AND FAIR MAN WHO WAS RESPECTED BY EVERYONE WHO KNEW HIM.

I HAVE KNOWN JIM BOURQUE FOR A LONG TIME.

BUT EVEN IF I HADN'T, HE WAS EASY TO GET TO KNOW. JIM WAS THE KIND OF PERSON YOU LIKED THE SECOND YOU MET HIM. AND THE KIND OF PERSON THAT ONCE YOU GOT TO KNOW HIM, YOU COULDN'T HELP BUT RESPECT HIM.

HE LIVED HIS LIFE HONESTLY, OPENLY AND WITH LOVE FOR HIS FAMILY, THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH.

JIM NEVER HAD A BAD WORD TO SAY ABOUT ANYBODY.

HE USED TO TELL ME: "THERE IS ALWAYS SOME GOOD IN EVERYBODY YOU MEET SOMETIMES YOU WEAR OUT A COUPLE OF SHOVELS BEFORE YOU FIND IT . . . BUT THERE IS ALWAYS SOME GOOD THERE."

###

IF I COULD SAY ONE THING ABOUT JIM'S LIFE, IT WOULD BE THAT IT WAS FAR TOO SHORT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, AS I LOOK BACK AT WHAT HE DID ACCOMPLISH IN HIS 60 YEARS, I CAN DEFINITELY SAY HE MADE THE BEST OF THE TIME HE DID HAVE.

IN OVER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, JIM WORKED HARD ON BEHALF OF MANY PEOPLE -- FROM TRAPPERS TO BUSINESS PEOPLE -- AT THE LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

THERE WAS HIS WORK WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. HIS TERM AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE METIS ASSOCIATION. HIS FOUR YEARS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FUR INSTITUTE OF CANADA. AS A DIRECTOR OF THE WORKER'S COMPENSATION BOARD. AND THE THOUSANDS OF HOURS HE GAVE TO MANY COMMUNITY GROUPS, MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS -- ALL AIMED AT ONE THING -- HELPING PEOPLE.

THERE ARE NOT MANY PEOPLE WHO WILL EVER ACCOMPLISH EVEN HALF OF WHAT HE DID.

AND WHILE HIS WORK WILL LIVE ON, IT WON'T QUITE BE THE SAME WITHOUT HIS SENSE OF HUMOUR, HIS BOOMING BIG VOICE, AND HIS STORIES.

STILL, I HAVE TO SAY, AS GREAT AS HE WAS, HE WAS NOT PERFECT ... HE DROVE A SUBURBAN I NEVER COULD GET HIM TO DRIVE A FORD!

###

I WAS RAISED TO BELIEVE WE ALL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER, AND WE ALL NEED TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK.

JIM DID THAT MORE THAN ALMOST ANYONE I KNOW.

JIM'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND LOVE OF THE NORTH AND CANADA WERE RECOGNIZED A FEW YEARS AGO WITH HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL, MAKING HIM THE *HONOURABLE* JAMES BOURQUE.

BUT ANYONE WHO REALLY KNEW HIM KNEW THAT HE DIDN'T NEED ANY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT TO GAIN THAT TITLE.

HE WAS ALWAYS HONOURABLE.

I CAN'T THINK OF ANYBODY ELSE WHO HAS THAT MUCH CREDIBILITY WITH *EVERYONE* IN THE NWT. ABORIGINALS AND

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NON-ABORIGINAIS ALIKE.

IN TODAY'S POLITICAL CLIMATE, THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE, IF ANY, LIKE JIM, WHO ARE UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED.

I HAVE TO SAY, ON BEHALF OF MP ETHEL BLONDIN -ANDREWS AND THE MLAS -- MANY OF WHOM UNFORTUNATELY COULD NOT BE HERE TODAY -- THAT HE WAS ONE MAN WE KNEW WE COULD COUNT ON IN ANY SITUATION, BECAUSE HE WAS FAIR AND HONEST.

ETHEL ASKED ME TO SAY SHE IS SORRY SHE COULD NOT BE HERE TODAY, BUT SHE HAD SOME WORK COMMITMENTS IN OTTAWA -- BUT SHE KNEW JIM WOULD UNDERSTAND, SINCE HE WAS ONE OF THE STRONGEST BELIEVERS OF PROTECTING OUR INTERESTS AT A FEDERAL LEVEL.

###

JIM WAS ALWAYS MAKING A DEAL -- NEGOTIATING -- PULLING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND GETTING THEM TO WORK TOGETHER, AND SOMETIMES PEOPLE WOULD BE SO FAR APART ON AN ISSUE -- BUT JIM WOULD DRAW THEM ALL TOGETHER, GET THEM TO SEE THE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW, GET THEM TO LAUGH AND INSPIRE THEM TO AGREE.

I KNOW IF THERE IS ANY KIND OF NEGOTIATIONS GOING ON IN HEAVEN, I CAN PICTURE JIM PULLING HIS CHAIR UP TO THE TABLE RIGHT NOW READY TO GET IN THERE AND START TALKING.

AND LISTENING.

JIM TAUGHT ME THAT YOU REALLY HAVE TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE -- NOT JUST TO THEIR WORDS -- BUT TO WHAT THEY ARE REALLY SAYING.

HE ALSO SAID THERE IS ALWAYS A SOLUTION, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE PROBLEM MAY BE, THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY YOU CAN WORK IT OUT. PROBLEMS TO JIM WERE OPPORTUNITIES.

SOMETHING ELSE I REMEMBER ABOUT JIM IS FROM ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS LOGGING WITH HORSES UP ON THE

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SLAVE RIVER.

JIM AND HIS BROTHER AL WERE MAKING A TRIP AROUND GREAT SLAVE LAKE, GOING FROM YELLOWKNIFE TO FORT SMITH, AND THEY STOPPED AT MY CAMP TO HAVE A MEAL WITH US.

HE SAID TO ME: "DONNY, YOU KNOW YOU SIT IN THOSE OFFICES IN YELLOWKNIFE AND SOMETIMES ALL OF THE STUFF AROUND YOU CAN GET A HOLD OF YOU, AND YOU CAN START TO LOSE PERSPECTIVE OF WHO YOU REALLY ARE. BUT WHEN YOU GET OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF GREAT SLAVE LAKE, IT LETS YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, AND IT PUTS INTO PERSPECTIVE HOW SMALL YOU REALLY ARE AND WHO THE BOSS *REALLY* IS."

I HAVE ALWAYS REMEMBERED THAT STATEMENT, BECAUSE GOING OUT ON THE LAND REALLY DOES GIVE YOU PERSPECTIVE.

WHEN THINGS GET CRAZY FOR ALL OF US, WE WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER WHAT JIM SAID, AND KEEP OUR PERSPECTIVE ON EVERYTHING WE DO -- WHETHER IT IS IN WORK OR IN OTHER PARTS OF OUR LIVES.

I AM SURE THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON IN THIS ROOM, OR WATCHING THIS MEMORIAL SERVICE, WHO DOESN'T HAVE A SIMILAR STORY ABOUT JIM.

I THINK THAT IS JIM'S BEST LEGACY.

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ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, AND SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, MY WIFE GLADYS AND OUR FAMILY... OUR THOUGHTS AND OUR HEARTS ARE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, SHARLEEN.

JIM SERVED IN MANY POSITIONS, AND IN MANY ROLES IN HIS LIFE -- HUNTER, TRAPPER, POLITICIAN, PARK WARDEN, DEPUTY MINISTER, CHAIRMAN, BOARD MEMBER, FRIEND -- BUT THE ONES HE WAS MOST PROUD OF WERE AS HUSBAND, FATHER AND GRANDFATHER.

THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS HE HAS MADE ARE HERE TO STAY,

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AND IN THIS WAY, SO IS JIM.

MAHSI, JIM. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE NEXT
LIFE.



Lives Lived

JAMES W. BOURQUE

*Elder statesman of the Western Arctic.
Born Dec. 17, 1935 in Wandering
River, Alta.; died in Ottawa Oct. 19,
aged 60.*

JIM Bourque was a big man in the Western Arctic, and not just in the physical sense. But he would have been amused to see himself described as a "native activist" in the obituaries. The term has the ring of radical protest, while for most of his life, Jim was a good and faithful public servant.

He rose from the trapline to the senior ranks of northern policymakers. He learned to hunt, fish and trap from his father and his Cree grandparents and at 18, he was president of the Hunters' and Trappers' Association in Fort Chipewyan, Alta. He was one of the first aboriginal park wardens in Wood Buffalo National Park, straddling Alberta and the Northwest Territories; in 1980, he was elected president of the NWT Métis Association, a strife-torn group Jim healed. Garth Wallbridge, a Métis lawyer in Yellowknife, tells me, "He taught me how to be Métis."

Jim's goal when he became deputy minister of the Northwest Territories Renewable Resources department in 1982 was to save the hunting and trapping way of life. He also wanted to see his people's traditional ecological knowledge given the respect accorded western science.

Blockades and protests weren't his style. He was a practical environmentalist, and this sometimes brought him into conflict with aboriginal groups, as well as industry and governments. His method for deflecting overblown rhetoric was classic: he would have a subordinate invite officials of the offended group out for a good meal, and, after a sense of bonhomie had set in, the messenger would deliver Jim's carefully worded response.

His accomplishments were legion: He founded and chaired the Fur Institute of Canada, a lobby group that fought to save trapping from southern animal-rights activists. He directed the development of policies on traditional knowledge and sustainable development. He helped bring about changes to the international regime for migratory birds that allowed aboriginal people to pursue their traditional spring hunt.

A storyteller and a humorist, he was as at home in an embassy as in the bush. Jim Bourque once told me his secret was that he chose his people well, and backed them to the hilt. They repaid him with hard work and a deep loyalty.

His other secret was that he never really left the land. In the early 1980s, Jim Bourque undertook two

long expeditions through the bush, travelling hundreds of kilometres on foot. NWT premier Don Morin recalls Jim Bourque telling him, "When you get out in the middle of Great Slave Lake, it lets you know who you are. And it puts into perspective how small you really are, and who 'the Boss' really is."

Jim's own views on most issues were rather conservative — but a person's ideological stripe or ethnicity didn't matter much to him. As he told Don Morin, "Sometimes you wear out a couple of shovels before you find it, but there is always some good there."

In July of 1992, his services to the north were recognized with an appointment to the Privy Council. In his later years, Jim was in much demand as a consultant; just before his death, he helped with an environmental



James Bourque in the 1990s.

agreement between BHP Diamonds and the federal government. Interested in applying electronic technology to traditional ecological knowledge, he founded The Centre for Traditional Knowledge at the Canadian Museum of Nature.

Jim Bourque's memorial service, held at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife, was the Western Arctic's first "state funeral." Don Morin presented Jim's son, Edwin, with a moosehide jacket intended as a retirement present for his father. The jacket, ordered several years ago, had become a running joke. "Well, I didn't get the jacket yet," Jim would say. "I guess the moose this year aren't big enough." It was finished the day before he died.

There were bureaucrats, trappers, park wardens in green uniforms, Métis men in sashes, Métis women who brought country food for the ceremony, Dene chiefs, Inuit politicians, priests and lawyers, people who loved one another and people in long-running feuds. Even in death, Jim Bourque was bringing us together.

In the midst of a particularly acrimonious constitutional debate in the western NWT, it's difficult not to lament, with Métis Nation president Gary Bohnet, "He is lost to us at a time when we most need his guidance." But I know the many northerners he mentored are using his memory as a touchstone, asking themselves, "What would Jim do in this situation?"

Marina Devine

Marina Devine is a Yellowknife writer and consultant who worked with Jim Bourque when he chaired the Commission for Constitutional Development in the western NWT in 1992.