



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

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MCK offers condolences on the passing of Billy Two-Rivers

For immediate release

(Kahnawake – 13, Enniska/February 2023) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) is offering its deepest condolences on the passing of Billy Kaientaronkwen Two Rivers at the age of 87.

As a member of Council, he was first elected to the MCK in 1978 and served ten consecutive terms until 1998. He was hugely influential, acting as Grand Chief Joseph Tokwirot Norton's right-hand man during the so-called Oka Crisis, the most difficult time in Kahnawà:ke's recent history. He was both colorful and outspoken, never afraid to challenge government officials or correct Kahnawà:ke's opponents on their misinterpretations of the community's position or its place in history.

Billy's first language was Kanien'kéha, and he was a strong advocate for the reinstatement of its use in everyday life. He always took the opportunity to encourage his younger colleagues to learn and use the language as much as possible. In 2019, he was one of 38 elders who were honored for their contributions to the development of the *Kahnawà:ke Language Law*.

He first came to public attention in the early 1950s as a professional wrestler, gaining fame throughout Canada and the United States, and, later, the United Kingdom. He retired in 1977 and soon after embarked on his successful political career.

He also played lacrosse and was a member of the 1964 Mohawks Senior 'B' championship team.

Billy also acted in several movies in his later years. He remained active until his final days. He spent his final years as a resident of the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre.

On behalf of the entire community, the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke offers its sincerest condolences to Billy's family and friends as he passes into the Spirit World.

The MCK observed a moment of silence in his honor at the start of today's Council meeting.

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