



UNITED INDIANS
OF ALL TRIBES FOUNDATION

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Mr. John Diaz, Chief
Seattle Police Department
610 Fifth Avenue
P.O. Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

September 1, 2010

Dear Chief Diaz,

It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of one of our community members and gifted artist John T. Williams. We offer our most sincere condolences to his family and friends, his life, as are all others, was valuable. That his death occurred under such uncertain circumstances is tragic and disconcerting to our Native community here in Seattle.

On behalf of the Board of Director's of the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation and the American Indian, Alaska Native and Canadian First Nation's peoples residing in the city of Seattle, we would like to present our response to the incident involving the shooting death of a Native American community member by an officer of the Seattle Police Department on August 31, 2010.

As an organization founded 40 years ago upon the principles of social justice for all people and dedicated to serving Seattle's Native people, we strongly condemn the unnecessary use of lethal force in any situation save for the direst of circumstances. We recognize the difficult job of the Seattle Police Department and appreciate the grave sacrifices made by the men and women serving in this profession, however, as citizens of this city, there is growing concern and outrage regarding the Seattle Police Department's use of lethal force in situations where it clearly does not warrant it.

The testimony of numerous witnesses has raised concerns about the legitimacy of Officer Birk's choice to use deadly force. By all witness and media accounts, the situation describes a man in an entirely non-threatening posture at the moment of his shooting. Therefore in the interest of human rights for citizens of all races in Seattle, it is imperative that a comprehensive and objective investigation be adhered to.

We are dedicated to working with the Seattle Police Department to ensure that our police force does not fail in your role to protect and serve and that tragic and unnecessary deaths such as the one of John T. Williams are prevented into the future. Our expectation is that justice will be served and that the results of the investigation will be presented to the Native community.

Respectfully,

Michael Reichert (White Earth Ojibway)
Chairman, Board of Directors
United Indians of All Tribes Foundation

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