



500-211 Yonge Street Toronto ON M5B 1M4 (T)416.408.4041 or 3967
Toll Free 844-633-2886 (F)416.408.1568 (E)alst@web.ca www.aboriginallegal.ca

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for Immediate Release:

Jethro Anderson' s Family Reacts to the Verdict of the First Nations Youth Inquest

THUNDER BAY, ON: Today the jury released a verdict and recommendations in the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nation youth. The families welcome the recommendations but believe they must be implemented to make a real difference for First Nation youth's access to and opportunity for safety and education.

Stella Anderson, Jethro's mother, was particularly glad to hear that the jury recommended improvements to Police investigations and the way that Police will communicate to families and search parties looking for missing youth. She agreed to become a party to the inquest because of her experience 16 years ago, searching for Jethro when he was missing. She wants better protocols and communications around searches and the jury seems to agree.

After hearing months of evidence and testimony of 146 witnesses throughout the inquest, the jury found that Jethro died from drowning and that the manner in which he came to his death is undetermined. He went missing on October 28, 2000 and his body was found on November 11, 2000, in the Kaministiquia River.

Stella recognizes the importance of the inquest and the recommendations but also feels like she did not get all of answers that she needed to about how Jethro died. His death still weighs heavy on her. She said, "Not a day passes where I do not think about Jethro. I often think about his last moments and worry. Something as small as doing a load of laundry in cold water, washing my hair, taking a bath, or watching TV can give me anxiety. These are all moments that are part of every day life and they remind me of my son drowning. No mother should have to experience this ever, but I do, even 16 years after Jethro's death."

The fact that Stella has more questions than answers about Jethro's death is worrisome. Despite this, she remains hopeful that the recommendations will be implemented so that investigations of missing First Nation youth in Thunder Bay and elsewhere will result in better communication between police and families. She stated that she "believes that something must be learned from this inquest and that recommendations must be followed so that lessons from Jethro's death are not wasted."

For more information please contact:

Christa Big Canoe, Legal Advocacy Director – Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto (416) 408-4041 x 225 or 647-227-4392 or by email canoecd@lao.on.ca