

Passing of Ms. Cece Hodgson - McCauley

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my condolences and pay tribute to Cece Hodgson-McCauley who passed away last Sunday at the age of 95.

The Northwest Territories is built on the legacy of those who came before us and paved a way for the next generation. The people who stood tall and were the outspoken voices in the crowds when change was needed most. These people and their legacy are part of what makes the North strong and unique, and Cece Hodgson-McCauley is one of these people.

Born on the shores of Great Bear Lake in 1922, Cece lived her life as a proud Indigenous Northerner. At an early age Cece attended Sacred Heart Mission School in Fort Providence after the loss of her mother. She always had the best interest of others at heart, was continually encouraging others to stand up for what they believed in, and reminding them to always be truthful and do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, Cece was a pioneer and inspiration for all people, but especially Indigenous women in leadership. She was the first female Chief in the NWT and the founding Chief of the Inuvik Band. She was also a former president of the Norman Wells Land Corporation. A fierce “Woman Warrior of the Sahtu”, Cece worked until the very end writing her outspoken column for News North.

In her column, and in life, Cece always spoke her mind and wasn’t afraid to be herself. Throughout her life and career, she touched many people and communities across the North and Canada. She was a supporter, and often a critic, of government and encouraged Northerners to get involved in causes that mattered to them. She is a reminder that sometimes to see change you need to make your voice heard and showed us this first hand

as a strong voice for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Cece was a leader in all respects and in 2017 she received an Indspire Award for Politics.

Cece recently wrote her final editorial for News North and in it she acknowledged how she had a wonderful life and felt blessed for her family and things she was able to do with her time on earth. We are all grateful to have known Cece and know that even though she may be gone, her memory and impressions she has left on this territory will forever remain.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier along with some of his colleagues from this House, are in Norman Wells today to attend Cece's memorial service. On behalf of him and the Government of the Northwest Territories, I'd like to pass on our sincere condolences to the family of Cece Hodgson-McCauley.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.