



STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE BOUSHIE FAMILY

The Osgoode Indigenous Students Association (OISA) is deeply saddened by the miscarriage of justice that was the trial of Gerald Stanley for the shooting of Colten Boushie. We stand behind the Boushie family and encourage relations and allies to turn to one another rather than to anger in response to the racism with which Canada is faced as a result of this decision.

We also turn to the words of Cree student Leon Thompson, at University of Saskatchewan Law, for guidance, comfort, and hope:

“Before the verdict, I saw Indigenous expressions of concern, of fear posted across the internet....Now, I see waves of anger and sadness bursting from profiles of all colours. Anger in a system that doesn’t represent us equally....Lamentations of being foolish enough to believe in reconciliation....When racism rears its head, we become less willing to share, and when it grows, othering becomes reinforced on each side....[But] racism is not our default setting; it is learned. It is an enemy that steals our brothers and sisters for its own gain. It is reinforced by institutional structures we have built that do not keep pace with our evolving societal views. It is emboldened when in situations like this we allow ourselves to feed, consciously or not, on anger, sadness and fear. I will not feed my enemy. I would rather starve it with love and hope.

Colten’s death is the latest manifestation of proof of what we as nehiyaw people have endured. It is hard not to feel sadness in a case like this, to feel anger, to feel this as a death connected in a chain stretching back beyond visibility, into history. But the Cree worldview teaches that death is not a time to mourn, it is a time to celebrate the life lived. Colten did not simply live to die, he lived to dream, to hold hope for the future and what the potential of life has in store for us. These dreams are what we must carry forward, to honour his life and the ones that went before him. Hand outstretched, as scary as it may be, in the spirit in peace and friendship....To quote Mary Ellen Turpel, ‘When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty.’ It is our duty to resist.”

In Colten Boushie’s name, our jury selection process must be amended. OISA calls on our government to ensure that Indigenous victims and accused will never again have to face a jury that does not represent them. **OISA calls on our government to mandate that in criminal trials involving an Indigenous accused or victim, at least one of the jury members must be from the accused and/or victim’s nation(s).** This is what reconciliation requires. This is one important, and long-overdue step we can, and indeed must, take to honour Colten Boushie.



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OISA will continue to work to make change from within the justice system as lawyers, advocates, and students. We will continue to fight for Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island so that they may have a justice system that works for them, not against them; one that respects, supports and represents them fairly, not one which condemns them. We will work to challenge and improve the peremptory challenge process, currently laden with racial prejudice. From jury representation to law schools to the judiciary, we will work to create a justice system in which we are present and our voices are heard.

OISA wishes to encourage the Osgoode Community to stand with the Boushie family in these difficult times. We remain hopeful that together, we can achieve #JusticeforColten. We further encourage those requiring assistance processing this difficult decision, or those looking to do something about it, to reach out to leaders and other means of support. Members of OISA Council are also available for discussion.

Let us starve our enemy with love and hope.

- ON BEHALF OF OISA COUNCIL -

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