



**CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF
COOS, LOWER UMPQUA & SIUSLAW INDIANS**

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For Immediate Release

**THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF COOS, LOWER UMPQUA AND SIUSLAW
TRIBES LOSSES RESPECTED LEADER: CHIEF DONALD "DOC" SLYTER**

COOS BAY, OREGON – On Saturday November 4, 2023 after a long battle with cancer, Chief Donald “Doc” Slyter has left this world to rejoin the Creator. He passed at home surrounded by his family. His lifelong perseverance, up until the very end, would certainly make our ancestral Warriors proud. Never one to back down or admit defeat, he fought for what he believed was right. He spent nearly his entire life living on the Southern Oregon Coast. Chief Slyter was 72.

Chief Slyter served as the Chair of the Tribal Council beginning in 1984 until 1987. Later, in April 2015, he was overwhelmingly elected to the Tribal Council. He was elected for a second term in April 2019. In May 2019, he was once again elected as Chairman. He remained in office in that elected position until he decided to run and was elected in April 2020 to serve as Tribal Chief, a position in which he served until his death.

His lifetime was filled with deep dedications to the Tribe, through attending many events, networking with other Tribes up and down the west coast, hosting community members and partners and so many he called “friends” in visits to those most sacred places. He attended countless meetings with state, federal, and local agencies advocating for the restoration of lands, water, fish and wildlife, participating on various boards such as Tribe’s Gaming Facility Operational Review Board and was active with Tribal Committees, none more important to him than the Culture Committee.

Chief Slyter was married to his wife Debbie for fifty years, yet another testimony of his commitment and determination. His lifelong involvement with the Tribe gave him the opportunity to witness the passage of federal legislation in 1984 that federally recognizes the Tribes. Never content, Chief Slyter felt an obligation not only to those Tribal Members today, but also those of future generations. His presence will be missed by many. Without doubt, his Spirit will watch over all friends and family.

His mission and goals and positive influence in areas of preservation and revitalizing of all aspects of the Tribe’s culture, his ability to hand craft beautiful flutes and play, write and

share songs often, his vision for us to one day be self-sufficient and never lose sight of our sovereignty will be his legacy for generations to come.

Brad Kneaper, Chair of the Tribal Council stated, “It is with a heavy heart and expressed sadness to learn of the passing of our beloved Chief Doc Slyter. Chief was a great man, a mentor and a friend to me and many others. I have known him for nearly 20 years and since I came to work for the Tribe back in 2004, he always had a word of wisdom for me. I have enjoyed working with him and will miss the talks and interaction as he was very instrumental in our decision-making process. We did not always agree, but we always treated each other with respect and came away with a smile. My heart goes out to the family and the Tribal membership. It is never goodbye Chief, but we will see you again. For information about services for Chief Slyter, please contact the Coos Bay Chapel. Please feel free to reach out to Tribal Council during this difficult time for our Tribe.”

