

## **In memory: Patrick L. Luke “Yetatamanisht.”**

**December 7, 1962 – June 22, 2020**

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society wishes to honor the life and memory of Patrick Luke; lifelong fisherman, USMC veteran, OSU graduate, Fisheries Biologist and elected Tribal leader. Patrick was an enrolled member of the Yakama Nation, his father's lineage, his mother hailing from Nixyaawaii - the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla Tribes). Coming from a traditional fishing family, one with a relationship spanning thousands of years on the Columbia River, Patrick's education began at a young age. Patrick channeled his cultural traditions and knowledge towards a career as a fisheries biologist to protect and preserve the First Foods of his people. His academic career began as a returning student at Blue Mountain Community College, then to Oregon State University as a Ford Family Scholar, finally working on an M.S. from Evergreen State College at the time of his passing. After earning his B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from OSU, Patrick took a position with the Yakama Nation, where he was instrumental in starting their Pacific lamprey (*Asum*) conservation program. After many years of service as a biologist, Patrick was elected to the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. From his position as a council member, Patrick continued his service towards fish, traditional rights, and the big river (N'chi Wana). In 2016-17, Patrick was elected to serve as the chairman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Patrick lived a full life, grounded in the values of the River Tribes and Longhouse traditions, but was taken far too soon. We have asked several colleagues to share personal details of their time spent with Patrick, who will be remembered as someone who valued relationships with family, friends, and colleagues over everything else.

### **Guiding Us from Up Above...**

“The creator knows our heart. When the bell tolls, we raise our hands, showing great respect to honor the creator - yes we are his children living under that great law and ‘Tiichum’ (Land) were promised at the beginning of time. Strong spirits / power lives within us, all of us, including you, Ralph.” These were some of the last words that Patrick shared with me in late June, 2020, only a couple days before he passed away. In this exchange, he shared the importance of cleansing one’s spirits (i.e. praying for our hearts, our spirit, our walk in life) in a sweat lodge prior to hunting and fishing, and he explained how he was looking forward to “ramping up for summer Chinook season” on “N’chi Wana” (The Mighty River, i.e. the Columbia River), his favorite place of all... unfortunately, those words became the last ones I ever heard from him.

I worked closely with Patrick for 5 years on the Yakama Nation Pacific Lamprey Project between 2012 and 2016. He helped build this burgeoning new project from literally “zero” and truly established the foundation and backbone of this program, which continues to flourish each successive year, thanks to him and the people that he trained (myself included). We are seeing remarkable increases in Pacific Lamprey numbers within the Yakama Nation ceded lands in recent years and I sincerely hope our program is living up to his “original visions” when he helped start this program. As many of his friends and families know, Patrick had a very intimate and close relationship with Asum (Sahaptin word for Pacific Lamprey), perhaps closer and stronger than anyone else on this Tiichum (hope y’all are learning these Sahaptin words, like I did from him). I often caught him naturally talking to Asum in our hatchery holding tanks, as if

they were his “best buddies” or “family members.” As a matter of fact, they probably were, because Asum seemed to know how to talk right back to him... ☺

I know life was not always simple for him and his walk of life wasn't always easy. He had experienced many ups and downs and internal struggles over the years (and he was quite adept at hiding them or “locking them away”). However, despite these struggles, or perhaps because of it, he was kind to others surrounding him, no matter what their backgrounds were. He had great affinity and empathy to all those around him (even when that kindness was not always reciprocated). “He always greeted us with a smile and a laugh and was so positive and supportive of what we were doing – I always appreciated that about him, always such a nice guy” said a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff who often encountered him on the mainstem Columbia River. Wish there was more time... for all of us to greet Patrick once again on “N'chi Wana,” exchange a few laughs together, and glean from him the true principles of life, “Tamanwit” (natural law, “the way”), for which he had so much respect, admiration, and appreciation. I am, however, hopeful that he will continue to guide us from up above... just like those days when he was befriending and embracing our beloved Asum in the hatchery tanks; I know his big heart will always be right there (for all of us to learn from).

Ralph Lampman

Yakama Nation Fisheries Resource Management Program, Pacific Lamprey Project

[lamr@yakamafish-nsn.gov](mailto:lamr@yakamafish-nsn.gov)

## **Happiness**

I spent a fair amount of time reflecting on what to say about Patrick Luke, but my thoughts kept returning to one thing; there was never a time I interacted with him where it wasn't an uplifting experience. Honestly.

I first met Patrick years ago as his teacher, and we had numerous opportunities to chat and be together since that time, first when he was still at OSU and subsequently as colleagues. But why did he make me happy? I guess first and foremost was the fact that he struck me as a genuinely nice, good person. We had many chats about resources, primarily centering on lamprey of course. We also chatted about things social, the current happenings both locally and nationally. We saw eye to eye on these, but what was particularly uplifting was that Patrick was always positive. While these sorts of topics can lead to discussions that are downers, they never were with Patrick. In addition, it was obvious that Patrick cared. He wanted to make a difference, and he did.

Carl Schreck

Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University

## **Learning from Patrick Luke**

Patrick was a student in one of the first course offerings I gave at Oregon State University – FW 473 Fish Ecology. Notice that I did not described my role as “teaching” the course.

Schools and universities are rightly designated as institutions of learning, and I have always

approached my course offerings with the view that I should learn at least as much as the students. If you want to learn something, prepare to teach it to others.

Patrick was one of the best learning opportunities I've had in my courses at Oregon State University. He was honest, determined, dedicated and committed to the task at hand. He did not hesitate to take on any task or assignment, no matter how complicated or difficult. He did not hesitate to acknowledge that he did not understand something, and that he could not see how to make progress on the matter at hand. But he never gave up on anything or anyone. He was patient, persistent and polite – a remarkable combination. Nothing was too big a challenge for Patrick. He was never satisfied with giving less than his best. He was honest, never hesitated to admit that he did not understand something and was never satisfied until he really understood both the problem and the answer. Nothing intimidated Patrick; he was ready to take on any challenge and see it through to the successful conclusion. I never once heard Patrick complain about anything, although he had many more opportunities and reasons to complain than anyone.

Patrick was completely open and honest in everything he did. He was more mature than the others in the course, in every sense of the word mature. Chronological age is just an inevitability, intellectual and personal maturity is an accomplishment. He had vastly more life experiences than others. His personal background was infinitely more complex and complicated. He had complete respect for others and was ready to give anything he could to help in any way. Patrick introduced us to our first West Coast tribal Pow-Wow, held in the McAlexander Field House at Oregon State. It was an incredible experience for us, highlighted by the enormous personal pride and involvement of Patrick in the activities. It was an amazing opportunity for us to learn about the diversity and richness of the Northwest tribal peoples. That was clearly a fundamental personal strength for Patrick.

Following his graduation Patrick took every opportunity to stay in touch with us at Oregon State, both individually and collectively. He devoted incredible effort and endless time to the conservation and restoration of lampreys in the Pacific Northwest. He brought the best available science to the most important conservation concerns of his tribal people. He was responsible as part of the team that sought new and innovative ways to restore lampreys to their native habitat. Quite deservedly that effort was highlighted in the feature production, “The Lost Fish” by Freshwaters Illustrated. Patrick was recognized by his colleagues when he was appointed as the Chair of the Columbia River Intertribal Fisheries Commission in 2016 in recognition for his lifetime of dedication to the River, the fishes and the people.

Patrick helped us all to learn.

David L. G. Noakes

Fisheries & Wildlife Department, Oregon State University and Oregon Hatchery Research Center

[david.noakes@oregonstate.edu](mailto:david.noakes@oregonstate.edu)