



City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

Seattle Human Rights Commission

Roslyn Solomon, Chair

September 3, 2010

John Diaz, Chief of Police
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Re: **Fatal Shooting of Native American carver John T. Williams**

Dear Chief Diaz:

The Seattle Human Rights Commission is writing you to express our serious concern regarding the fatal shooting of John T. Williams on August 31, 2010, by Officer Ian Birk.

John T. Williams, a Native American carver, was a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations and a regular member of the Chief Seattle Club, a downtown center that provides services to homeless Native Americans. Mr. Williams and his family are well-known artists in the Native American community. Regardless of his economic, physical, or emotional condition, it is a tragedy that John Williams' life ended in such a violent manner.

Mr. Williams' death has had a great impact on Seattle's large Native American community as well as the City's homeless and people with disabilities communities. As the Department's Firearms Review Board and the Office of Professional Accountability conduct a thorough review of the incident, the Commission urges you to provide the Native American, people with disabilities, and homeless communities with as many facts and answers as quickly as possible.

SPD has the responsibility to treat all citizens with fairness, respect and value. Please bear in mind that many in the Native community believe that is not an isolated incident. We understand that you are committed to accountability, de-escalation in the use of force, improving relationships with the minority communities in Seattle, and transparency in the review of police actions within SPD.

We would like to offer you assistance, should you wish, with the facilitation of meetings between SPD and the Native American, people with disabilities, and homeless communities in furtherance of a constructive and meaningful dialogue. And please keep us informed of the results of your investigations.



Seattle Human Rights Commission

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roslyn Solomon".

Roslyn Solomon, Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Stearns".

Chris Stearns (Navajo), Vice-Chair

Cc: Mayor Mike McGinn
Councilman Tim Burgess, Chair, Public Safety & Education Committee
Councilman Bruce Harrell, Chair, Energy, Technology, & Civil Rights Committee
Peter Holmes, City Attorney
Darryl Smith, Deputy Mayor of Community
Julie Nelson, Director, Office for Civil Rights
Felicia Yearwood-Murrell, Seattle Office for Civil Rights
Arthur Shwab, Chair, Public Safety Task Force, Seattle Human Rights Commission
Jesse Aspuria, Chair, Homelessness Task Force, Seattle Human Rights Commission
Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities