



Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

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STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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Miami, FL: On January 6, 2015, sadly the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida lost a legend, a leader, a revered Tribal Elder and a loved one, the Honorable Chairman William Buffalo Tiger; the first Chairman of our Tribe. Chairman Tiger leaves a legacy of leadership, political, social, and civic activism that would be greatly missed.

Born on a hammock in the Everglades on March 6, 1920, we honor him for shaping our world and establishing a strong foundation for the current and future generations to lead their lives with a sense of independence, unwavering determination to be self-sufficient and reverence for traditions.

As the pages of our history books record, he crafted the pathway to establish our legal recognition and our tribal sovereignty, and nation status with the United States Government; his efforts led to the enactment of our Constitution and Bylaws on January 11, 1962. As leader of the Miccosukee Tribe, Buffalo Tiger won countless battles to ensure the survival, preservation, and progress of the Miccosukee People. He fought his entire life to keep the Miccosukee Tribe and its people in harmony with their beloved home – the Everglades – by always protecting and defending the environment and its natural resources.

As our first Chairman from 1962 to 1985, Buffalo Tiger along with Tribal members built and developed our initial infrastructure and expanded our Miccosukee Reservation. His influence in the Native American Community extended beyond the borders of our sovereign nation. In his capacity as tribal leader, among his many achievements was the instrumental role, which he performed to establish the United Southeastern Tribes in which he served as its first Vice-President. This organization, today known as United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., has grown to include more than 26 federally-recognized Indian Tribes that effectively represents all areas and issues affecting Indian Country.

Throughout his life, Chairman Tiger epitomized the ideals that you should fight for what you believe, speak when others are afraid, lead when many others only follow, love your family, embrace your culture and respect nature. He summarized these ideals in these simple yet profound words,

"You have to know where you came from to know where you are going."

We were blessed to have him in our lives and in our world. We shall continue to honor his vision of nation-building, unity, and preservation of our culture, traditions and identity.

The Service will be held at 10:00 am on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at Woodlawn Park Cemetery South, 11655 SW 177th Avenue, Miami, FL 33186.