



Council of Yukon
First Nations




Yukon

Eagle Feathers unveiled for use in Yukon courtrooms

FOR RELEASE

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

A ceremony took place yesterday to mark the unveiling of a set of eagle feathers to be used in Yukon courtrooms as part of a series of initiatives aimed at making the law courts more culturally-inclusive for Yukon First Nations and Indigenous Peoples.

The initiative is the result of a joint effort between the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon and judiciary representing both the Supreme Court of Yukon and the Territorial Court of Yukon.

The collaboration includes a public display of Yukon First Nations art and land acknowledgement signage in the Law Courts building. Unveiling of the artwork and signage will take place at a later date.

A total of 10 eagle feathers were unveiled and will now be available for use in courtrooms in Whitehorse, Watson Lake, Dawson City and during circuit courts in rural Yukon communities. The feathers may be used to swear oaths in court and are a means of acknowledging and incorporating Yukon First Nations culture within the mainstream justice system, as well as bringing respect and awareness to Yukon First Nations culture within the building.

Quote:

“CYFN is pleased to be part of this collaborative effort to ensure that Yukon First Nations culture is reflected in the judicial process. It’s through projects like this that acknowledge and increase Yukon First Nations presence that move us towards reconciliation and defining a better way forward for everyone.”

- CYFN Grand Chief Peter Johnston

“For generations, court rooms across the country have acknowledged colonial traditions and willfully ignored the significance of First Nations cultures, practices and beliefs in Canada. By ensuring that witnesses have the cultural means to swear or affirm their oaths with eagle feathers, our territory is taking an incredibly significant and important step in acknowledging and respecting Yukon First Nations and advancing reconciliation. As we look at practices within our institutions, and their colonial history, we need to work together to make them more inclusive and reflective of the people they serve.

- Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee

The introduction of eagle feathers for use by Yukon First Nations people in the courts is another step towards putting reconciliation into action. It signifies respect for Indigenous culture and beliefs, and recognizes the need to make our justice system more inclusive and culturally appropriate for Yukon First Nations people

- Chief Justice Suzanne M. Duncan (Supreme Court of Yukon)
- and Chief Judge Michael Cozens (Territorial Court of Yukon)

Article teaser and social media:

Eagle feathers to be used in Yukon courtrooms as part of a series of initiatives aimed at making the experience of attending court more culturally-inclusive for Yukon First Nations

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Photo:



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Caption: Eagle feathers prepared by Elder Randal Tetlich