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For Immediate Release

## **Nunatsiavut mourns passing of first elected President, Jim Lyall**

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe today, on behalf of Beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, extended his heart-felt condolences to the family and friends of former Nunatsiavut President and Minister, Jim Lyall, who passed away this morning.

“Today we lost a great leader – a man who has contributed tremendously over the years in advancing rights, issues and concerns of all Labrador Inuit,” says President Lampe. “His determination, strong will, and desire to invoke positive change for the benefit of Nunatsiavut, and his adopted community of Nain, will certainly not go unnoticed. One always knew exactly where Jim stood on issues that were important to Labrador Inuit. He was someone on whom you could depend on to keep things in perspective. Above all, he was a devoted husband and father, and a good friend to many. I will miss him greatly.”

Born in Nutak in northern Labrador in 1945, Jim and his family were forced to move, against their will, south to Nain when he was 11 years old, as part of the provincial government’s resettlement program.

He began his formal education in Nain before attending the residential school in North West River. He completed high school in St. John’s, and upon graduation returned to northern Labrador where he began working for the provincial government stores. He would work for the stores for 15 years in the Inuit communities of Nain, Postville and Hopedale and the Innu communities of Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu.

From 1977 to 1981, Mr. Lyall was employed as the Executive Director of the Labrador Inuit Association, before assuming the role as Postmaster for Canada Post in Nain – a position he held for seven years.

Mr. Lyall successfully operated a restaurant and takeout in Nain for nearly two decades, and in 2002 he once again began working as the Executive Director of the Labrador Inuit Association. He would continue in that position until the Nunatsiavut Government was formed in December 2005. Under the new government, Mr. Lyall took on the position of Budget Analyst.

He was a Justice of the Peace and an active member of his community. In 1998, he was appointed to the North Coast Transportation Committee, and in 2006 was appointed to the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Labrador Transportation.

No stranger to the political arena, Mr. Lyall served two terms as the mayor of Nain and one term as a town councilor. In 2008, he was successful in becoming the first elected President of Nunatsiavut – a position he held until 2012.

In May of 2017, Mr. Lyall was acclaimed as an Ordinary Member for the Constituency of Nain when no other candidates came forward to run in a byelection after the seat had been vacated. He was elected to the position a year later and served as Minister of Language, Culture and Tourism until his passing.

Mr. Lyall passed away just hours after his wife, Jean, at the Labrador Health Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

“I know there are no words that will take away the sorrow and pain that the family is going through during this difficult time,” says President Lampe. “Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you all.”

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