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For Immediate Release

## **Nunatsiavut mourns loss of former LIA President, respected leader**

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe today extended his heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of former Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) President and Ordinary Member for Nain, William Barbour, who passed away at his home yesterday.

“William was very passionate about protecting Inuit rights, including those to lands and resources, and in promoting and preserving our language, customs and traditions. He always put the rights of Labrador Inuit ahead of all things.” says President Lampe. “During the course of his career, as an elected official and as public servant, William’s intelligence, integrity, sense of humour and humility earned him much respect in the Inuit circumpolar world as well as with his own people.”

Born in Nain in 1959, Mr. Barbour grew up as a hunter and fisherman with his father and other elders. He was sent away from Nain to go to residential school in North West River when he was 14 years old before attending Grenfell College in Corner Brook, NL to continue his studies.

He spent many years working with LIA, including serving as Special Assistant to the President. He also worked as a Wildlife Technician, where he was instrumental in developing a project that used Western science to collar polar bears in northern Labrador to prove the existence of denning bears in the region – something that Inuit already knew. Using science to confirm Inuit Knowledge resulted in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to lifting the prohibition on the hunting of polar bears by Inuit. He had a measured and insightful way of solving problems.

Mr. Barbour was elected as President of the LIA in 1994. During his nine-year tenure, he was integral in the completion and signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement-in-Principle, which led to a final Agreement. He was instrumental during the negotiation of the Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA) between the LIA and the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Company. This IBA is now being used as a model for Indigenous partnerships across North America and other parts of the world.

Following his term as LIA president, Mr. Barbour continued to work for Inuit and was elected to the first Nunatsiavut Assembly as an Ordinary Member for Nain. He was subsequently appointed as the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, a position he held until the spring of 2009. He was re-elected in May 2010 for another four-year term. In 2014 he was hired to work as an interpreter/translator for the Nunatsiavut Government.

“William has left a mark, not only on the history of Labrador Inuit but on those whose were fortunate enough to have known him and to have worked with him. He will be fondly remembered,” says President Lampe.

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