



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Joseph Gosnell Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. Chancellor, every so often a leader comes to the fore who by virtue of intelligence and integrity guides others along a difficult path to their desired destination. Chief Joseph Gosnell Sr. is such a leader. A man of reason and courage, of wisdom and grace, he has inspired all who believe in honour, truth, and fairness.

At the Nisga'a Treaty Initialing Ceremony in the British Columbia legislature, he spoke the following words: "This ceremony is a triumph for the Nisga'a people, the people of British Columbia and the people of Canada. Today, we make history as we correct the mistakes of the past and send a signal of hope around the world."

These words encapsulate the philosophy by which he has lived his life, a philosophy of inclusion, hope, and justice. The day on which he spoke them saw the culmination of a decades-long struggle by the Nisga'a people to have a grievous wrong redressed. And for Joseph Gosnell, their Chief Negotiator, it was the pinnacle of more than a quarter century of representing the will of the Nisga'a Nation.

As the Nisga'a Nation's Chief Negotiator during the final years of treaty negotiations, he unfailingly displayed great generosity of spirit, often in the face of adversity. In doing so, he distinguished himself and set an example for others. For his unwavering dedication to the cause of the Nisga'a people, Joseph Gosnell was recognized in 1999 with the Order of British Columbia, our province's highest honour, and honorary doctorate degrees from Royal Roads University and the Open University. That same year, the Canadian Labour Congress presented him with its Humanitarian Award.

Joseph Gosnell was born in the village of New Aiyansh in the northwest corner of British Columbia. As a young man he worked as a commercial fisherman before entering tribal politics. He rose to stand on the world stage and earn our respect, gratitude, and affection. He has pursued his people's goals with patience and tenacity. With the ratification of the Nisga'a Treaty by the Parliament of Canada, the Nisga'a people and Chief Joseph Gosnell have secured their place in Canadian history. Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this University, I ask that you confer upon Chief Joseph Gosnell Sr. the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris carisa*.