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IN THE NOOKSACK TRIBAL COURT
NOOKSACK INDIAN TRIBE
DEMMING, WASHINGTON

NO.: 2014-CI-CL-004

GEORGE ADAMS

Plaintiff,

v.

KATHERINE CANETE, DONIA EDWARDS,

and SUZANNE BROWNRIGG, in their

official capacities, as agents of the

NOOKSACK INDIAN TRIBE

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF GEORGE ADAMS

I, George Adams, declare:

1. I am over the age of eighteen and otherwise competent to testify.

2. My name is George Adams.

3. *Yálmalh t'ówa syo7wán7 ay níchim mé17 ó7wa qeyxáahas í7lh ta-n Lhéchalosem.*

'Syélpxen' kwe-n stí7ixw-ólh sná7. Qetl' ó7sí7lhsma toli7 Noxwkw' ó17oxwey7-ólh-chan

í7lh ta Noxwsá7aq Temixw-ólh. Qayslhiyáno t'ówa í7lh-chan kw ay scho7wátas tlya

asláq' alhs-ólh-chalh qe í7ma stí7ti7ixw-ólh-chalh. Tl' ó7l7lh kwe-n tse7ítas ay t' ónoxwas

tol7yestí7ixw-ólh. (Translation: "At this time it is important that I start by speaking

just a few words in my Nooksack Language. My ancestral name is 'Syélpxen.' And that

I am also a direct decedent from the Kendall Creek Village within the traditional

Nooksack Territories. Furthermore, I declare that I am competent in the knowledge of our

1 oral traditions and our native ways. This is the truthful teachings from my late elders.”)

2 4. Most all of my life, my residencies have been in Nooksack Territory located in the
3 the Whatcom County area.

4 5. My *oral tradition teachers* were my grandparents and other elders from Coast Salish
5 (CS) tribes, i.e., Nooksack, Lummi, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Swinomish, Saanich,
6 Cowichen, Chilliwack, Malahat, Musqueum, Clallum tribes to name a few.

7 6. My *formal education* stemmed from receiving a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education
8 at Western Washington University in 1974. From there, I taught at both public and tribal
9 schools and at the Nooksack after school program in grades pre-K-12, which also
10 included adults.

11 7. My work has been filled with great colleagues throughout the years, and more recently
12 Mr. Allan Richardson, Anthropologist, Nooksack Place Names work (AR 2011), and Dr.
13 Brent Galloway, Linguist, for the Nooksack dictionary (BG, GA 2013), who also did a
14 body of work on other Central Coast Salish dialects.

15 8. I have working knowledge of the three (3) main Coast Salish (CS) dialects, including
16 *Lekw'éngeṅ*, *Helq'eméylem* and *Leshútsid* and I have assisted many CS tribes in language
17 Curriculum. Because of my knowledge, I am respected by many native CS language
18 teachers, cultural leaders and tribal leaders from the many CS tribes.

19 9. In September 2012, I was hired by the Nooksack Indian Tribe (NIT) as the Lhéchalosem
20 Language/Culture Preservation Teacher under the Bill & Melinda Gates
21 Foundation Lhéchalosem Language Grant. My name, education, credentials and
22 experience were utilized by the NIT to obtain and implement this grant and to complete
23 the project.

- 1 10. On March 12, 2014, Katherine Canete, General Manager of the Nooksack Indian Tribe
2 (NIT), terminated me from my position at will as the Lhéchalosem Language/Culture
3 Preservation Teacher, effective immediately.
- 4 11. On March 17, 2014, I submitted a written request required by the NIT Personnel Manual
5 Policy to Suzanne Brownrigg, Human Resources Director within three (3) working
6 days from the date I was terminated. I stated the reasons I felt the termination
7 violated the policy.
- 8 12. On March 18, 2014, Donia Edwards, NIT Education Director upheld my termination. I
9 contacted Ms. Edwards, who was my direct supervisor, to ask her if maybe the funds
10 from the Bill & Malinda Gates Foundation ran out. She informed me the funds were still
11 available. I do not understand why I was terminated.
- 12 13. I believe on or about March 19, 2014, my position was filled by Loren Roberts, who I
13 believe lacks the minimum job qualifications of the job I was terminated from. This is a
14 violation of the NIT's Indian Preference policy because I was removed from this position
15 while possessing the maximum job qualifications.
- 16 14. On March 27, 2014, Millie A. Kennedy, who is an Attorney I sought from the
17 Northwest Justice Project to help me in regard to my termination, contacted Suzanne
18 Brownrigg, NIT Human Resources Director, to request the NIT Personnel Manual Policy.
19 Ms. Brownrigg informed Ms. Kennedy that she mailed me a letter by certified mail with
20 a return receipt on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 that included a written response to my
21 March 17, 2014 letter. Ms. Brownrigg also informed Ms. Kennedy that I was in Stage 2
22 of my grievance process and that my timeframe ended on that same day. This was
23 confusing to me given all the working days outlined in the Grievance Process.

- 1 15. On March 27, 2014, I was instructed by Ms. Kennedy to urgently submit to Ms.
2 Brownrigg my request to convene a Grievance Review Board Hearing regarding my
3 termination. I went to the NIT Human Resources Department to submit my request.
4 Ms. Brownrigg accepted it without informing me that I had failed to meet a 5 day
5 timeframe.
- 6 16. On March 31, 2014, I received a letter from Ms. Brownrigg stating that because I failed
7 to meet the 5 day timeframe allowed to request Stage 2, my grievance was hereby
8 considered closed.
- 9 17. I was removed as Lhéchalosem Language/Culture Preservation Teacher without the
10 due process guaranteed by the NIT Constitution, the Indian Civil Rights Act, and the
11 Personnel Manual Policy, and in violation of the Indian Preference Policy without any
12 respect or concern for our NIT Tradition and Custom that includes oral traditions. Oral
13 traditions allow for fairness in the dispute of resolutions with appropriate elders of our
14 Tribe.
- 15 18. I do not believe I was terminated from my position under the guise of "at-will" but rather
16 for my belief that the disenrollment of other NIT Tribal Members is unfair and for
17 exercising my fundamental liberty right to free speech on this issue. I also believe I was
18 terminated for exercising my right to be a candidate to run for office under Article IV of
19 the NIT Constitution.

20 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that the
21 foregoing statement is true and correct.
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Signed at Bellingham, Washington this 2nd day of May, 2014.


George Adams

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