



Tina Marie Lawrence

April 23, 1956 - September 9, 2023

Tina Marie Lawrence " Dahd-za-lahk" was born on April 23, 1956. She was a lifelong member of the Lummi Nation and lived a humble life serving our people. Tina passed away peacefully on September 9, 2023, surrounded by those she loved.

Tina is preceded in death by her husband, Frank Lawrence Jr. Her parents, Herman Olsen Sr. and Eva (Bob) Olsen. Her siblings, Wendy Cagey, Ray Olsen, Howard Olsen, Herman Olsen Jr., and Michael Skates. She is also preceded in death by her grandchild, Landry Lawrence Jr.

Tina is survived by her children: Herman Lawrence and his wife Heidi; Tremaine Lawrence and his mate, Lexie; Charmaine Lawrence. Frank Lawrence and his mate Anna and Darius Lawrence and his mate Jolee. She leaves behind her siblings: Sandra Washington, Jill Charlie, Adrienne Hunter, Frank Olson, Maryann Olsen, and Ronnie Skates. Acknowledging the love and bond she also had with her late husband's siblings, she leaves behind Rita, Pete, Robert, Mark, Helen, John, and Paul Lawrence. A grandmother of 15, she leaves behind Daeshawn, Buddy, Sidney, Lillian, Herman Jr., Devin, Raeshawn, Aaron, Cecilia, Tre, Jeremy, Silas, Sean and Troy. She is also survived by nine (9) great-grandchildren: Alaya, Mayonie, Cora Lee, Josiah, Zackariah, Shairose, Karson, Paetyn, and Amiyah. And like most of the prominent families in our community, she leaves behind numerous nieces,

nephews, friends, and relatives.

Tina Marie Lawrence, there are many things we can say and share. Still, what genuinely came to mind when I heard the family speak about memories was their overwhelming gratitude; Tina was the kindest and most humble person who ever shared a foot in our path. And, of course, that sounds like something cliché when we speak of someone who is no longer here. We often say hyperbolic or embellished things about those who have passed. Especially when that someone is a respected elder, mother, sister, grandmother, and Matriarch, the pulse that kept the family together; YET, when we describe Tina and how she touched the lives of many, we can't help but express her as humble, selfless, kind and nurturing ~ someone who at times, had a strict approach; strict with those Old teachings of respect, loyalty, hard work and a commitment to values taught.

Understand that few people on this Earth possessed the type of selflessness Tina did. In these modern times, it's rare to find someone like her – someone so genuine – Someone who never took a single breath for granted, nor did they expect to be given or to take what was not theirs; a humble woman destined to make an impact on our people by foundationally exhibiting the traits and values she commanded from us.

Frank Lawrence Jr. must have fallen in love with Tina for these qualities. From a young age and when there was an unspoken rule, marriage was intended to last forever; Frank and Tina partnered in this life by sharing 35-plus years. I know firsthand Frank loved his wife.

I never shared this story with my brother-in-law, Tremaine, but there was a day I walked to the Lummi Health Clinic in the early 1990s when his father greeted me. We made eye contact, and he walked toward me, smiling and inspired and describing a piece of artwork he'd created. Frank was a talented

artist, and on this particular day, he used his passion for art to express his love for his wife, Tina. That day, as I chatted with Frank, he folded up a piece of red paper, using a dull pair of scissors to cut out chunks of paper in various sizes. As an impatient young girl, and at that moment, I thought to myself, I should have entered the back door, or I should have slipped by Tina's husband, not acknowledging his eagerness to share. But thankfully, I did not. Because what I learned that day was how simple love can be. Right before my eyes and in a matter of a few minutes, he miraculously, somewhat like a superhuman artist, created this perfect red heart with Coast Salish design. I was in awe! And what he said to me next was perfect! He smiled, held up that red heart for all to see, dimples in cheek, and looking me in the eye, he said, "I am going to give this red heart to my wife. Marriage is hard, young lady, but with a simple piece of artwork and a moment of my time, she will know how much I thought of her today." How perfect and lucky I thought she was ~ 35-plus years, and a simple gesture of time – that held the partnership together – through the most challenging times. Since 2008, Tina has waited patiently to be reunited with her husband. And although leaving this Earth creates complex emotions, because heavy grief means deep love, I can't help but picture, after 15 years of grieving her husband, the beautiful Red Heart that is waiting for her today.

Tina spent her life dedicated to our Nation's children: her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, foster children, and through advocacy, the many children she served in her lifetime career of working for Indian Child Welfare, ICW, and the Lummi Daycare, retiring from ICW as recently as 2018. You see, as a caretaker, a woman of solid family values, knowing she was the pole that held up the home, she selflessly fostered and took care of many children, not biologically hers; Auggie, Pricilla, and Frank became hers, as did many others. She was the Auntie who put aside judgment and opened her home to children in need, with a heart driven by service and loyalty bound by an Old way of thinking, "We are never alone! And when we don't have

anything to give, we give a little more!” ~ That was Tina’s way of serving, acknowledging, and accepting her role as caregiver to her own and that which the Creator called upon her to do.

Tina, you showed us how to pay attention to the simple joys of life, teachings that shined through your love of pulling canoe on the Lone Wolf and Red Wing – alongside your sisters, Ronnie, Adriene, and Wendy. Teachings and values embedded within believing in the Spirit, the power of the Winter season, and the healing that came with Summer round drum and stick game celebrations. It will be these things your children remember. Siblings being loaded up in a car, exempt from seat belt laws, bread and bologna sandwiches, and a destination untold. You taught happiness doesn’t have to be an obscure concept but can be found in the everyday routine of family and time together or found when knitting a sweater, crocheting a blanket, and sharing a moment inside the house of healing as the fire-warmed those around it. Your legacy taught the importance of being present; cheering fiercely on the sideline of a Lummi Blackhawk game for your grandchildren is where you found pride. You taught sacrifice and bonds are created from hard times, empathy, togetherness, kindness, and forgiveness. Through your grit, compassion, persistence against hardship, and commitment to your family, you laid the stable foundations for your descendants by cultivating a strong sense of self-responsibility, a belief in the Spirit, and a lived understanding of hard work, all of which became the foundation of the family you leave behind, The Legacy.

In closing, remember the actions of Tina. And you, too, can be family to those who don’t have the ones they should, through kinship, caretaking, or a life committed to children – you too can show the simple act of love. Take a moment to think, “Where would we be without her?” You know, it is a good life when we can look back and understand our lives left sprinkles and remnants of kindness, goodwill towards others, and memories of a melted birthday cake with 60 inflamed candles.

To her children, Hy'shqe for the many sacrifices you've made over the years, so we could have a piece of your mother too. May your mother's gifts, acts of faith and service our People, never be in vain.

You Can Only Have One Mother

You can only have one mother

Patient kind and true;

No other friend in all the world,

Will be the same to you.

When other friends forsake you,

To mother you will return,

For all her loving kindness,

She asks nothing in return.

As we look upon her picture,

Sweet memories we recall,

Of a face so full of sunshine,

And a smile for one and all.

Sweet Jesus, take this message,

To our dear mother up above;

Tell her how we miss her,

And give her all our love.

Tribute Wall

EM

“ So sorry to hear about my friend of many years! back to days of our teen years. Heartfelt condolences to her children and grandchildren. She will be missed.

Elaine Malloway - September 19, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ Going to love n miss you more! So sorry we didnt get to connect! I remember you as a humble loving and caring person so gentle.

Alesha Rodriguez - September 13, 2023 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Rest In Peace girlfriend, we had some great times visiting drinking coffee and eating muffins. I will miss your sweet kindness.

Cathy Ballew - September 13, 2023 at 12:00 AM