



## Wendell "Son" Noel Martin, Jr.

June 25, 1983 - November 17, 2020

Wendell Noel Martin Jr "Ti-o-whel-ten" was born June 25, 1983 to Wendell Martin Sr. and Rosanna Martin of the Lummi Nation. Wendell Jr. passed away suddenly on, November 17, 2020. Wendell Jr. is preceded in death by his baby brother, Noah Joseph Martin. His Grandparents; Roy "Henry" Martin, Mary Martin and Willie Jones Sr. His uncles; Roy Martin Jr., Dean Martin, Jay Martin, Mark Martin. His aunts; Evelyn Karleen Jones and Julie Finkbonner and his brother in law; Ryan Landon Finkbonner. He is survived by his parents; Wendell Sr. and Rosanna. His mate of 20 years, Natasha. His children; Landon and Ziva. His sisters, Leanne and Tim Ballew Jr. and their children – Hunter and Tandy. Melissa and Joe Pantalia and their children – Serena, Jo-Jo and Willah. Akasha and Jeff James and their children – Jeffrey and Eleanor. And his baby sister; Jaydalee and her mate Noah Toby. He also leaves behind the most amazing In-Laws; Bernie and Raydean Finkbonner. They loved him, accepted him and welcomed him into their home where he spent his entire adult life with his wife and children – "Hy'shqe, Finkbonner Family – Our hands to out to you for loving, accepting and caring him. He is also survived by many other loving family members; William and Regina Jones, Julie and Delfred Jefferson Jr., Colleen and David James, Marcella "Sissy" Martin, Margaret Martin and Carmen and Tim Solomon – His grandmother – Josephine "Josie" Jones. And he also leaves behind numerous friends, cousins and relatives.... The lives he touched is endless! And, we can't forget about the entire fleet he leaves. A fleet of boat owners that worked

alongside the “Jayda Lee CrewYou!” You know, it is with great hardship, love and gratitude that I stand in honor before our fisherman today – that unwritten cultural bond you share amongst each other is invaluable. There are no words to express the amount of hurt and sadness that his “fleet family” is feeling today. One less brother to radio, one less brother to compare a catch. One less brother to share a tall tale and most importantly one less son alongside his fisherman father. It will be his brothers that are bound by the currents – the ones that road alongside him on our ever so healing Salish Sea that find an incredible sense of hurt today. We need to remember our fisherman as well!

These pandemic times and health restrictions test our cultural teachings. They push our boundaries and broaden our outlook on what is really important, our health and our family. So, as we safely gathered this week and reminisced we were reminded ... how protective, kind-hearted, humble, hardworking and mischievous he was! As I sat and listened to the stories shared by his wife, children, parents, sisters and family I am content knowing, we’ve learned much from him. We laughed and shared stories of his LadyRose buckskin years. The times he would challenge his Chehalis buckskin peers to an “All American” game of basketball. Where on that Canadian style basketball court, he’d display those natural athletic talents. He had a shot that matched that of his Grandpa Willie! You know, one of those styles that looked as though there was no hope of making it through the net, but it did magically each time –REPEATEDLY... And although, he may not of had the stature of an NBA star -he could without hesitation, gracefully make basket after basket. And on this particular day, when he was challenged to a game of basketball by his Chehalis friends.... He laughed as they left upset after getting beat by the boy whom shot with one had while holding up his gangster style blue jeans with the other. And as they stomped off the court yelling, “Let’s go play SOCCER THEN!” – He laughed, gather his Ladyrose buckskin family and wonder over to the soccer field to beat them at that game too! There are many crazy things that happen amongst our Buckskin kids. They grow up bonded. They develop a sense of loyalty where bonds and

certain traditions are kept amongst them. They don't tell the adults everything that happens off the water and in between those races. I can verify this! My sister, Karlie whom sat stroke in front of Lil Wendell for many of those championship years – I asked her, "Do you have any stories you'd like to share in the Eulogy about you guys' and the Ladyrose buckskin years? She looked at me as if I had asked her to chop off her left arm and replied, "Nope! I am taking those things to the grave!" I'd really hoped to highlight many of the crazy times he shared with his Buckskin family off the water, but Lil' Wendell apparently there is an unspoken rule and you are safe for now! What I can share with you about his Buckskin years is that he trained hard! He worked hard. He carried on a tradition passed down by his great grandpa Earl. His Uncle William was his skipper. And for the longest time, his Uncle couldn't figure out why Lil' Wendell was always exited, rain or shine to "Tow The Bucket" On certain days, he'd always arrive at the Stommish grounds with his hair spiked up and gelled back! Looking like the "cool-kid" as his classroom teachers often referred to him as! It puzzled his Uncle cause, towing the bucket was hard work. It required a strong mind. Most kids dreaded that sort of training, but not Wendell. He look forward to that day! For on those days, he displayed his best! What the crew and his Uncle didn't know was his effort, attitude and work ethic was intended to catch the eye of Tasha! As the LadyRose Buckskins paddled and trained, towing the bucket towards fisherman's cove. What Uncle William didn't know was, the two girls in the dingy that paddled off shore daily to catch the path of the LadyRose- and the eye of the boy that sat second was Tasha and Marche! And for those of you that know, in June of 2000 is where the love story began – with a gelled up buckskin boy and a girl in a dingy that stole his heart! Tasha, from that time forward, you were all he needed! You became his rock! His foundation and his reason! Although things may not make sense right now and may be a bit blurry and unreal I pray you find faith and strength is the 20 years you shared together. Growing up with your best friend and lover is something most of us

never get to experience, but you did. You gave each other the truest partnership. You understood each other. You had each other's back no matter what! You truly supported each other and that was apparent! But most importantly through those years both good and bad and through the trial and tribulations, you created the two most beautiful children! Landon, was his namesake and his mini me! He's the boy, with a smile and a glistening of an eye could get just about anything he wanted from his dad! And Ziva, the "Little Lady of his Life"... the one that could get her daddy down on the floor to play dolls and dress up – The beautiful brown eye girl, that he help create quickly earned her daddy's heart! – SO MUCH that Wendell Jr. would lay patiently while Ziva would use a whole bottle of lotion when giving her daddy a hard earned back rub! – THOSE were the things he loved doing for his "Little Lady" and "Mini Me!" Tasha, always remember he loved you three very much! Wendell Sr. told stories of his sons early years. The one where his father caught him and Matt doing "adventurous and silly teenager" things in the backyard shed. You know, when it is obvious and smoke is seeping out the windows. Uncle Wendell wasn't sure what they were thinking! What they should have known was, Uncle Wendell sure as Hell knows the difference between the two smells – potpourri and... Skunk! Wendell Sr. also recalled the time his Son went hunting by himself for the first time. He was about 11. Uncle Wendell sat him down and gave him that "fatherly talk about being safe" After the teaching, Wendell Jr. beamed with excitement with his father's gun in hand and waders pulled up to his hip! He walked down towards Hillaire Rd in hopes of gathering ducks for the family. He left confident and proud to be independently following in his father's footsteps! As the night came his parents began to worry! He was gone for hours. Knowing, Wendell Jr. he probably didn't want to come home empty handed. Trying not to worry too much, his parents waited patiently at home. Soon, Little Wendell came barreling in the front door!!!! "DAD!" he yelled with excitement while holding up his catch for the day! "DAD!!! Look what I shot! What is this? Can we eat it?" Uncle Wendell smiled got up from the couch, gave his son a pat on the back. He walked

toward him while shaking his head said, "Son! You are not supposed to shoot things like that! You are not supposed to shoot those! WE don't eat CRANES!" – His parents laughed and without bursting their son's prideful bubble his dad quickly explained the meaning of an "Endangered Species" – Just in case! Being raised in a home with 4 sisters gives a man a certain sense of how dramatic and demanding women can often be, but that didn't faze Son. For Wendell Jr., he took on the role of "protector" at an early age. He chased off any boyfriends he didn't approve. Which made it difficult for his sisters sometimes. He most certainly didn't care if he knew them CAUSE as the Protector his role was making sure the men that stood next to his sisters were individuals that replicated the characteristics of their dad! So, Tim, Jeff, Joe and Noah – consider yourself lucky! The sister's protector has endorsed the love you have for his sisters. On his behalf and in his absence continue to take care of them. Wendell Jr. taught his sisters to fish and crab. When prompted they each accepted the challenge made by their brother. They journeyed out on the treacherous waters of the Salish Sea to learn those skills passed down by their father, to their brother and now them. They felt safe knowing their dad trained him well. You see, Wendell Sr., spent many years with his son on the water. He taught his son everything he knew. At an early age, Wendell Sr. took Lil' Wendell out on his gill net! Rosanna knew how much her husband expected from a deckhand. She knew shw dangerous and hard the work was. So worried and a bit stress that her "Birthday Baby" would get yelled at or cussed out, she spent those early years alongside her son as he learned from his dad. Because Lil' Wendell was genetically inclined and inherently a fisherman, he caught on quick! He had a strong mind. He could read the tides, set a trap, find the most prosperous position to place his pots and pick fish quicker than any other deck hand his father ever had. He was a generational fisherman and strong Martin man – taught by his father. With everything I have shared, I stand here today with a broken heart while remembering many things! Remembering how much of a Momma's boy he was! Not many moms get the most perfect birthday present! Remembering his

cleverness and his ability to con his friends out of their lunch money. How he'd go to school empty handed and come home with the really cool "trades" he made on the playground. Remembering how persuasive he was. He proved this by talking his sister to join a "Gang!" Good thing their life of crime didn't stem farther than claiming their territory at the Stommish grounds because that ended quick! Remembering the family trips to Reno where fake ID's came in handy. The family trips to Hawaii where his sisters pulled a fast one by talking their brother into sneaking out for the night! It was a night filled with Rum, Coke and a 5 siblings whom created their own family luau!

Remembering the time he demonstrated loyalty for his Martin uncle. When in the middle of night, with the help of the mischievous neighborhood Martin crew – snuck out and egged his Aunties house! And remembering, February 8, 2007 and the spiritual help he received from Uncle Samuel, our Late Aunt Wendy and the Crab Bay family. Sammy Joe took really good care of him. Aunt Wendy loved him! So much that even when he snuck out and left Crab Bay, she made the boys stay home and went to look for him by herself! She knew he wasn't going far. He just wanted to check on Tasha. As her protector he needed to make sure she was going to be okay while he took care of what he needed to take care of that Winter! Aunt Wendy understood and facilitate this quick visit for him so he could return to the home for a successful winter – And that he did! One of his Winter brothers is Kendall Hillare. They went in on the same night. That spring after he came home, he shared a story with his mom. He said, "Mom! At first, I was a little scared and thinking I was in the wrong place!" Rosanna concerned replied, "How come Son?" Lil' Wendell looked at his mom and responded, "At first I kept wondering why I could hear people talking about "Kendall" – Don't they know I am Wendell? I am sure they got the wrong guy – Maybe I am not supposed to be here, I thought" Rosanna said, "Son! We sent you there to learn a better life! Why would you think they got the wrong guy?" Lil' Wendell replied, "Because they kept calling me Kendall!" Being a fisherman is a dangerous and hard yet a rewarding life!

Wendell found peace and healing on the water. During the last opening in October, Jeff recalls Lil Wendell telling him, "I could have my own boat but I love being second for my dad. I wouldn't have it any other way! Why would I want to work separately from the man that taught me everything?" Wendell Jr. was skilled and what he knew, he learned from his father. Lil' Wendell continued by telling Jeff, "You are the only one that can hang with me and my old teachings" See, Jeff spent 12 years as his brother's deck hand on his father-in-laws boat! Jeff explained that Lil' Wendell worked hard! At the end of the day, he'd call his dad to compare their catch. On the days, Wendell Sr. had more product on his boat, Jeff exhausted and ready to go home often found himself making another crab run! Lil Wendell would say, "We got to beat my dad! We got to do one more run!" ... Wendell Jr's goal was always to be the most productive.... He maximized his time out on the water. As Wendell Jr. would say to Jeff..... "WE got to TURN and BURN, Bro!!" and off they'd go in an attempt to beat their teacher, Wendell Sr.! There will definitely be a hole on the Jaydalee Crew as they continue the family tradition without Son – Something that will be incredibly hard and surreal. On behalf of the family, I ask that you remember his children. Reminded them often about the amazing father he was! Landon and Ziva, were his pride and joy. Remember his wife, as unfortunately grieving the unbearable loss of a close loved one is not new to her. She will need your embrace to get through the tough days ahead! Lastly, I can't imagine losing a child. It isn't the natural process and not the way it is supposed to be. As I sat with Rosanna, I was in AWE at her strength! She is a strong woman with a strong cultural foundation. As I sat in silence watching her, she openly shared "One day when my Son was having a rough time with is sobriety he came to visit me. He said, "Mom, I had a dream. It startled me a little and I woke up confused" Rosanna, knew in our belief dreams have value and meaning. So, she asked, "What did you dream Son?" Wendell continued by saying, "It was night, Mom! I walked into this big building. I didn't know where I was. It looked kind of like the Wexlium but different. There were old people there. They were dressed in full Winter

regalia. They were sitting along the edge of this big building. And as I walked in they looked at me! They stood up and raised their hand to me, Mom!” Rosanna told her Son, “They were standing for YOU my Son! That is the spirit you have. That is how our Old people see you! They respect you and what you carry!” She hugged her son that day. She prayed with him! From that moment, through culturally bound teachings and love of a mother, Wendell found sobriety again – Rosanna got her son back! I got choked up as I listened to her. Tears rolling down my cheek! No solely because I understand a mothers’ love but because once again on this day those old people are standing for her Son! Our heart aches... Ti-o-whel-ten! We bow ours head and pray for strength, guidance and answers. We find peace as we remember through this traditional that you will be with us as we travel the Salish Sea. We will see you on the waters of Hales Pass as you watch over us in protection and love. Today, we find peace in knowing those old people stand with their hands raised – As you once again sit stroke! Listening to your Grandma Willie holler out “WHO READY!” as he steers your spiritual canoe through the gates of Heaven! Rest easy, Ti-o-whel-ten! Until we see you again – Meet you The Crossroads!

I am a fisherman

It is not merely something that I do,

It is who I am

Fishing is not simply my escape,

It is where I truly belong

It is where I am supposed to be

It is not a place that I go

But a lifelong journey that I am on

It is a passage that my father has

Shown to me

And one that I will show others

Once you understand this

Then you will know who I am

And we will fish together even from far away

# Tribute Wall



“ *We send you our deepest condolences.  
An we send you an your families prayers an hugs an prayers for  
your family strength.  
From the Johnnie family*

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**Paul Johnnie** - November 23, 2020 at 12:00 AM