

Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild

representing the Government of Canada



Wilton Littlechild, Ph.D., is a Cree chief, residential school survivor, and lawyer who has worked both nationally and internationally including with the United Nations to advance Indigenous rights and Treaties. He has also – through leadership with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – raised awareness of former Canadian policies that decimated the livelihood and culture of Indigenous Canadians.

Born in Alberta, Wilton Littlechild was raised largely at residential schools from 1951 to 1964, where he spent 14 years surviving through study and sport. After leaving residential school, he studied physical education at the University of Alberta and law at the University of New Mexico, where he continued his balance of academics and hockey.

Chief Littlechild was a member of the 1977 Indigenous delegation to the United Nations (UN), and worked on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He organized within the UN to increase Indigenous input in the economic and social issues the UN tackles. In the 1980s, he worked on the lawsuit to prevent patriation of the Canadian Constitution until the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights were protected and, in more recent years, has been a regional and International Chief on Treaties No. 6, 7, 8.

Chief Littlechild has been a member of parliament, Vice-President of the Indigenous Parliament of the Americas, North American representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and a chairperson for the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform.

In addition to his ongoing work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he's continued to run his own law firm in Erminiskin Reserve, Alberta, and maintains his commitment to sport. He has been inducted into seven Sports Halls of Fame.

He has been awarded the Order of Canada and in 1993, the Canadian government awarded Chief Littlechild the Canada 125 Medal. He is a 2015 Laureate of the Indspire Awards and was recently honoured with the Alberta Award of Excellence