

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau Québec (FCNQ) In Memory of Eli Elijassiapik

*Inukjuak, March 6, 2015*: The passing of our president Eli Elijassiapik has by now reached us all, and it is with great sadness we mourn his loss. Eli was truly dedicated to the co-operative movement and worked everyday to ensure that his local co-op and the FCNQ continued to run smoothly. His presence will be sorely missed.

Eli Elijassiapik was born in 1936 in a small hamlet on the Nauligarvik River, north of Inukjuak but had lived in Inukjuak since 1965. He is the older brother of Simeonie, now deceased, and Harry Elijassiapik; both well-known sculptors in the region. He was pre-deceased by his wife Eva who was an artist working in local crafts, and leaves behind his life partner Winnie Arnamitsaaq and his children Lucy, Annie and Joannasie Elijassiapik.

As a tribute to his memory, his nephew Jobie Weetaluktuk who works for the FCNQ, recalls how they lived at their family camp where they had built a wooden house in Kangirsukallak. A first, it was built by all the able men of the families and the excitement was clearly audible that clear and crisp fall morning. Young Jobie's aunt could be clearly heard loudly calling Eli's name several times, wherein when he responded, she cried out to him, « Don't you dare fall! », as he was standing on a large drum during construction. Everyone around broke into laughter! The possibility of Eli falling from the drum and the image was humourous! Eli was born and lived during the era of family camps and semi-nomad Inuit lifestyle, and experienced the change from family camp life to community life.

Eli was recognized as a talented sculptor of soapstone carvings. His sculptures were exhibited in major exhibitions in Canada, the United States, Japan, Sweden, France and Germany. His work has been purchased by many important galleries including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal (Quebec), the Museum of Civilization in Québec City (Quebec), the Art Gallery of York University, in Downsview (Ontario), the Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montréal (Quebec), the Dennos Museum Center, Northwestern Michigan College in Michigan (United States), and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (British Columbia).

The Fédération des coopératives du nouveau Québec (Ilagiisaq-FCNQ) was created in 1967. Five cooperatives first founded the Ilagiisaq. Today FCNQ has 14 member co-ops and its purpose is to provide services and support to all the cooperative members.

He had become a member of the newly established Inukjuak Co-operative's board of directors in 1968 and was 32 years old when he did. He had been involved with the growth of the local co-operative since. He continued diligently and constantly to better the Inukiuak Co-operative Association and was proud of how well it was being managed, due to the board of directors' ability to make sound decisions to which he participated and guided.

He was also a respected local leader having served for several years as President of the Inukjuak Community Council. He was a member of the FCNQ board of directors since the 1970s and first became president in 1980. He held the presidential mandate for the past three years running and was hoping to remain involved as an Executive Committee member of the FCNQ.

Eli was to receive the Order of Merit from the Conseil Québecois des coopératives et la mutualité (CQCM) March 12, a Merit he very much deserved. Eli was always a humble man and dedicated to serving others, the co-op was the best way he knew how. He remained loyal to the cooperative movement until his death March 3. His funeral will be held today in Inukjuak at 3 o'clock.

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