

PRESS RELEASE

"UN Advocate for Great Sioux Nation Passes Away"

"Professor's Death a Great Loss for the Great Sioux Nation"

One of the greatest champions at the United Nations for Indigenous Peoples, and especially for the Great Sioux Nation, was Professor Dr. Miguel Alfonso Martinez who taught International Law at the University of Havana, Cuba. Professor Martinez passed away at 1 p.m. on Monday February 1, 2010.

Professor Martinez spent 10 years of his life working on a "Study on Treaties, Agreements and other Constructive Arrangements between States and Indigenous Populations" as a Special Rapporteur and member of the United Nations' Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. He traveled to South Dakota in 1994 and 1995 to meet with many elders of the Great Sioux Nation to learn their understanding of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868.

In the summer of 1997, during the Sub-Commission meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, the late Chief Garfield Grass Rope stated, "Professor Martinez's report is critical to our survival. It seems sad that the existence of a race of people may hang on a report, but without international intervention on our behalf we will soon be overrun by the invader. For this reason, we hope that Professor Martinez's report will be given the highest priority."

On June 22, 1999, the Treaty Study was approved by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights confirming that the Fort Laramie Treaty was an international agreement. With that approval, the UN also approved the recommendations the Study contained. "It was a great contribution to the rights of our Peoples. The work is a milestone in the UN system. In total, he spent many years in the UN system working for the rights of all peoples. It is a great loss," said Dr. Sharon Venne, International Law Professor, Yukon, Canada.

UN Advocate for Great Sioux Nation Passes Away

Friday, 05 February 2010 13:58

Representatives from the Teton Sioux Nation Treaty Council worked with Professor Martinez for many years at the United Nations in Geneva. He was born May 16, 1935, in Havana, Cuba, and was elected to the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1984. His death is a great loss to the people of the Great Sioux Nation.

For more information contact Charmaine White Face, Spokesperson, Teton Sioux Nation Treaty Council, at xxx-343-5387, or via email at bhdefenders@msn.com