



Nuxalk Nation
PRESS RELEASE – June 26, 2023

Snxakila Clyde Michael Tallio receives honorary doctorate from UBC

Bella Coola, BC – Snxakila Clyde Michael Tallio, a member of the Nuxalk First Nation, received an honorary Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, degree from the University of British Columbia on May 24, 2023.

Snxakila holds the position of Alkw, a ceremonial speaker, historian, orator, cultural leader, and teacher. A fluent Nuxalk speaker, Snxakila has dedicated the past 20 years to the revitalization of Nuxalk culture, language, and ceremonies. He received over a decade of training through community-based teachings by Nuxalk elders, who were among the few remaining cultural experts and fluent language speakers.

“I always had an interest in our language, and in my final year of high school, I got an after school job recording elders at the cultural centre. I was getting ready to apply to university when Ximaltwa (Nuxalk language expert Clarence Elliott) told me that I was doing very well learning the language,” Snxakila explained. “He asked me to stay and train with the elders to become an Alkw. He told me that the universities would always be there, but the elders might not be here when I got back.”

Snxakila’s expertise in Nuxalk language and culture has been sought by acclaimed organizations around the world, such as UBC’s Museum of Anthropology, the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C., the Chicago Field Museum, the Royal British Columbia Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where he redesigned the Nuxalk section of the Northwest Coast Hall.

In addition, his dedication to the research and recovery of Nuxalk laws has been critical in rebuilding healthy and self-governing communities in Nuxalk territory and in First Nations across the globe. As a founding member of the Nuxalk Ancestral Governance Department, he has collaborated with hereditary and elected leadership and community knowledge holders to articulate Nuxalk ancestral protocols and provide a defensible basis from which the Nation can assert their inherent rights.

He has co-authored academic articles and presentations at international conferences on the application of Indigenous knowledge in environmental management. He is currently the Cultural Director of the Nuxalk Nation, where he is managing the development of the Nation’s first Big House in over 100 years.



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“This degree is important because UBC is recognizing the contribution and the value of Nuxalk knowledge, language and culture as equal to the rigorous academic training required to complete a western PhD,” said Snxakila. “The world is only just starting to recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge and how this knowledge can contribute to the next chapter of the human story. What I want people to know, especially our Indigenous youth, is that your culture and language can be the foundation of your success.”

In addition to being one of the youngest recipients of an honorary degree from UBC, Snxakila is now the second Nuxalkmc to achieve such recognition. In 1985, Dr. Margaret Siwallace also received an honorary Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, degree from the University of British Columbia, becoming the first Indigenous woman to receive this distinction from the university.

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Photo caption:

Snxakila Clyde Michael Tallio accepting his honorary degree at UBC on May 24, 2023

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