



Tribute to Chief Edward Sangris from Denendeh Development Corporation September 11, 1953 – October 31, 2023

Born in Dettah in 1953, Edward Sangris came from a long line of leaders of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. His father Joseph (It'o) and brother Jonas were former Chiefs, and with Edward's 16 years, their leadership spanned over 60 years, not including their respective times served as Councilors.

Throughout his life, Edward made significant contributions to his community in every area important to his people. On the land and in the community as a chief and a natural leader he was strong on preserving the language and culture of the Yellowknives Dene. He understood the importance of the Treaties and had a deep understanding of Treaty 8 as it was understood by his forefathers and what it means to future generations. And as a business leader, serving on the Boards of Det'on Cho Corporation, Denendeh Investments Incorporated and Denendeh Development Corporation, he helped advance the growing Indigenous economy in the North.

Edward Sangris was raised in a traditional lifestyle. As a child he was sent to the Charles Camsell hospital in Edmonton for tuberculosis. He later attended Residential School in Fort Smith where he excelled at sports, particularly hockey. In the 1970's he attended the Lethbridge Community College studying Environmental Sciences and when he returned home, he worked for the Department of Wildlife throughout the 1970's.

Family was everything to Edward. He was married to Beatrice (Baillargeon) for 45 years and together they had three children; Darcy, Gordon and Vanessa, and seven grandchildren, including one who passed away, and two great grandchildren. In 1985, after Beatrice's mother died, Beatrice and Edward helped to raise Beatrice's brothers and sisters; Margaret, Paul, Jonas, Eileen and Christine. To provide for his expanded family, Edward worked at Polaris mine as a heavy equipment operator on a month-long rotational basis, and returning home, he would spend time with the children on the land. Edward worked in the mining industry for a total of twenty three years.

As Chief, Edward Sangris was a statesman among the Indigenous, municipal, territorial and national arena, including the British Crown, whom he hosted in Dettah in May 2022. Eddie continued his leadership role right to the end, ill as he was, leading his community through the evacuation during this past summer's wildfires.

He clearly understood the complexities of the political and economic development of the North. He believed we need to strategically align and work together at the community, regional and territorial levels. He was a thoughtful and strategic thinker and took his time making his decisions, mindful of their impact on future generations. His knowledge, advice and friendship will be missed by many.