



NEWS RELEASE

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[SPS Newsroom](#)

Billy Frank Jr. Day Observed This Week

SPS Native students led effort for SPS Board resolution

SEATTLE – Seattle Public Schools observed Billy Frank Jr. – Salmon Celebration Day on Tuesday, March 9.

This marks the first of what will be an annual observance, after the SPS Board of Directors approved a resolution to honor Mr. Frank each March 9.

Mr. Frank, a well-known advocate and leader for tribal fishing rights, achieved notoriety in the 1960s and 1970s during the “Fish Wars,” a series of protests aimed toward recognizing treaty-granted fishing rights for Native American tribes throughout the Puget Sound.

This latest effort to recognize Mr. Frank was led by SPS students who are also participants in the Clear Sky Native Youth Council. They advocated for and drafted the board resolution.

[Board Resolution 2020/21](#) was unanimously approved by the board at its Feb. 24, 2021 regular legislative session.

“Our Native students continue to amaze me,” said SPS Board Director Zachary DeWolf, a citizen of the Chippewa Cree Nation of Rocky Boy, Montana. “They initiated our resolution honoring Billy’s work and legacy, which changed the world for generations to come. His work taught so many of the need to honor and uphold treaty rights, the importance of salmon to our region and our culture, about habitat restoration, and the need for people to work together to protect our vital resources.”

During school board deliberation on the resolution, SPS Board President Chandra Hampson, who is HoChunk/Ojibwe, delivered an elegant tribute to Mr. Frank, which included: “When he shook your hand he grabbed you and made you feel like you were part of something really important, somebody he needed to help him, right now, to win the day for the salmon, for all the creatures, for the people, for all the people.”

Mr. Frank and many other Native leaders and tribes, including the Muckleshoot, whose ancestral lands are within the SPS catchment area, fought to protect their fishing rights by suing the State of Washington. Their actions spurred a series of protests led by tribal communities, many of whose members were incarcerated for protesting the rights affirmed in their treaties to fish in “usual and accustomed” places.

The Point Elliott Treaty, ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1859, established Native Tribes’ fishing rights in the Puget Sound.

For more information about Billy Frank Jr., [please see the SPS website](#).

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