



CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS

Special Tribute to Rev. Betsy Stang, Founder The Wittenberg Centre



William Commanda and Betsy Stang

Circle of All Nations, founded by late Indigenous Elder William Commanda, expresses great sorrow at the passing of Rev. Betsy Stang (2 Aug 47 – 15 Feb 19), founder of The Wittenberg Centre, (a non-profit organization with ECOSOC consultative status at the United Nations), and a passionate advocate for Indigenous, environmental, womens', peace and social justice issues. Betsy was involved in this work on the global stage from the time of the first United Nations Conference of the World's Indigenous Peoples, fittingly and provocatively called



Circle of All Nations
Global Eco Peace
Community Founded
by Mishomis William
Commanda



**Asinabka Sacred
Chaudiere Site**
Legacy Vision for
Ancient and Historical
Gathering Place



William Commanda
Carrier Sacred
Wampum Heritage,
Honorary and
Researched PhD,
Officer of the Order of
Canada

Cry of the Earth, and Grandfather Commanda was the Elder who launched the discussions with his presentation on the Algonquin Sacred Wampum Heritage, including the epic *Seven Fires Prophecy* (recorded by The Wittenberg Centre amongst others), and their passions intersected then.



Over the years, we maintained a very special relationship with her. Elder Commanda participated in many cross-cultural events grounded in advancing understanding of Indigenous spiritual and way of life practices at The Wittenberg Centre. Later this, in part, influenced Indigenous peace work at the United Nations.

Betsy and her friends David Berry and Sharon Franquemont and others were actively involved in the organization of annual Prayer Vigils at the Mall in Washington DC for two decades. Elder Commanda joined as many of these events as he could, from his homeland in the other capital city on Turtle Island, Ottawa. In this video clip of William Commanda delivering Wampum Belt messages, it is Betsy who is assisting him (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0Vs8OmxLcA>).

Betsy joined us at Nepean Point, at our *Circle of All Nation* Millennium Peace Gathering. In 2001, we attend a Peace Gathering in Portland, Oregon; and Betsy hosted us for breakfast with Chief Arvol Looking Horse, and loaned us her rental vehicle (and Grandfather and I drove two hours to see the Pacific Ocean at Seaside, Oregon!). In 2003, she and Jim Davis were with us to celebrate Grandfather's 90th birthday in Kanata and at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. When she was first treated for that aggressive cancer in 2004, Grandfather and I drove down to Woodstock to support her with prayer and pipe ceremony. We visited her Buddhist friends at that time. Another time, William Commanda, his daughter Evelyn Dewache and I drove down to participate in the Neale Donald Walsch Humanities Team conference with Betsy and Jim. We also worked together to protect a sacred Indigenous site in New York State, and she advanced support for Grandfather's Legacy Vision for the *Asinabka* Sacred Chaudiere Site at the UN level and elsewhere.

Both Grandfather and I have kept Betsy in our hearts over the years. She lived life on a bigger scale than many, was braver than many, and did much to inspire, encourage and support a diversity of folk and causes, especially Indigenous. We are grateful for her leadership, courage, warmth and generosity and extend our deep sympathies to her son Matthew and to Jackee, to Jim, David, Sharon, Martha and her many other friends. *GINAWAYDAGANUC – We Are All Connected!*

