

# ROBERT JOSEPH LOUIE –CAMPAIGN PLATFORM

## TRADITION & COLLECTIVE WISDOM

**“In our traditions, our leaders, our chiefs worked for the people. In this traditional way, I will listen to the needs and wants of my people. I value what each and every one of you has to offer. Through the collective wisdom of community, we will move forward together.” Robert Joseph Louie**

*Who is Robert Louie, Sr.?*

*Robert Louie Sr. is descendant to Flat-bow Kutenais of Lower Division. He was born into the culture on the Kutenai wetlands, delivered by a Yaqan Nukiy midwife. As is the tradition, family, friends, and relatives gathered nearby to witness the news of his birth. The day he was born, maternal grandmother told the family the baby was coming to live with her. From the day of his birth to her passing in the late 1960's, Robert lived with her in the ancestral traditional homeland territory, receiving her gifts of guidance and wisdom of the old ways. Robert's first language was Ktunaxa. He speaks the language fluently.*

*In addition to her oral teachings, Robert was always by her side during family visits, encampments, gatherings, festivals, festivities and ritual ceremonies exposing him to the collective wisdom of the Lower Division Kutenai people. Through the strong oral teachings, Robert came to know himself, his people, their history, their systems of beliefs, ways of life, the oral teachings, motif folklore theme tale stories, and geographical ancestral homeland settings. Often grandparents and river neighbors quizzed Robert before bedding down for the night - an expression of honoring their ancestors, their sacrifices, their practices in keeping their prayers and dreams alive through generational retention of the knowledge.*

*Robert Louie Sr.'s customary name of Yaminqan was given by Grandfather Louie Ernest – referring to bird species of blue bird.*

### **Proven Track Record:**

- Integrity & Honour
  - Served as an RCMP officer.
  - Lived his life in the traditional manner of the Yaqan Nukiy People.
- Community Leadership
  - The elders respected Robert at an early age due to his traditional upbringing by his grandmother and made him Hereditary Chief.
  - Worked for his people as the LKB Wetlands Manager for decades.
  - While on the Education Board, Robert oversaw many cultural activities and cultural camps where community members were active in planning, teaching, and participating in the activities.
  - Robert developed and still oversees the Yaqan Nukiy Heritage Centre which shares the knowledge and teachings of the Yaqan Nukiy with interested persons. The Centre is a collection of contributions from many of the Yaqan Nukiy People. It shares information on hunting, fishing, garment construction, housing, transportation, daily life lessons, legends, and exhibits of the fish trap, the tulle tipi, the Kutenai Canoe, historical photos, stick game, buckskin, beadwork, arrowheads, primitive tools and dance regalia.
- Government Negotiation Experience

- At the request of his elders, he gave up his career as an RCMP and returned home to help them with the land claims. (an example of Traditional practice)
- By listening to the people and getting a mandate for negotiation, he helped the people get multiple settlements. The process included going back and forth between the Canadian government and his people to seek direction on how to proceed with the negotiation. (an example of Collective Wisdom)
- Listening to Community & Collective Wisdom
  - The community wanted their own school. Robert worked with other community members to establish one of the first Reserve Based Schools in British Columbia.
  - At the request of his people, Robert arranged funding through BC Lottery and the land claim dollars for our current gym and complex hall. In a two-year process, he oversaw the process of building the Lower Kootenay Band gym and complex which was designed with pride by the people, including the tipi and the Kutenai canoe in the building design.

### **Moving to the Future:**

- ❖ **House of Tradition** – entrenching our ways in daily practice so that all members may have access to learning traditional ways. This is especially important as technology and the outside world are more prominent in our busy lives. This would be a place for us to center ourselves and for the people to know and understand who they are as a people. This is critical for our members living away from the community. They would be able to come and visit the House of Tradition for a weekend or a month - on their schedule. And, just have a place to contact with questions.
- ❖ **Establishing an Elder's Council** – ensuring one of our most precious resources is valued so that people today and future generations have the collective wisdom and guidance of the elders.
- ❖ **Supporting Employment & Individual Businesses for Community** – Looking to explore a gas station, a taco stand or mini-restaurant, a drive-thru coffee/snack shop, and any other ideas that community members might have.
- ❖ **Using technology to keep our people connected and informed.** Robert loves new technology and uses his computer and iPhone on a daily basis. He is a progressive thinker and was one of the first at Lower Kootenay to have a cell phone (*he purchased one – a flip phone LOL - so his mother could reach him at all times*). He wants all band members to have access to information and be able to contribute their thoughts and ideas through the use of technology. Robert recognizes all of his people, whether they live on the Reserve or far away. Just as he lived away when he was an RCMP, he recognizes that young people have education and job opportunities in other geographical areas. Robert believes that we need to adapt to the change of having band members living away; that all of the band members are important.

In closing, Robert says, ***“Ellie George, Wayne Louie and I are together in our campaign with one heart.”***