

First Nations Court Opening Ceremony in Duncan

The Duncan First Nations Court Opening Ceremony took place on Friday, October 11, 2013.

Attendees included: Attorney General Suzanne Anton, Q.C., Deputy Minister Richard Fyfe, Q.C., Assistant Deputy Minister of Court Services Kevin Jardine, Chief Judge T. Crabtree, Judge Adrian Brooks, Judge Marion Buller-Bennett (FNC presiding Judge), Judge Josiah Wood, Regional Crown John Labossiere, Director of Aboriginal Programs Susan Hendricks, RCMP, local MPs and surrounding First Nations' Chief and Council.

First Nations Court (FNC) is a judge-initiated sentencing project to address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. FNC has been in operation since May of 2013 and has local Elders who share traditional teachings while making recommendations to the court during the sentencing process.



Duncan Crown Counsel, Leah Fontaine, Terry LaLiberte, the new President of the Native Court Workers' Association of BC, and Judge Josiah Wood. Judge Wood is the local Judge who started on the project a few years ago and was the driving force for the court's creation.

Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton congratulating the First Nations Court in Duncan on its grand opening at the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre.

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Several of the Cowichan Tribe members performing songs & dance in honour of the occasion.



Members of the Elders Panel, which sits at the table with the Judge, Crown, defence and accused during the sentencing process.