

BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres
BCAAFC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2026

BCAAFC Mourns the loss of Amshen - Joan Phillip

VICTORIA, B.C. – The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) mourns the passing of Amshen – Joan Phillip and sends our heartfelt condolences to her loved ones, community, and everyone impacted by this profound loss.

Most recently, Amshen – Joan Phillip served as the MLA for Vancouver-Strathcona and Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits, but her impact extends far beyond her time in elected office.

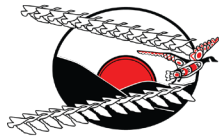
A member of the Penticton Indian Band and a lifelong advocate for Indigenous Peoples, Amshen dedicated decades of her life to advancing Indigenous rights, justice, human rights and environmental protection. Her work was deeply rooted in community. Before entering provincial politics, she worked as a youth counsellor, served as an education and program director at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and spent many years working for the Penticton Indian Band.

“Amshen – Joan Phillip had a profound impact on Indigenous communities across British Columbia,” said Celeste Hayward, Executive Director of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. “She was a fierce advocate, a community leader and someone who never shied away from speaking up for Indigenous people. Her connection to the Friendship Centre Movement makes this loss particularly meaningful to our community. We are grateful for the strength, courage and determination she brought to her work, and for the many people whose lives she touched along the way.”

Amshen brought a strong voice into every space she entered, from grassroots community work to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Throughout her life, she advocated for a more just future while remaining deeply connected to the people and communities she served.

Our thoughts are with Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, their children and grandchildren, her extended family, the Penticton Indian Band and all those who knew, loved and worked alongside her.

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She will be deeply missed.

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