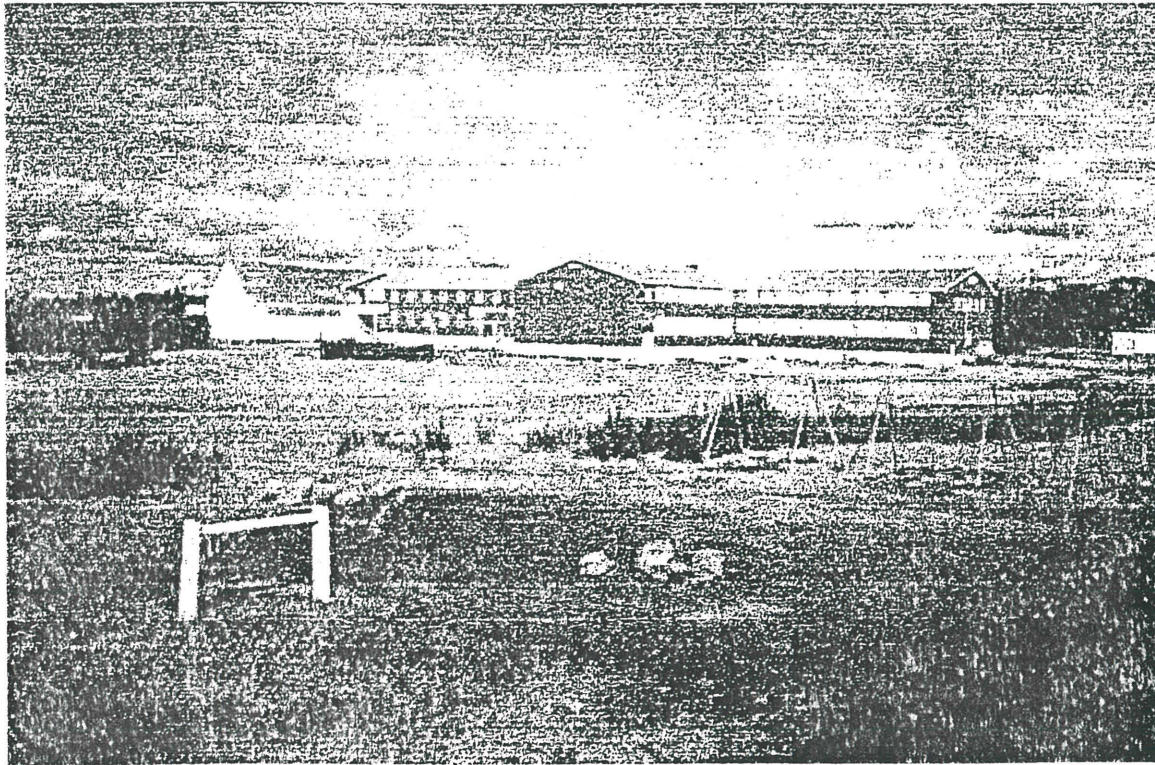


# A Report on the Victim/Witness Support Service of a Multiple Child Sexual Abuse Court Trial in Inuvik, Northwest Territories August 1998



## The Grollier Hall Experience

Prepared for:

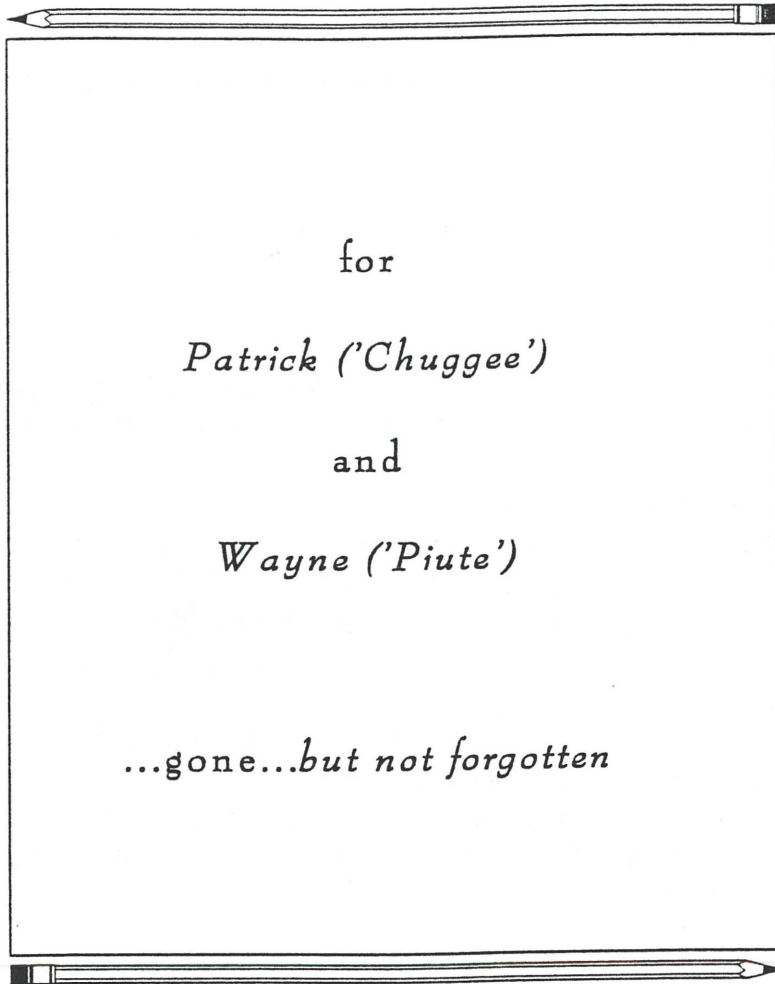
- Health Canada
- Justice Canada
- Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
- Government of the Northwest Territories

By: Lawrence Norbert, Coordinator  
Grollier Hall Residential School Healing Circle  
16 October 1998

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The views expressed in this report are those of the Grollier Hall Residential School Healing Circle and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders or the Inuvik Interagency Committee.





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was initiated and developed by the Groller Hall Residential School Healing Circle with support from the following people and organizations:

*'THE BOYS OF GROLLIER HALL'* for their courage

### FAMILY SUPPORT:

Doreen, Ethel, Diane, Lori, Irene, Eddie Jr., Leanne, Denise, Millie, Sheri, Maggie, Lona, Louise, Jessica, and Cecile

### 'SUBSTITUTE' PARENTS:

*"Thank you"* to Mr. and Mrs. Frank and Martha Kudlak (Sachs Harbour) and Mrs. Laura Lennie (Tulita)

### RCMP 'G' DIVISION:

Sgt. Al McCambridge, Cpl. Les Bancroft, Cst. Rob Frame- *"Thanks for believing in us and for hanging in there!"*

### COMMUNITY CAREGIVERS:

Debbie Greenland, Dale Sharkey, Bernice Lavoie, Violet Doolittle, Rita Green, Lucy Dillon, Lisa Norris, Renee Kalinek, Elaine Doctor, Gina Dolphus, Caitlin Odlozinski

### INUVIK REGIONAL HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD:

Deborah Tynes, Olive Binder, Arlene Jorgensen, Pat Pedersen, Angela McInnes and the Housekeeping Staff, Andrea Lee and the Kitchen/Dietary Staff, Sharon Spinks, Tammy Rogers, Dawn Anderson, Dinah Carnogursky, Cindy Stewart, Robert Hill

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

- Health Canada (First Nations and Inuit Health Programs, Medical Services Branch)
- Justice Canada (Grants and Contributions Unit, Programs Branch)
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Indian and Inuit Services - NWT Region)
- Government of the Northwest Territories (Victims Assistance Committee, c/o Community Justice Division, Department of Justice)

### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS:

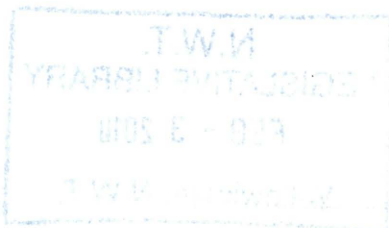
Roman Catholic Diocese of the MacKenzie; Northern Store (Inuvik); Town of Inuvik (Recreation Department); Turning Point

### BACKGROUND FACILITATION:

Sandy Little, Health and Wellness Promotion Division, GNWT Health and Social Services

### THE GHRS TEAM:

|                  |                                         |
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| Vera Morin       | <i>New Path Teachings, Yellowknife</i>  |
| Charlie Neyellie | Dene Spiritual Advisor, Deline          |
| Harold Cook      | GHRS Victims Advocate, Fort Good Hope   |



## INTRODUCTION

Between August 4-15, 1998, a former senior boys supervisor of Grollier Hall (a now-closed native residential school in Inuvik, Northwest Territories) stood trial for 42 sex-related charges on twenty former students dating back to the 1960's and 1970's. The victims, all senior boys at Grollier Hall, were between the ages of 13 and 18 years at the time the crimes were committed.

The Grollier Hall Residential School Healing Circle - a society of former Grollier Hall students - mobilized a team of Aboriginal consultants to counsel and support the men during the trial process. The men were also supported by their families, community caregivers and various government and community agencies. This interagency model of collaboration, cooperation and teamwork resulted in testimony which withstood intense cross-examination, lessened post-trial stress to the men and their families, and opened long-closed doors for the men to rebuild or repair their family and community relationships.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Victim/Witness Support Service was created by the Grollier Hall Residential School Healing Circle as a means of providing assistance and support to the men and their families who participated in the criminal justice proceedings.

The introduction of this service is one of the objectives of the GHRS Healing Circle, which is:

*to advocate for the availability of victim/witness support services, from pre-court planning to post-court follow-up, to former GHRS students involved as victim/witnesses in any investigation and trial process so that each is personally and emotionally prepared to give testimony.*

The primary purpose of the GHRS Victim/Witness Support Service (VWSS) was to emotionally assist the men, i.e. establish a counselling "safety net" before, during and after the trial.

Specific activities included providing the men with courtroom orientation, accompanying them to court, debriefing them and their families, serving as their liaison with the police and Crown, referring them to community agencies for counselling and other support services, and providing logistical support for the families and caregivers accompanying the men.

## GROLIER HALL

Grollier Hall operated in Inuvik between 1959-1996 to provide a Catholic educational system for children from the communities of:

Inuvik, Aklavik, Arctic Red River, Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Fort Norman, Fort Franklin, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Holman Island, Coppermine, Cambridge Bay, DEW-line sites such as Cape Parry and from seasonal fishing camps

who attended the school from September to June of each year.

The residence was administered in succession by the Roman Catholic Church - Diocese of the MacKenzie under agreement with the federal Department of Indian Affairs and National Resources (now Indian and Northern Affairs Canada); the Department of Education (as it was then known) of the Government of the Northwest Territories; and the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Board of Education. The dormant structure is currently owned by Aurora College.

## THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

*"The residential school, in and of itself, constituted an abusive experience for students. As children and having little prior contact with a white culture, they were removed from their homes with little advance warning, placed in an authoritative environment which left them vulnerable and frightened, and subjected to degenerative and devaluing behaviour which resulted in loss of self-esteem, confidence and self-worth.*

*Incidents of emotional abuse appear to include ridicule; over zealous discipline which created fear and anxiety not only on recipients but also on witnesses; arbitrary rules which isolated students from each other (eg. siblings) and from community students and people; underemphasis of their cultural values; an inversely proportional emphasis of the "superiority" of the western culture over aboriginal culture, and separation of children from their traditional family connections.*

*Given the historical context within which the hostel operated, one could say that while such institutionalized assimilation (which would not be tolerated today) gave certain educational benefits to the children, it was not without a high personal and collective price.*

*The single most effect (outside of the physical, sexual and emotional abuse) was the cultural and language loss or damage to the students, coupled with the ensuing fragmentation of family and communities which, in some cases, were never fully repaired.*

*Other negative experiences included:*

- the discouragement of the use of the Inuit language, breach of which resulted in discipline;*
- their culture being neither taught, enhanced or given value in any significant measure;*
- years of ability to experience their own culture being lost (eg, family, connection with the land); and*
- years of detachment, abject loneliness and isolation.*

*In a "rigid and paramilitary" environment (barracks-like quarters, compulsory daily religious services) lacking normal family and cultural dynamics and exposed to inappropriate discipline and sexual conduct, students also lost their opportunity to be "parented" and to learn parenting skills, thus creating a "ripple and long lasting effect" for future interpersonal relationships and a succeeding generation.*

*There emerges a psychological trauma for both society and the individual - an internal conflict between the will to deny past horrors and the will to proclaim.*

*Experts working in the field of domestic violence and survivors of abuse contend that these experiences and abuse should be more accurately described as "torture and acts of atrocity" and that the effects (shame, guilt, self-blame, isolation, persistent distrust, explosive anger, self injury, preoccupation with suicide, dissociation, disruption of intimate relationships, loss of sustaining faith, hopelessness, despair) are both severe and very long term."*

☞ summarized excerpts from *Sir Joseph Bernier Federal Day School Turquetil Hall Investigation Report*, Katherine Peterson, November 1994

## THE ABUSERS

In 1962, Martin Houston, employed from 1959-60, was sentenced to 9 year in jail on 5 counts of buggery and 4 gross indecency. He is currently a priest in Carmen, Manitoba.

In August, 1997, Jerzy George Maczynski (a senior boys supervisor before Leroux) was subsequently convicted for Indecent Assault and other related offences and sentenced to 4 years incarceration.

In February, 1998, Joseph Jean Louie Comeau, a former junior boys supervisor, was sentenced to two 1-year jail terms on two sex-related charges involving 2 victims;

During 1967-79, Paul Leroux was employed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of MacKenzie as the senior boys supervisor of Grollier Hall to provide guidance, counselling, supervision and discipline. Previously, he was a hostel supervisor in Beauval, Saskatchewan for seven years. Aside from his Grollier Hall duties, Leroux was a justice of the peace, a hockey and soccer coach, and a Big Brother.

During his tenure, Leroux systematically perverted his position of power, trust and authority to sexually abuse at least thirteen teenage boys, aged 14-19 years, under his care.

In 1979, he was convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and received a 4-month jail sentence. He subsequently left Inuvik for Vancouver where he worked as a complaints investigator with the Canadian Human Rights Commission for 15 years.

## THE INVESTIGATION

In November, 1996, a former student living in a Sahtu community made a complaint of sexual abuse by a former supervisor to the RCMP. Investigators seized records of attendance from the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Board of Education and prepared a list of all the male students and their possible current addresses. In March, 1997, a letter from another former student alleging sexual abuse by the same former supervisor prompted officers to widen the scope of their investigation to include all male students who attended Grollier Hall between 1959 - 1996. The RCMP interviewed about 465 former students.

On April 10, 1997, Paul Leroux was arrested by the Vancouver Police Force and charged with possession of child pornography. In June, he was charged by the RCMP and on August 4, 1998, appeared in Supreme Court in Inuvik to answer to 42 charges of gross indecency, indecent assault, attempted indecent assault, and attempted buggery against 20 former students.

The Leroux victims, now grown men, live in Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulita, Deline, Yellowknife (including inmates from the Yellowknife Correctional Centre), Calgary, Ponoka, and High Level.

## ASSISTING THE VICTIMS

Starting in May 1997, meetings were held between the RCMP, GNWT departments of Justice, and Health and Social Services, and the Inuvik Regional Health & Social Services Board (IRH&SSB) to coordinate support services for the GHRV victims.

These services were to be provided in conjunction with the RCMP investigation and subsequent court appearances. At the outset, concern was raised about the lack of a victims services program and/or staff. Subsequently, the IRH&SSB submitted and received a financial contribution from the Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories to sponsor such a program. The IRH&SSB contracted a person experienced in counselling victims of sexual abuse to provide support to former students and communities impacted by the investigation into abuse at Grollier Hall.

In December 1997, an ad hoc group of former GHRV students met in Yellowknife to form a Planning Circle with the initial intention of supporting each other emotionally through their GHRV investigation and trial processes and to determine their own grieving and healing needs as related to their residential school experiences. The GHRV Planning Circle was invited to an interagency meeting in Inuvik in January 1998, where they received commitments for financial, resource and political support from the federal and territorial governments and from Aboriginal organizations to help with the immediate and long-term intervention and emotional support needs of former GHRV students.

Harold Cook, a Correctional Officer at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre, was granted a one-year leave of absence from the GNWT Justice (Corrections Division) to assume the GHRVSHC Victims Advocate position, effective February 9th. He re-located to Fort Good Hope and set up an informal regional victims advocacy office to provide intervention, emotional, and limited counselling support to former GHRV students.

## GHRV VICTIM/WITNESS SUPPORT SERVICE

The Victims Advocate was a member of a trial coordination team comprised of Justice Canada, the RCMP, the IRH&SSB, and Inuvik Family Counselling Centre formed to organize logistical needs for the GHRV victim/witnesses.

Each interagency partner had determined its own mandate, e.g. the Crown was to be responsible for pre-court preparation, the RCMP for transportation, and the IRH&SSB for meals and accommodations. The task of providing emotional support and debriefing was left to the GHRS Healing Circle.

Learning from the experiences of the Maczynski and Comeau victims, the GHRS Healing Circle set out to ensure that the Leroux victims ("the men") were emotionally supported by their family, their community caregiver, and an Aboriginal counselling/support team throughout the court process, the philosophy being that if the men were *better prepared and emotionally supported*, they would be a much more efficient use of the court's time as they would know what to expect from the lawyers and the judge, thus lending credibility to their testimony.

Each victim/witness had the following options of support:

- ⊕ to be accompanied by a *family support* person (their spouse or a brother, sister or cousin) who would be accommodated at the Arctic College (Aurora Campus) with meals provided at the Inuvik Regional Hospital cafeteria using a chit (food voucher) system;
- ⊕ to be accompanied by a *community caregiver*, preferably one who had attended a GHRS Healing Circle "Support for the Residential School Survivors" training workshop held in Fort Good Hope and Inuvik during March, 1998. These training workshops were designed to provide mental health, alcohol and drug and counselling professionals with the knowledge and skills to better understand the global impact of the residential school system on northern peoples and communities. Topics included amongst others, a historical perspective of the residential school system in the NWT, understanding cultural and identity loss, support and intervention, basic counselling skills, the adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse, critical incident stress debriefing, and teamwork promotion;

- ⊕ a *team of Aboriginal professionals*: from varied backgrounds in family and addictions counselling, and one a well-respected spiritual advisor from a Sahtu community. Their critical responsibilities would be to offer reassurance, to normalize the process, and to generally present a calm presence. Their basic criteria was an understanding of and commitment to empowerment, i.e. they would take their lead from the men and attempt to respond to their identified needs (background facilitation); and
- ⊕ two families (or 'substitute parents') who were brought in from Tulita and Sachs Harbour to provide silent support in the courtroom and emotional encouragement. These parents had each lost a son (both former GHRS students and alleged victims of Paul Leroux) through suicide, one after disclosure to the RCMP in December 1997.

## FUNDING

The GHRSHC believed that, since the prosecution of crime is a federal responsibility in the Northwest Territories, the federal criminal justice system had an ethical obligation to provide services and processes that allowed for the least harm to occur to the men who were witnesses in the sexual abuse case.

Funding proposals were sent to the federal departments of:

- Health Canada (First Nations and Inuit Health Programs Directorate);
- Justice Canada (Aboriginal Justice Directorate, which indicated that the proposal did not fit within its mandate but forwarded it to the Grants and Contributions Unit, Programs Directorate); and
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (NWT Region).

A proposal was subsequently forwarded to the Victims Assistance Committee. In total, the GHRS Healing Circle requested \$84,595.00 for the project.



The Consultant, Community Mental Health (West), Health and Wellness Promotion Division, GNWT Health and Social Services, served an important negotiation link with the federal departments.

## THE GHRM TEAM

The GHRM Healing Circle called upon the same team members who had delivered its "Support for the Residential School Survivors" training workshops to deliver the Victim/Witness Support Service. However, due to the lack of confirmation of funding from sources and the lack of core funding, the Healing Circle was unable to bring the team together until one week prior to the trial for a strategy session to outline support services, coordinate and link with other key players, clarify roles and responsibilities, and draft an evaluation framework.

The Consultant, Community Mental Health (West), Health and Wellness Promotion Division, GNWT Health and Social Services and the Regional Psychologist, IRH&SSB, participated in the strategy meeting.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of MacKenzie provided in-kind contributions for a meeting place, plus accommodations and meals for the strategy session in Yellowknife. Aurora College provided a three-bedroom student townhouse in Inuvik for the GHRM Team during the trial phase.

## LOGISTICS

### Getting to Inuvik

Witnesses were brought into Inuvik on a region-by-region schedule coordinated between the Crown Counsel and the RCMP:

- ➔ Beaufort (Tuktoyaktuk)
- ➔ Sahtu (Fort Good Hope, Deline, Tulita, Norman Wells)
- ➔ Mackenzie Delta (Aklavik)
- ➔ North Slave (Yellowknife)
- ➔ Alberta (Peace River, Ponoka)

The RCMP notified the witness as to his dates of testimony and travel. The GHRM logistical coordinator then worked closely with the IRH&SSB to organize corresponding itineraries for the accompanying family support person and community caregiver. *Full airfare* travel was invoiced through the business arm of the logistical coordinator (consistent with the breaks and legal challenges commonplace to a multiple victim trial).

### Staying in Inuvik

The witness, his family and community caregiver were met at the airport by IRH&SSB staff and driven to the Aurora College campus (unused due to the summer break) where rooms were assigned on a designated floor.

Packages were distributed containing an Aurora College lease agreement, a food voucher for the Inuvik Regional Hospital, and a pass to the Aurora College exercise facility.

Twenty-four hour security using local personnel was arranged by the RCMP and Aurora College. Travellers were required to enter and leave the building using a sign-in/sign-out policy (in the event of re-scheduling of testimony). Messages were left on a message board beside the sign-out book.

The lounges had cable television equipped with a VCR and movies. Coffee and snacks were available daily by the IRH&SSB. Caregivers were assigned shifts and available around the clock to assist the men cope with emotional triggers and flashbacks.

After the witness provided his testimony, he and his family support were re-located to the Nurses' Residence adjoining the Inuvik Regional Hospital in order to minimize any possible contact between those still waiting to give testimony. Aurora College and the IRH&SSB were to invoice the GHRM Healing Circle for this room, meal and security costs.

## Orientation

On the same evening, all arriving witnesses, family members and caregivers were assembled in the Aurora College resource room for an orientation by the GHRM Counselling/Support Team, the GHRM Victims Advocate, staff from the Inuvik Family Counselling Centre, and staff from the IRH&SSB.

Points discussed included:

- ✓ trial preparation by Crown counsel;
- ✓ police statement review;
- ✓ the trial room location and facilities;
- ✓ the abuser and defence counsel strategy;
- ✓ possible emotional reactions;
- ✓ debriefing procedures and sharing circles;
- ✓ counselling, mental health and medical services;
- ✓ counselling service located on-site at the Aurora College campus lounge room;
- ✓ community agency contacts;
- ✓ option of completing a victim impact statement;
- ✓ accommodations and meals;
- ✓ the Aurora College security policy;
- ✓ handling the media;
- ✓ RCMP contacts;
- ✓ 'tainting of evidence' caution; plus
  - any needs or concerns of the witness and his family.

On the evening (or the morning of the day) before their testimony, the witness was given a trial orientation by the Crown counsel, the Crown Victim/Witness Assistant, and the RCMP investigators, on:

- ✓ the prosecution policy of the Attorney General of Canada;
- ✓ roles of the Crown V/W Assistant and the GHRM Victims Advocate;
- ✓ court procedures, the trial (e.g. who will be in the courtroom, the Crown's case, the defence's case); being a witness; verdict and sentencing; victim impact statements; plus
  - any concerns and needs of the witness.

## Meals

Meal vouchers were distributed along with listed meal times of the cafeteria. People were expected to look after their own meals costs outside of those times. In the event that court times overlapped, the IRH&SSB made arrangements for meals to be brought in or set aside at the cafeteria. The IRH&SSB was to invoice the GHRM Healing Circle for all meal costs.

## Getting Around Town

The IRH&SSB provided daily transportation between the airport, the Aurora College campus, the cafeteria and the trial location using a van. The GHRM Victims Advocate rented a vehicle to transport the GHRM team members or the witnesses and family members between the different locations.

## The Waiting Area

A location consisting of two empty offices, a small empty storage room and a large waiting area, situated across the hallway from the courtroom was provided in-kind by the IRH&SSB, which fitted the area with couches, chairs, a coffee machine and supplies, and a telephone.

Letters of support were pinned on the walls as received.

The non-smoking regulation was relaxed to allow smoking in one room fitted with a sliding window (used primarily for debriefing purposes). Although stark, it had large windows allowing for bright sunlight.

A sign on the entrance door gave notice to the public and media that the waiting area was private. Authorized entrance was permitted to the witnesses, families, community caregivers, the GHRM team, GHRM victims advocate, IRH&SSB staff, Inuvik Family Counselling Centre staff, the RCMP and Crown Counsel.

At times, the Team and caregivers provided informal debriefing to members of the public attending the trial, or provided information and referrals (access to available services, family support services, community caregivers) in conjunction with IRH&SSB.

### **The Courtroom**

Two sheriffs conducted electronic body searches prior to anyone entering the courtroom. There were, at any one time, at least four RCMP officers present in the courtroom. A number of public seats were reserved for the debriefing team and caregivers, then later by witnesses who had given testimony, and their families.

### **Giving Testimony**

The GHRV Team facilitated, with the men, a review of their RCMP statements. IRH&SSB staff drove the men and the families to the courtroom site and accompanied them to the waiting room.

The trial judge was flexible with court procedures and allowed:

- the family support person to sit near but slightly away from the witness box (silent support); and
- ❖ in one case, a box screen to be installed to shield a witness from looking at the accused, a courtroom practice usually reserved for child or youth witnesses.

The 'substitute parents', caregivers and the GHRV team sat in a reserved area in the public gallery, directly facing the witness, to give silent support.

### **Debriefing**

Immediately following testimony, the witness was taken to the debriefing room to process their emotional reactions, usually accompanied by their family support person and/or community caregiver. Debriefing was conducted by a GHRV Counselling/Support Team member and/or a Inuvik Family Counselling Centre professional.

Refreshments, tissue paper, blankets, and pillows were available.

The room had blinds which were drawn to provide more privacy.

The option of sitting in court later to hear the testimony of the other men was available.

The GHRV Team also assisted the GHRV Victims Advocate with completing victim impact statements.

### **Sharing Circles**

These were held in the evenings at the Family Counselling Centre and led by a GHRV Team member. Participants usually included the men who had testified that day, their family members, and community caregivers (both from Inuvik and those from out of town).

All persons had by then several hours to process the day's events and were better able to share their feelings and reactions:

- the men to their experience of coming face to face with their abuser for the first time in many years, to testifying and to re-living the memories of their abuse;
- the family members to hearing the stories for the first time, to witnessing the stressful cross-examination by defence counsel, and to coming to terms with an understanding of the reasons behind the men's behaviours throughout the years; and
- the caregivers to bearing witness to the emotional interactions between the men and their families.

The Team also coordinated - with the RCMP - debriefing and sharing circles with inmate/witnesses in the jail facility.

Team members were called upon from time to time to assist the RCMP in searching for errant witnesses or men resorting to alcohol and drug-coping methods.

## Assessments

The GHRV Team referred one witness to the Hay River alcohol and drug treatment program but only after vigorous intervention following reluctant (and almost deliberate) stalling by the IRH&SSB Alcohol and Drug Specialist.

The Team conducted post-trial risk assessments of the men, their families, and the 'substitute parents' and relayed the information to the appropriate community caregivers for follow-up.

## Going Home

Most men left the following (or within a few) day of giving testimony. Some remained to provide silent support to those still waiting to give testimony, others to watch the trial proceedings, others to witness the verdict and sentencing.

## Debriefings

The GHRV Team held *daily* debriefings and evaluations with the Crown, RCMP, and IRH&SSB staff, and made adjustments accordingly to services delivery.

A few hours following the sentencing, the GHRV Team facilitated a final *interagency team debriefing* of RCMP, Crown counsel, IRH&SSB staff, Inuvik Family Counselling staff, community caregivers, and remaining witnesses.

All persons were able to process the project's events and to share their feelings and reactions of an emotionally-intense experience:

- ▶ witnessing grown men testify and re-live the memories of their teenage abuse;
- ▶ the emotional interactions between the men and their families;
- ▶ two years of investigation and trial preparation;
- ▶ comprehending the global impact of the residential school experience;
- ▶ the emotional impact on each of their professional and social lives, as well as on their families; and

- ▶ the end of an intense logistical coordination project.

## Aftermath

On August 15, Paul Leroux was sentenced to 10 years in jail on 9 counts of gross indecency, 3 indecent assaults, 1 attempted indecent assault, and 1 attempted buggery. He filed an appeal on October 15th.

All the men have encountered *post-trial reactions*:

- some have begun rebuilding or strengthening relationships with their families;
- others are angry or disappointed at the sentence and/or verdicts (28 charges were dismissed or stayed);
- some want to commence civil action against the Roman Catholic Church;
- most experienced the aftermath of trauma (catching a cold or flu; mental flashbacks; disorientation; emotional swings; depression)
- others are coping in the manner they have used in the past (drugs, alcohol, isolation);
- others are taking counselling, therapy, or alcohol and drug treatment.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Victim/Witness Support Service was one component of an *interagency team* where all the agencies and departments involved focused their energies and resources on meeting the emotional needs and concerns of the men and their families.

The Service operated on the principles of *empowerment*: i.e., of informed participation; of the men exercising choices in favour of what they truly wanted; of the men being heard; of the men being able to create their own future by knowing where they were; of building their self-confidence; of collective interaction; and of initiating change.

The Service was *client-driven* (the men - through community consultations with the GHRV Victims Advocate - chose the GHRV Counselling/Support Team).

This action in itself corresponded with one of the primary principles of the GHRIS Healing Circle, namely:

*Respected Elders and Aboriginal counsellors/healers chosen by the GHRIS Healing Circle will be essential participants in defining healing and the approaches taken for our healing.* (emphasis mine)

There was *familiarity*:

- the men knew the Team members;
- the Community Caregivers and the Team members knew each other through the GHRIS Healing Circle "Support for the Residential School Survivors" training workshops;
- the Team knew the GHRIS Victims Advocate;
- the Team leader, GHRIS Victims Advocate and GHRIS Healing Circle Coordinator are former Grollier Hall students.

The Team was *flexible* (day-to-day strategy based on daily debriefings with the men, Crown, RCMP, caregivers, sharing circles); *willing to take risks* (e.g. working with security-risk inmate/witnesses and those going through drug dependency withdrawals; strongly encouraged and persistently followed up with the men to prepare their victim impact statements); and *competent* (they knew their stuff!).

*On-site debriefings* were immediate (on-site, evening follow-ups), accessible, involved the family, held in separate rooms with large windows (allowed for sunlight and less claustrophobic post-testimony reactions), and were flexible (relaxation of the non-smoking policy). The waiting area was personalized and user-friendly with couches and chairs, refreshments, and letters of support in view.

*Team spirit* was high although slightly dampened by the conspicuous absence of any official church ministry during the trial and sentencing.

Other highlights:

- ☼ *volunteer community caregivers* who either took leave without pay from their jobs or used holiday time to be involved in the project.

- ☼ the '*substitute parents*' from Sachs Harbour who were present for the entire trial and who provided moral support to the men.

## PROBLEMS/CONCERNS

Due to legal considerations and constraints, funding proposals only went out two months before the trial; confirmations were not received until late July. This, along with the fact that the GHRIS Healing Circle does not have core funding, created *funding uncertainty* resulting in a *compressed timeframe* prior to the trial to:

- clarify roles, expectations, and ascertain strengths of each other;
- determine tasks, responsibilities, and preparing relevant locations (e.g. debriefing room);
- build relationships between team members, the men, and key government/agency contacts
- determine team logistics (e.g. service agreements; travel arrangements);
- allow the men to select their family or caregiver support (in a few cases, the selection was undecided until one or two days prior to the witness leaving for Inuvik).

Administration consequently had to respond to the daily changes (court delays, travel arrangements).

It also meant that no *prior consultations* took place with community agencies or government departments as to the mandate of the proposed V/WSS project or to request assistance or support (e.g. an alcohol and drug program and a Dene band refused or was reluctant to loan their community caregiver as support persons; a lack of awareness on the roles and responsibilities of the GHRIS Team).

The seeming *lack of support by the RC Diocese* displayed in a highly critical letter received prior to the trial containing unproven "community concerns" from unidentified persons regarding "excessive salaries" paid to the GHRIS counselling/support team, and chiding the "management and accountability" of the GHRIS Healing Circle.

The GHRM team considered this action as unprofessional, non-consultative and a negative impact on morale. The conspicuous absence of the Church was regarded as holding itself as a *non-accountable witness* to the court sentence, i.e. it again turned a "deaf ears to the Boys".

*Accommodations* were in 3 different locations of the town: the donated townhouse had limited space for two women and three men who each required their own personal "downtime" space due to the highly emotional nature of the project. *Ground transportation* became an extra cost, e.g. taxis, as the IRH&SSB vehicle service was designated only for the men and their families.

*Communications* between interagency members: there was no central location for messages, faxes, etc., although the telephone located in the waiting area was on loan from the IRH&SSB. This unclear *flow of information* created a mixed community perception about the project; some information was distorted (e.g. team fees); there was gossip among certain community/departments personnel which had an impact on the GHRM Team.

Although the community caregivers were familiar and willing to connect with the men, the *selection process* was frustrated by

- ☒ internal community rivalry and dynamics (power struggle; unresolved issues);
- ☒ annoying pestering of the men by certain community caregivers to be arbitrarily chosen for the project; and
- ☒ confusion that the court process was itself a form of residential school inquiry.

The GHRM team was tempted to intervene at times but in the end, the men were encouraged to make their own choices.

Some of the men were a handful, resorting to life-long *habits of coping* (alcohol, drugs, AWOL); given to flirting with the caregivers; missing appointments; and absent from evening sharing circles. More than a few had the *misconception* that the trial represented the end of having to deal with their abuse and of telling their story.

There was no special activities planned for men and families (e.g. recreation) or the team who usually found themselves burnt out by the end of the evenings.

## MAJOR CHANGES IN OPERATIONS AND/OR PERSONNEL

The GHRM-V/WSS team was originally to include two consultants and the Aboriginal spiritual advisor. However, a third consultant was belatedly included prior to the strategy session which necessitated modifications in roles and responsibilities and a major search for additional funds.

The options of having the men accompanied by a family member and the families by a community caregiver was considered at the strategy meeting held in the week prior to the trial. This also resulted in a major changes to the budget and a search for additional funds.

The notion of having 'substitute parents' present in the courtroom and in the debriefing area was contemplated at the strategy session after both families had made requests to the GHRM Healing Circle. Again, this resulted in a budget shuffle and funding search.

A three-bedroom residence was made available to the V/WSS team by Aurora College for the duration of the trial. However, due to shiftwork and support to the men and their families, two consultants moved to a local hotel and the other to the nurses' residence while only one ended up using the facility (along with the GHRM Victims Advocate). These were additional costs which required a further funding search.

## SUPPORT FROM JUSTICE SYSTEM AND COMMUNITY AT LARGE

Most everyone who came into contact with the V/WSS had positive comments:

- ✓ the men were greatly relieved to have familiar faces present at all times - during travel, at the accommodations, at the waiting area, in the courtroom, at the sharing circles;
- ✓ family members expressed gratitude at the positive changes seen in the men almost immediately following testimony;
- ✓ the Crown Counsel were impressed that even though some men broke down during testimony, most if not all, provided strong testimony which was unwavering during vigorous cross-examination by defence counsel;
- ✓ the RCMP - through their extensive investigation - came to a new understanding of the magnitude of the impact that the residential school experience had on the men, and through the trial, established personal and working relationships with the men and the GHRHS Team;
- ✓ the trial judge, before delivering his sentence, thanked all those who assisted the witnesses which aided in smooth trial coordination;
- ✓ the community caregivers were extremely appreciative for being included in such a positive interagency effort;
- ✓ community people, native bands, Metis locals, regional and national native organizations, and government workers offered personal encouragement and letters of support to the men and gratitude to the GHRHS Healing Circle.

## FOLLOW-UP

### The Men

The men (including the survivor/inmates and the Maczynski, Comeau, and Houston victims) identify an urgent need for a *family healing workshop* where they can acknowledge their Grollier Hall history; express their emotions at their lost opportunities for being teenagers together; define the kind of relationship they want to have as adults; and rebuild or repair relationships with their families and communities. They hope the Bishop of the Diocese of the Mackenzie will be present to:

- acknowledge a lack of understanding and betrayal on the part of the Church;
- resolve the Father Martin Houston matter; and
- clarify post-trial statements by a Diocese employee hinting at the validity of a witness' testimony of informing the (then) Grollier Hall administrator of Leroux's sexual abuse actions.

The former students agreed the Bishop should provide a *homily* or statement encouraging people to begin to address the impact of the residential school experience in their individual lives, families, communities, and culture. This homily would be supportive action towards healing, would provide an opening to the workshop, and would help establish a nurturing environment for the men to know they are believed and still valued by their communities.

They request information on the types of *available therapy* (e.g. one-on-one, personal development seminars, etc); the costs for such therapy; the sources of funding to help attend; the length of time for each; and any cautions of taking any such treatment. They want a list of mental health resources available in the NWT and Canada and who to contact. They also wanted information on any future workshops dealing with residential schools and related issues, e.g. childhood sexual abuse, familial, cultural.

They would like to see *community educational/awareness activities* for their parents, government workers, politicians, crown counsel, RCMP, Elders, and survivors on the history of the residential school system, the effects of colonization, indoctrination policies of government and churches, and the impact such a system had on their culture.

Most expressed a need and request for the GHRHS Healing Circle to locate and obtain Grollier Hall *memorabilia*, such as trophies, photographs, yearbooks, and attendance records. Arrangements will be made with the RC Diocese, Beaufort/Delta Divisional Board of Education, and the RCMP for such items.

Some wanted to know the status of the *Grollier Hall structure* (the ownership), what is going to happen to it (e.g. new facility?), and if so, whether space would be available for the GHRV Healing Circle activities (e.g. training or healing centre, reunion, memorial). Some felt it should be burned to the ground (erase the memories).

### The Team

The Team identified the need for a more *structured high-risk intervention support model* that would assist victims of residential school abuses starting from the time of a disclosure, through the investigation phase, then trial support, and followed by community or group healing activities.

An important element would be an RCMP *investigation protocol* that would allow for:

- cultural-sensitivity;
- advance notice given to former students so as to emotionally prepare themselves for giving a police statement;
- mental health support after giving a police statement; and
- consultation with the appropriate residential school survivors group.

They saw a need for some sort of *ongoing training* for community caregivers on the residential school issue, whether as internships, in-service seminars for government workers, training-the-trainer workshops. This might be accomplished through curriculum development in partnership with Aurora College, the Tl'oondih Healing Society, and Nats'ejee K'eh A&D Treatment Centre.

There is a definite need for a *residential school aftermath treatment program* for former residential school students and their families who have to tell their stories either through a formal court process or an alternative disclosure process. This program could be part of/or the mandate of the Tl'oondih Healing Camp, the Nats'ejee K'eh A&D Treatment Centre, and Trapper's Lodge (RC Diocese).

There is a need for the GHRV Healing Circle society to establish an *office location*, secure core funding, engage executive and administrative support personnel, and develop management procedures and policy guidelines.

### SUMMARY

The clients and professional who interacted with the Grollier Hall Victim/Witness Support Service viewed it from different perspectives. Ultimately, however, it is the nature and quality of the user's experience that counts.

The Service:

- was well supported by the men and their families who used it;
- facilitated the cooperation of the men;
- created a perception of fairer treatment;
- facilitated the prosecution of the case by mitigating some or most of the hardships and stresses victim/witnesses experience during court proceedings; and
- responded to a gap in a system that in the past almost entirely neglected victim needs.

We suggest to any residential school survivors group wishing to develop a similar service that they ensure their funding proposals are received by the appropriate funding sources as early as possible to ensure *adequate funding* is in place before commencing such a project and *sufficient time* to prepare and coordinate, amongst others:

- logistics (accommodations, transportation, etc);
- strategy sessions to clarify the roles and responsibilities of a counselling/support team;
- project awareness campaign (community and aboriginal organizations, media); and
- resources for the counselling/support team.

We further suggest - depending on the requests of the former residential school students involved, the communities affected and the size of the region - *more than one advocate* to assist the former students involved and to liaise with law enforcement and prosecution agencies.



The following should be considered:

- trust has to be established between the former students involved and the victims advocate, i.e. the person must have their confidence as historical sexual abuse is a very sensitive topic (especially if the victims are men);
- it is highly recommended that the advocate be a former residential school student as he/she would be more able to understand, in the deepest sense possible, the impact of the residential school system and to identify with how former students have been affected;
- it would be of immense value if the former students involved can view the advocate as one who has worked on his/her residential school issue and who has his/her own healing support network
- it would be greatly beneficial if the advocate is able and willing to travel extensively and to be available and accessible by former students.

In conclusion, we suggest that a victim services program be developed and implemented for the Inuvik region to assist all victims of crime (including historical residential school abuses) in a more comprehensive and efficient manner.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a **public inquiry** be convened to examine the experience of students of residential school facilities across the western NWT. This inquiry should be able to investigate situations of alleged physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuses at residential schools, the quality of education received by students of these facilities, and the types of treatment and healing available for residential school survivors. The following must be considered:
  - a public inquiry may cause *secondary victim trauma*;
  - *support and referral protocols* be arranged for historical abuse victims to contact existing services, front-line workers and survivors groups;
  - the inquiry process must allow for the *least harm* to occur to inquiry witnesses;
  - each witness should be consulted and dealt with concerning his/her *support needs*; and
  - the *healing process* of witnesses does not end with the conclusion of an inquiry.
2. That, prior to an inquiry, **educational and awareness workshops** on the residential school issue be conducted for government senior managers, professionals, front-line community caregivers and community justice committees to increase awareness, cross-cultural understanding and up-to-date knowledge.
3. That an outcome of the inquiry would be an **alternative disclosure and validation process** to enable people who have not disclosed to come forward with their stories; acknowledge their strength and credibility; hold their abuser(s) accountable; and deal with the legacy of their residential school experiences in their own ways.
4. That the results of the inquiry, if any, be included in the current **curricula of educational institutions** so as to:
  - break the silence on historical abuses;

- validate the legacy of the northern residential school system; and
- promote wholistic health and an increased awareness and education of the generational effects of the residential school system.

5. That the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre and the TI'oondih Healing Society, in partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories (Health and Social Services) and residential school survivor groups, design, develop and implement a long-term **residential school aftermath treatment program** for former residential school students and their families.
6. That the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre and the TI'oondih Healing Society, in partnership with Aurora College and residential school survivor groups, design, develop and implement a combined **training and healing program** to integrate northern residential school survivors as **community assistants** in sexual abuse counselling.

The objectives would be to provide counsellor trainees with basic knowledge and understanding of the power and control dynamics of sexual abuse, development of basic counselling skills, and therapeutic resolution of personal and community sexual abuse issues, based on experiential, integrated, personalised and transformational learning principles.

The goal would be to have *paraprofessional sexual abuse counsellors* trained to function at a basic skill level and solidly empowered to assist individuals and communities with power abuse issues.

7. That the Government of the Northwest Territories increase its *victim services budget* for existing or future victim service programs to effectively assist with any multiple-victim sexual abuse trial.

**EPILOGUE**

*"I recognize that my finding may disappoint some and may please some others, but I am sure everyone realizes, as counsel realizes, that a criminal trial must deal with specific facts on specific allegations. It is not a broad-ranging inquiry into whatever abuses may have occurred in the residential school system. That must be done in some other forum, as I am sure it will be done. A criminal trial is certainly not a healing process. It is badly equipped to heal the victims of crime. Victims can only be healed through their own efforts, through the assistance of their family and friends, and through the work of the entire community."*

Reasons for Judgment, *R. v. Leroux*,  
The Honourable Justice J. Vertes,  
Supreme Court of the Northwest  
Territories, Inuvik, August 14, 1998

*"In these situations, we know that the sexual abuse of young people is an act of violence, both physical and profoundly psychological."*

Reasons for Sentence, *R. v. Leroux*,  
The Honourable Justice J. Vertes,  
Supreme Court of the Northwest  
Territories, Inuvik, August 15, 1998

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Dene Nation

Metis Nation of the Northwest Territories

North Slave Metis Alliance (Yellowknife)

Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Ottawa)

David Cook (Fort Good Hope)

Concerned Citizens of Tulita

Tulita Dene Band

The Leadership and People of the Sahtu  
(Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated; Sahtu Dene Council)

Drug & Alcohol Program (Fort Good Hope)

The People of Fort Good Hope

TI'oondih Healing Society (Fort McPherson)

Tetlit Gwichin Band (Fort McPherson)

James Ross & Company (Fort McPherson)

Rita Arey (Aklavik)

Inuvik Dmm

Feb 27/97

p. 3

## NEWS

### Briefs

#### Grollier investigation

Inuvik RCMP are investigating an alleged sexual assault that occurred at Grollier Hall in the mid 1970s. Grollier Hall is a residence for students from surrounding communities who attended school here.

The male suspect, a former employee at Grollier, no longer lives in the NWT, according to Staff Sgt. Tom Steggles of Yellowknife RCMP. Only one alleged victim has been identified.

A search of Grollier Hall was carried out last month by Inuvik RCMP under a search warrant. "This is a brand new investigation and we have a lot of groundwork to do yet" before any charges are laid, said Steggles.

# Leroux on trial

## Grollier Hall assault victims get support

by Glen Korstrom  
Northern News Services

Former Grollier Hall senior boys supervisor Paul Leroux, 58, appeared in NWT Supreme Court in Inuvik Aug. 4 to answer to 44 sex-related charges stemming from incidents during the 1960s and 1970s.

Leroux pleaded not-guilty to 25 sex-related charges, guilty to nine charges, gave special pleas to four charges and the crown stayed six charges.

There is a publication ban on the names of his alleged victims during the trial, which is expected to last for the next three weeks.

Meanwhile, the 20 men who allege Leroux sexually abused them in Inuvik as teenagers in the 1960s and 1970s are receiving professional support during the trial.

The Grollier Hall Residential School healing circle has taken a lead role in forming a support service for those who will once again come face to face with their alleged abuser.

"Our fundamental priority as the GHRs healing circle will be to establish a counselling and emotional safety net before, during and after the Leroux trial," said

Harold Cook, the victims' advocate for the GHRs healing circle.

"The GHRs victim-witnesses will receive support from their family, their community caregiver and from our counselling and support team to get through the court process emotionally intact."

The support service team consists of three aboriginal professionals with training in family and addictions counselling.

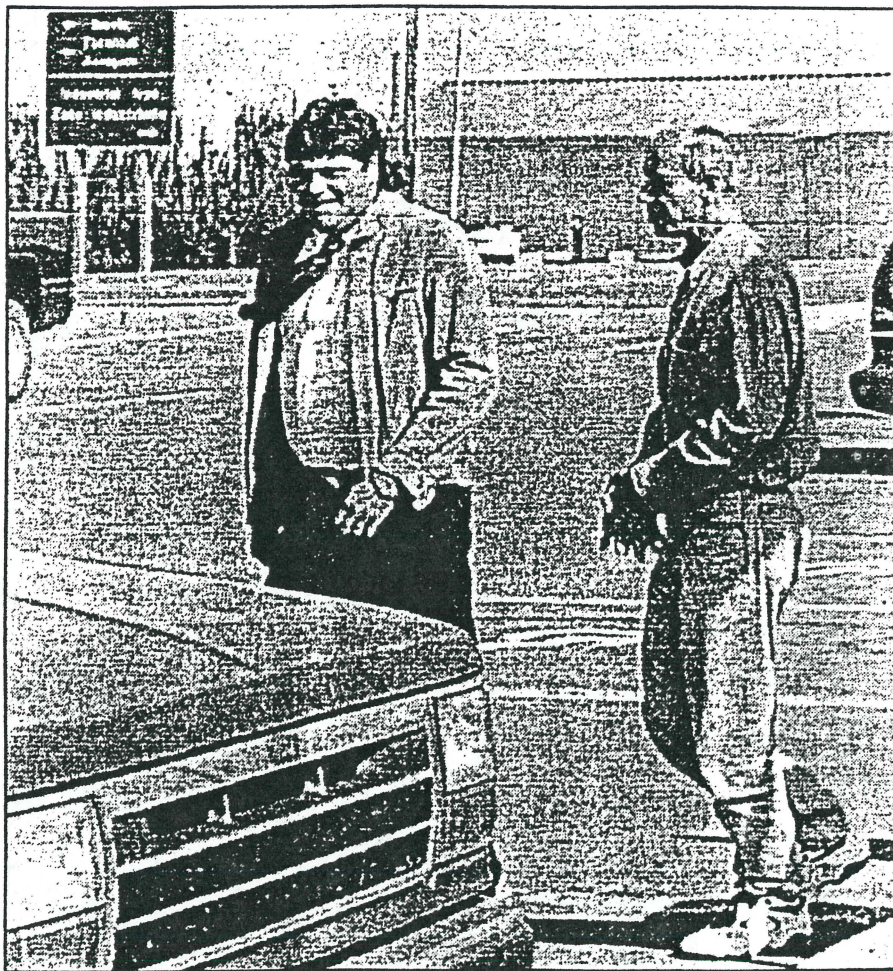
Norman Yake-laya is in Inuvik from NSY Training in Hay River while Vera Morin is here from New Path Beginnings in Yellowknife and Phyllis Nault is here from Blue Raven Consulting in Hay River.

Spiritual advisor Charlie Neyellie from Deline is also helping Leroux's alleged victims, who were all between the ages of 13 and 18 at the time the alleged assaults occurred.

The counselling team's main role will be to offer reassurance, normalize the process and generally present a calm presence in a highly charged setting.

Further support will come from community caregivers who attended GHRs healing circle workshops in Fort Good Hope and Inuvik in

*Victim-witnesses offered support during trial*



Glen Korstrom/NNSL photo

**Cpl. Les Bancroft (left) leads a handcuffed Paul Leroux from Inuvik airport to waiting Ford truck July 29.** Leroux is currently appearing in NWT Supreme Court to face 34 sex-related charges concerning 20 former students during his years as senior boys supervisor at the former residential school, Grollier Hall. The trial is expected to take three weeks.

March 1998. Allegations of sexual abuse on former male residents of Grollier Hall surfaced in 1996.

Initially the RCMP

launched an investigation into the affairs of a former boys' supervisor; however, the investigation expanded considerably once additional

suspects were named.

Two former supervisors have since been convicted for sex-related charges and received jail sentences.

The Edmonton Journal, August 15, 1998, A1

# School supervisor guilty of sex assault

BRENT PUSHKARENKO  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Inuvik

A clutch of former residential school students embraced each other in an Inuvik courtroom Friday after five guilty verdicts were read against the man who sexually abused them.

More hugs were exchanged outside the court with police officers who worked on the case against Paul Leroux, former supervisor of Grollier Hall residential school for Inuit and Indian students.

Leroux had earlier pleaded guilty to nine charges of gross indecency.

He is expected to be sentenced today.

Justice John Vertes also found the 58-year-old guilty on charges of indecent assault and attempting to commit buggery. The victims ranged in age from 14 to 17.

Leroux, supervisor of Grollier Hall from 1967 to 1979, was found not guilty on one charge each of indecent assault and gross indecency in an alleged incident involving a 12-year-old boy.

He was also found not guilty on four additional sex charges.

"It is a judge's responsibility in a case like this to apply proof beyond a reasonable doubt," Vertes told a packed courtroom. "I recognize my findings disappoint some and are looked upon favourably by others, but in a criminal trial we must deal with the facts."

The Crown has asked for a 15-year

sentence, saying Leroux breached the trust of those around him while in a position of authority.

Defence lawyer Jim Brydon has asked for a five-year sentence, including the fifteen months Leroux has already spent in custody. Brydon said his client has not reoffended since he left the school in 1979.

Dr. Peter Collins, a Vancouver psychiatrist, testified Thursday at a sentencing hearing that without a proper examination it would be difficult to conclude Leroux is a pedophile with a high risk to reoffend.

He did, however, suggest evidence seized during a police raid on Leroux's Vancouver apartment in March of last year, including videotapes, photographs and information stored in a computer, suggests there's reason to believe he may still have an attraction towards young boys.

"I've never known pedophiles to be totally curable," Collins testified.

Leroux, who once served as a justice of the peace and later as a complaints investigator for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, apologized to his victims Friday.

"I wish to apologize to all the people hurt by my actions," he said. "I also want to apologize to their families, the community, the aboriginal community as a whole and the Roman Catholic Church.

"I hope and pray these individuals can forgive me."

...eric that Clinton was ...

# Leroux goes to jail

by Glen Korstrom  
Northern News Services

## Senior boys' supervisor gets 10 years

Sexual abuse victims, families and caregivers packed NWT Supreme Court in Inuvik to see the final days of a trial of a former senior boys' supervisor at the now-boarded up Grollier Hall.

When Paul Leroux was found guilty of 14 counts of sexual abuse and sentenced to 10 years in prison because of acts he committed at the school during the 1960s and '70s, many hugged each other. Some cried.

Throughout the trial the courtroom doors were posted with signs alerting anyone who had difficulty hearing testimony that counsel-

lors were available to listen and provide guidance.

Leroux sat slumped for much of the trial. Sometimes he played with his eye glasses. His reaction was similarly lifeless after the verdict and sentence were read.

His 10-year sentence includes the 14-and-a-half months Leroux has already spent in custody.

Many people who attended much of the court session declined public comment, but the consensus was that no outcome could return the many years of suffering experienced by most of Leroux's victims.

Just before delivering his

sentence, Justice John Vertes said Leroux, "is not here as a scapegoat for the residential school system," but instead was being sentenced for specific crimes based on evidence in the trial.

When reading his verdict, Vertes considered how Leroux apologized to all his victims, their families and to the aboriginal community as a whole. Vertes added how Leroux had not reoffended during the past 19 years.

Leroux's 14 convictions include nine cases of gross indecency, three counts of indecent assault, one charge of attempted indecent assault and one of attempted buggery.

On Aug. 14, Vertes dismissed seven of the charges to which Leroux had pleaded not guilty. At the same time, he pronounced Leroux guilty on five other counts. Leroux started the two-week trial by pleading guilty to nine charges.

"There is no evidence of force or threats to compel students into sexual activity," Vertes said while reading his verdict.

"The methods he used were to entice, encourage and what he called affection."

Vertes rejected testimony from one witness who told of an encounter with a significant difference from the others — a meeting where he said Leroux threatened him with a knife.

Still, Leroux was found guilty of attempt to commit buggery in that offence.

"Clearly in a position of authority.... (Leroux) systematically, over a period of years, abused that trust," Vertes said.

*"There is no evidence of force or threats..."*



*The Grollier Hall Residential  
School Healing Circle  
would like to say*

*Thank You*

*to those who helped with our  
victim/witness support service:*

**Family Support:** Doreen, Ethel, Diane, Lori, Irene, Eddie Jr., Leanne, Denise, Millie, Sheri, Maggie, Lona, Louise, Jessica and Cecile. We especially thank Frank and Martha Kudluk and Laura Lennie, for being our "substitute parents".

**RCMP 'G' Division:** Al McCambridge, Rob Frame, Les Bancroft, Kevin Allen, Colin Allen Jr., Phyllis Ruben, Dan Martin, Sean Neary.

**Community Caregivers:** Debbie Greenland, Dale Sharkey, Bernice Lavoie, Violet Doolittle, Rita Green, Lucy Dillon, Lisa Norris, Renee Kalinek, Elaine Doctor, Gina Dolphus, Caitlin Odlozinski.

**Justice Canada (Yellowknife Office):** Scott Couper, Dianne Sylvain, Corina Hollingworth.

**Inuvik Regional Health & Social Services Board:** Deborah Tynes, Olive Binder, Arlene Jorgensen, Pat Pedersen, Ellen Smith, Angela McInnes and the Housekeeping Staff, Andrea Lee and the Kitchen/Dietary Staff, Sharon Spinks, Tammy Rogers, Dawn Anderson, Dinah Carnogursky, Cindy Stewart, Robert Hill.

**Aurora College (Aurora Campus):** Stella Bourque; the Security Staff.

**Funding:** Health Canada (First Nations and Inuit Health Programs); Justice Canada (Grant and Contributions Unit); Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Indian and Inuit Services - NWT Region); Victims Assistance Committee (GNWT Justice).

**In-kind Contributions:** Roman Catholic Diocese of the MacKenzie; Northern Store (Inuvik); Town of Inuvik (Recreation Department); Turning Point.

**Background Facilitation:** Sandy Little, GNWT Health and Social Services (Health and Wellness Promotion Division); GNWT Justice (Community Justice Division).

...and to all those who offered us their moral support and emotional encouragement, personally and by letter (they meant a lot to us...).

*We were alone back then - not this time!*

- "The Boys of Grollier Hall"
- Lawrence Norbert, GHRS Healing Circle Coordinator
- Harold Cook, GHRS Healing Circle Victims Advocate
- GHRS Counselling/Support Team (Norman Yakelaya, Vera Morin, Phyllis Nault, Charlie Neyellie).

News/Northern YK

August 24, 1998

A24



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