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"Not surprised" by Manitoba Government's denial says former MDC resident

Winnipeg, MB, February 19, 2019 – Since he was 14 years old, David Weremy's life has had a constant fixture. It wasn't a parent, or friend, or a pet, or a hobby. The constant fixture in David's life has been the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC), an institution for people with intellectual disabilities in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Mr. Weremy lived at the institution from the time he was 14 until he was 29 years old. Today, he still lives with the memories of the abuse and assault that happened to him there.

Mr. Weremy is a representative plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Manitoba Government for abuse suffered by children and adults who were housed at the institution. The lawsuit was filed on October 31, 2018. The Manitoba Government recently released its Statement of Defence to the proposed class action.

In the Statement of Defence, the province denies the fiduciary duty to care for and protect from abuse the residents of the Manitoba Developmental Center. "I'm not surprised," said Weremy in response to the defence, "But I want to know why the government says they had nothing to do with it. They kept us there. Why don't they care about the people who lived there? What about the people who still live there?"

Weremy is 74 now, and being a part of this lawsuit is another step in realizing the vision that drives his passion – closing institutions, and MDC has always been at the top of the list.

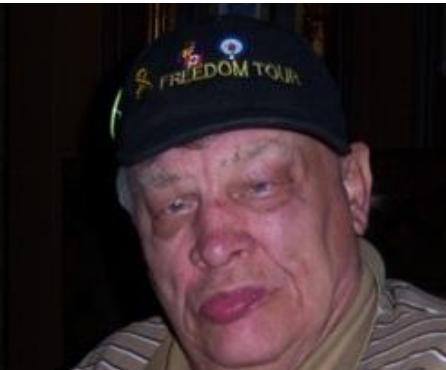
For the past several decades, David has been an advocate and an activist for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities, especially the right to live in the community and not in an institution. He has been part of local and national committees that work to close institutions. He was a main member of *The Freedom Tour*, and one of the directors of the documentary film about institutions in the Prairie Provinces. He has won the Diamond Jubilee Medal for his extensive volunteer work in the disability community.

David is concerned that the Statement of Defence is saying it happened too long ago, but he says "I'm not going to quit fighting. I want all the people out of there. They aren't done with me yet."

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People First of Canada is the national voice of people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. The vision of People First is to see all citizens living equally in the community. For further information contact Shelley Fletcher, Executive Director, Phone: 204-784-7362 or by Email: sfletcher@peoplefirstofcanada.ca Find out more at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

For information on the Manitoba Developmental Centre class action, please contact David Rosenfeld at drosenfeld@kmlaw.ca or at 416-595-2700



David Weremy, representative plaintiff in the MDC class action