

# Tom Maulson

*Boozhoo indinawemaaganidog, Bidewiiaash [indizhinikaaz], Waaswaaganiing indoonjibaa.*

You know, it's really hard to take a look back for 25 years, but before I get started I wanted to do something. I've done this a couple times now. I want everybody to stand up. You've got to help me here. Come on, everybody, and you'll like this. Everybody put their hands over their head, and say after me, "I'll continue to support treaty rights." The reason why I did that, we were in Minocqua, I think at that time they called it Minogua. Jim Schlender was there and he did that to all those rednecks. I thought guys would fall on the floor. Guys missed their seats, but they stood up and they put their hands up, you know. So I did that a couple times after that. I had that when there was a teacher's convention and all the Lakewood teachers came to Lac du Flambeau from the Minocqua area and I was one of the key speakers and I told Jim, I'm going to do that to those guys because I know some of those guys are rednecks. Some of these guys really raised hell with our kids in high school. So I did that and they didn't know what I was doing because they had a couple of speakers there that were really long-winded. I made them all stand up and same thing happened, they got so shook up a couple people missed their seats. Someone said, "Well, that's uncalled for." Well, I didn't care. But I think that was the same day that Jim had to go buy new tires. They slashed his tires and he said, "Are you going to wait for me?" I said, "Give me a break." But we made sure he got out of Minocqua anyway.

But, we used to put names on these here different towns, like PARR Falls instead of Park Falls. God, you could go on and on. I don't have enough time here to talk about the holocaust of what took place. It's really good to see, some of the younger people here because some of the young people were just kids. They didn't know what was going on. We talk and we hear some of the other panelists that were here earlier talk about the next 25 years. What are we going to do? It's sort of scary.

But I think the thing that gives myself and a lot of *Anishinaabe* people strength was the sunrise ceremonies. We shouldn't forget the small people. People that didn't sit up here, people like the Tribble brothers. It's not easy. But we're told we're here and we're doing a good thing. And we're going to succeed. Some of them old people said, "It's good to do this, it helps clear your mind, it helps with therapy and it brings reality to the table." I don't want to be disrespectful or sound racist, but what the white man has done to us *Anishinaabe* people, all the way back to when our grandpas were here, our grandmas that are here today. We're told by the spiritual leaders that we're only here for a short time, so we've got to do what we've got to do. Sometimes we make some people mad.

I want to say *chi-miigwech* to *Waaswaaganiing*. All those *ogichidaa*, those people that made it happen. They're back home, they should be here. I thought they would be here in numbers. But I want to say *miigwech* to Joe, one of our elders in our community that sustained all that also, very intelligent man. We've got a lot of good people in our communities. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be here today. The Commission wouldn't exist. My good friends on the left here wouldn't be here if I would never get to know them. So something good came out of that. And I said it's really hard to talk about what our people went through.

Today, we have young people saying, "Why?" 25 years ago, we were saying, "Why? Why are these rednecks wanting to do the things not only to myself but also to our women?" You had to be there to feel that. People I can tell you this: It wasn't easy to be an Indian, and it's

still not today. It's tough out there. We are the only people that are still in bondage. We continue have to do certain things as Anishinaabe people including getting agreements from governments or from the Great White Father, as our forefathers used to say. It's time the leaders stand up to be leaders. It's time that they throw the political shell off their back and come through from the heart because you have a lot of people that you have to leave. In talking to my brothers and sisters, the Anishinaabe people, I was told that there were a lot of non-Indian people supporting Indian people. That's why the Ojibwe never moved when there was a movement on Indian people in this country. So history is playing its part again, even in this short 25 years.

I can only say *chi-miigwech* to Kathryn, who represented us at that time. She was an *ogichidaakwe*, even though she was *chimookomanikwe*. But her heart was for all of us. Many, many, many long times talking with her and deciding how this was to come down and how she fought for our children. How the government was putting on us as Indian people and how we had to deal with treaty rights, our rights. And I challenge these leaders today, be leaders, be that. Sometimes you might be thinking you're standing alone, but you're not. We need to do that. We need to make that happen because if we don't lead now, we won't be able to lead tomorrow and the tomorrows to come. We wouldn't do the things that we want to do for that little baby that the Judge is holding. We've got to think about the one that is behind her or him, you've got to think about that. That's important.

It is not important what happened to me, because we're still here. Some of our best leaders walked on. We've got some good leaders amongst us today. We've got some good friends amongst us today. We're told by those spirits, let's use those people, let's use those to help pick us up and do the right thing.

I just wanted to say *chi-miigwech* to Jim Zorn and all his staff. They have done an excellent job here. Like I said, I could talk about that time that happened. It doesn't seem like late '80's, middle '80s, '89. I could tell you the horror stories. I can tell you the things that the non-Indian people were doing to us. As I told the reporter today, we as Anishinaabe people don't have a swear word in our language, but yet we took on all of that hate. So please, if you leave this room in doubt or if you leave this room without asking a question, there's people in this room that will give you an answer.

I can say we've come a long ways as a great organization, the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, but yet people are going to doubt us because we're Indian. I want to say that, and I don't want to hurt people's feelings when I say that. I have to say that. I'm *ogichidaa*. That's just the way it's supposed to be. That's the way the old people told us. You draw that line in the sand. We make that statement. We've got people in this room that took on the horror stories like I did, and took on the things like I did. They're the ones that did it. Maybe I was the lightning rod, I don't know, but they lost a lot of money on me. I'm still here.

But we've have a lot of things we've got to do for the next 25 years because time goes by so fast. I don't know where the days go. We need to start today. After we all get through we need to talk about tomorrow. Let's not talk about yesterday. It hurts to talk about yesterday. It brings up all the hate mongers. A lot of those hate mongers worked in our casinos. I've seen them there. I went and looked at them there. I didn't have a rock in my hand, but I looked at them. No doubt the same happened to you because gaming was prevalent and still is and an opportunity for jobs.

I just want to recognize my son over there. He was 12 years old when things blossomed after he got out of grade school and went into high school. His first year of high school, this thing was really in its movement. They knew. And all the other Indian students that went to Lakeland, they were in the same predicament. They knew where they came from. They were sort

of like in a room and looked like blackbirds in a corner. We had to go and watch, make sure nothing happened to them. You worried about them, like the grandmas and grandpas, the moms and dads, worried about us when we were going on to exercise treaty rights.

I've got to say something about Kathryn's husband, Jim. He knew that it was so bad because we took him a couple times and he was in the process of convincing our tribal government that we've got to do something because someone's going to be killed. I needed him to see what those people were doing to the Indian people up in the *Waaswaagoniing* area. And I know they were doing that elsewhere. I know they were doing it all across Indian country when people were going out to exercise their traditional rights. As I say, my opportunity to *chi-miigwech* to those people. Even though they weren't like Lac du Flambeau, we catch hell because they told us we were the Yankees of the north when it came to spearing. We were the best, so we started to teach some of the other ones.

I remember when St. Croix came to Lac du Flambeau. First night in Squirrel Lake, guys came with a canoe and what looked like a Model T lamp that they stuck under water with a battery. Edward Chosa, my friend, he's walked on now, and George Meyer was around at that lake and Edward went out and less than 20 minutes he was back with his 30 walleyes and the guy from St. Croix was paddling around there all night. He felt sorry for him and had to go get him the walleyes. But they got better. My brothers from Mole Lake were also canoe people, but now I see them driving those big old sport fishing boats, and backing up now out there and looking good when they take fish. Or when they don't take a rock or something like that.

It was tough out there and it was a holocaust. It was not easy for the warriors that went out there to preserve and to reserve for the next generation to come. I haven't been fishing off the reservation in almost ten years now. I've watched our people still stand in line back in *Waaswaagoniing* and play the bingo ball thing, because there's so many people that go fishing in Lac du Flambeau. The season was set up for 12 months until ice in or ice out or ice out to ice in and that's when spearing was supposed to take place. Because of the things that Indian fishermen went through, it almost got to just about two to three weeks at the most because things were so violent and you had to take that number of fish in that short time. You had to make sure that we took our numbers off that lake because you know and we knew next time we come back, if we did come back there, something drastic could happen.

We know that at Butternut Lake. Our elders were tossed off the back of trucks. I see Mr. Copeland here. He's a former retired DNR warden now working for my son in a part-time basis. He was there, a young man. He didn't have gray hair like he has now. They had a very small force to deal with over 500 people who were drunk, running their little kids back and forth going getting more and more beer and calling names that shouldn't even be repeated here. And I don't want to be disrespectful but I want to share with you one of the things that happened to me over in Wausau. I told one of them reporters they were so wanting to hurt Indian people that they brought their relatives and some guy was drinking. He had a can of beer and he come running down the hill at the boat landing and he's hollering, "Tom Maulson!" I just sat and turned around and looked at him, and he says, with regard to my mom being a full blood Ojibwe woman, "How did your mom like that white [expletive] in her?" What would you have done? I looked at him, grit my teeth, and I said, "Well, she must have really liked it because she had five kids." The guy didn't know what to say. He didn't say anymore, he just turned around and walked away. Those were the type of things that we had to put up with.

I talked about our young men with non-Indian girls. They knew those girls were with our Indian boys and talk about crucifying them. My wife is white. She came from a family of 13 and

it broke that family right in half. Yet before treaty rights that whole family was sitting in at my house eating my walleyes that I speared. Vatican walleyes, I call them the holy ones.

So this goes to show you how ill-informed people are. And I guess I go back to our children. I ask you people, the tribal leaders here today, we need to build our force a lot stronger than we have today. You know, we're losing a lot of our law enforcement people because we don't have the dollars that we can get to keep them. We're a training ground for some of these people. So I ask you if you've have influence with your tribes to start talking about that. Start making Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission a lot greater and we can make things happen.

I see George Meyer back here, my friend he said. Well, I guess I can say that today, but during that time he was the little [expletive] fire. I remember at Park Falls, George said, "There never will be spearing in northern Wisconsin." I don't know who made him say that. I don't know if there was a puppet back there. Then there was a time when he was over at Star Lake. We're standing in the water and old Ben Chosa, who is one of our *ogichiidaa* is was backing up and George is holding his hands up saying, "No more boats, no more boats. Tom, help me, no more boats." "Get out of the weeds, George, we're going to run you over," I said.

Then there's a time when my friend Jim Schlender and me were sitting at a table negotiating. I don't know what it was fish or deer. I don't know. I think we were fighting over one or two deer someplace. Jim got so frustrated at George he picked the pencil up and pitched it at him. George got up and he went back in there and he says, "Come on, boys, we're going." Another time up in LCO, George said, "You know, I can't handle it anymore," because there was a lot of swearing going on in the room. He said, "I'm -- you've got to give me a copy, I'm going to take that back to Buzz. I want a copy." It's just about break time. So we sat down and those guys went to lunch and we looked at each other, okay, he wants a copy, and Jim went downstairs, put it on a copy machine and made a copy of that tape. I don't know if you've still got it, George, or not, but that's a keepsake, man.

Those negotiating times were fun times when we did it. Once we implemented those things there was tough times, not only for myself but also for our other tribal people that went on to exercise them. You can't imagine the conditions that they went, snow, rain and lightning. They stayed there and we made it happen, people. We've still got some problems, but yet we still got to work towards the future now. We can't forget that. We can't forget how we're going to do better for the tomorrows to come. I've been a big one for saying you guys have had to open up doors for us. We're partners. We're part of management now and we've got a good organization. We can work together. Don't bring your ego to the table, just bring yourself to the table and we can work together.

I want to stop there and say *miigwech* and I want to apologize a little bit. It hurts and those tears were, you know, for people that have gone on. *Miigwech*.