

# Dick Hill leaves behind a legacy of fighting for Six Nations land

By Chase Jarrett and Donna Duric, Writers

Six Nations has lost a warrior.

Long-time Mohawk protector and warrior Dick Hill has passed away, leaving behind a legacy of fierce dedication to the protection of Haudenosaunee treaties and land rights.

Hill has been at the forefront of Six Nations and Mohawk rights for the majority of his life and was one of the key leaders responsible for keeping control during the 2006 land reclamation in Caledonia, also known as Kanonhstaton (The Protected Place).

Sorrow and expressions of condolence have been pouring in on The Turtle Island News' Facebook page since Tuesday morning, with readers sharing and remembering their memories of Hill, both as a relative and friend, and a respected warrior.

Hill was a force to be reckoned with during one of Six Nations' most poignant contemporary land rights battles.

His steely resolve was unshakeable when hundreds of OPP officers attempted a pre-dawn eviction of sleeping protesters at Kanonhstaton on April 20, 2006, later dubbed "Day Zero" by Six Nations people.

Hill was one of the first Six Nations people who answered the call for support during the early morning hours of the raid, facing off with police on Sixth Line Road in a determined, yet peaceful way.

His mind was focused on the people - his people, when he spoke these words to police on that fateful morning: "If you hurt one of my people...if you hurt just one..." before another Six Nations supporter stepped in.

Hill remained a prominent protector of Six Nations people throughout that

long, hot summer of 2006. He liaised with police and kept control of the site, despite frequent and volatile counterprotests by a number of people, including some Caledonia residents. He was highly respected by other warriors and was head of security for the duration of that time.

Hill remained a stalwart protector of Six Nations land rights in the months and years to come, as land rights protests sprang up throughout the Haldimand Tract after the precedent-setting Kanonhstaton land reclamation.

He played more of a behind-the-scenes role following Kanonhstaton as his health began to fail.

Known for his dry humour and laidback demeanour, he was a trusted leader at Kanonhstaton, says fellow warrior and land rights protector John Garlow.

All the men turned to Hill for direction and put their trust in him, he said.

"He was well-respected," said Garlow. "When we (warriors) called him, he didn't hesitate to come down to Kanonhstaton.

"He wasn't afraid to do

what we needed to do - not in an erratic kind of way, but in a well-thought out kind of way."

Garlow said the warrior blood lived within Hill.

"To serve and protect - he lived it - to serve and protect the people," said Garlow.

Doug Doolittle remembers Hill as a mentor, and says when it came to fighting for his people, "He just did it because he knew that he had to. I think of him as a mentor and someone to look up to. He didn't make anybody do anything, but the way he used his words he inspired you to take another step.

"The community has definitely lost an icon of the fight of our people - he was doing it long before anybody was doing it."

He said Hill was direct.

"He had a blunt way of saying things. He didn't beat around the bush. That's important, not to beat around the bush; something people will be annoyed with you for (but) the bottom line is, it's what rings true."

Hill will be remembered across Turtle Island, not just



Six Nations.

"He was known everywhere. You can't go to any territory that somebody didn't know about Dick," he said. "There's so many people that are going to feel it."

Doolittle recalled one memory of four-wheeling at the Glebe Lands in Brantford in the 1990s.

"He just laughed and laughed. He'd just say 'hang on there, Dugie we're going for it!' Regardless of what it was, trying to get up a sand hill, or going to a place for protection, (he) kept an eye on things. He came around and people felt that they were safe. That's what I would say. We always felt

safe when he was around." The community has truly lost one of its greatest warriors.

Dick is resting at home after 11 a.m. on Wednesday January 22, 2014. Funeral is 10 a.m. Friday Jan., 24, 2014 from home at 905 Second Line. Burial is at Stump Hall.