

## Honoring Tillie Black Bear, the Grandmother of Our Movement

Our beloved sister Tillie Black Bear passed over Saturday evening, July 19th, 2014. The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center will forever hold Tillie in our hearts and honor her dedication to the safety of Native women and sovereignty for Indian nations. Tillie was known as the Grandmother of the Battered Women's Movement for her leadership spanning almost four decades.

We have made *Beyond the Shelter Doors*, a short documentary on White Buffalo Calf Woman Society, [available for viewing on YouTube](#); we encourage all to learn more about the beautiful, courageous woman Tillie was and the impacts she has made by watching the video and reading below.

In 1978, as a young woman, Tillie began her national movement building by testifying at the first US Commission on Civil Rights hearings on wife beating. The same year, Tillie went on to lead in building organizations that continue to serve as houses of the movement—the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (formerly the South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence). At the same time, Tillie organized in her home communities on the Rosebud reservation, serving as a founding mother to the White Buffalo Calf Woman Society.





For the next three decades, Tillie’s leadership continued to indigenize federal legislation—the Violence Against Women Act, the Family Violence Protection & Services Act, and much more. In 1995, after the passage of VAWA, Tillie met with the Department of Justice to plant a stake that VAWA included Indian tribes. In 2000, Tillie helped shape the new VAWA tribal coalition program. In 2003, Tillie led a Wiping of the Tears Ceremony at the Senate building to launch the struggle for the VAWA ‘05 Safety for Indian Women Act. In 2011, as part of the NCAI Task Force, Tillie met with United Nation’s SR Manjoo as a pathway to the VAWA 2013 victory, restoring jurisdiction over non-Indians to Indian tribes. This same year, Tillie again provided leadership to found the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center.



Tillie's understanding of social change, organizing and movement building to make connections beyond the shelter



doors to end violence against women are her living legacy. For these gifts we say thank you, and honor Tillie by continuing to take on our

responsibilities to continue her organizing and movement building. And to her daughters Connie and Melissa, and the entire family, we thank you for sharing your beloved mother, sister, Unci for all these many years.

Tillie was a true strong heart. And although our hearts ache, we encourage all who knew and loved Tillie to be strong hearted in the days and months and years to come. We are forever thankful for her love, guidance, leadership, vision, and friendship.

Journey well, our dear Tillie Black Bear.