

On 19 July, Dr. Michael F. Tillman died after a long fight with various illnesses. He was 80 years old. After Mike finished his PhD at the University of Washington, he worked for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) at several science centers (i.e., in Seattle, WA and La Jolla CA), as well as their national headquarters in the Washington DC area. He represented the agency and the U.S. Government furthering conservation of marine mammals throughout the world and for three years was Director of the Conservation Monitoring Centre for the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Cambridge, England. He retired from NMFS in 2004 as a member of the Senior Executive Service. In 2010, President Barack Obama appointed him as one of three Commissioners for the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, a position he held until the end of 2022. Throughout his career, he advocated for women and minorities, enhancing opportunities for participation in field research and representation of the government at international meetings.

Much of Mike's international professional life revolved around the International Whaling Commission. His first meetings were in 1974 as a member of the US delegation to both the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Commission. Mike brought a strong quantitative component to the work of the SC and chaired several sub-committees and workshops as well as being elected its Chair from 1983-1985. His intellectual rigour, firm but fair chairing and dry sense of humour were his trademarks. From 1994-2004 he served as the US Deputy Commissioner to the IWC after he received a presidential appointment. At times during this period he also served as the Acting US Commissioner.

Mike became deeply involved in Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling (ASW) activities starting in 1977 as part of the US delegation at a Special Commission meeting where the US Government presented a proposal for a small take of bowhead whales in 1978. This take would help satisfy the nutritional and cultural needs of Alaskan Eskimos that lived along the northern and northwestern coast of Alaska. The proposal would replace the total ban of hunting these whales that had been agreed to at the Commission meeting in June 1977. His involvement in ASW issues was especially pertinent and valuable because of Mike's Native Alaskan heritage. He was a member of the Tlingit Tribe, Eagle moiety, Flicker Clan, on his mother's side, which give him a close bond with Alaskan Natives hunting bowhead whales along with other native groups conducting ASW under the IWC.

As part of Mike's role for the US government at the IWC, he was uniquely positioned to understand, collaborate with, and communicate with the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission. Those efforts were successful as the quota increased, providing further opportunities for the communities of the AEWK to meet their subsistence needs, while the bowhead whale population flourished.

In 2011, the IWC established the *Ad hoc* Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Working Group (ASWWG) of the Commission's ASW Sub-committee to identify and consider unresolved ASW issues and establish a fairer and transparent mechanism for the Commission to approve ASW quota limits. Mike chaired the ASWWG from its inception to its successful conclusion. His last Commission meeting was in Brazil in 2018 when the new approach to addressing ASW quotas was agreed to by the Commission.

In addition to his work on all ASW activities, Mike was interested in historical whaling records (19th century catches) and convened and chaired the International Workshop on Historical Whaling Records held in 1977. He also chaired an International Workshop on the Behavior of whales in relation to management in 1982, the first time this topic had been considered in the IWC SC. Both of these led to special issues of IWC publications.

Mike enjoyed travelling and visiting new places and cultures. He was especially interested in discovering good food, wines – and after his time in the UK - craft ales and beers. In addition, he loved to explore nature in both the US and beyond. He was an amateur musician and especially loved jazz, searching out jazz clubs and concerts wherever he went.

Mike will be missed greatly by his wife, Jennifer Tillman, his family, his friends around the world and the IWC community as a whole. Mike will be remembered for his contributions to the stewardship of cetaceans in the US and internationally, his recognition of the importance of Aboriginal Substance Whaling to many coastal communities in Alaska and elsewhere, and for his leadership in solving “wicked” ecological problems with fairness and understanding. He was a true leader and meant a great deal to all of us.

**Bob Brownell, Doug DeMaster, Greg Donovan, Rollie Schmitten, Robert Suydam
and the IWC Secretariat**