**Transcript of Thrivival: The Fire Within
2. Dedication to Elder Lillian Howard
Project Lead and Speaker: Heather Simpson**

HEATHER SIMPSON:

Dedication to Elder Lillian Howard, Muchalaht First Nation.

Before I go any further, I wish to honour and pay my respects to the late Elder Lillian Howard from the Muchalaht First Nation, dedicating this project to her memory and legacy. Elder Lillian Howard was such a beacon and beloved Matriarch in community who had such a great love, shown through her many efforts of leadership and advocacy. She spent her life as an activist for Indigenous rights and issues that impact our Peoples and community. At the time of her passing, she was the co-chair for the advisory committees with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department and was the Elder for the Butterflies In-Spirit, a dance group that raises awareness about the issue of Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Elder Lillian had a decorated career, and once told me that attaining her Masters degree from Royal Roads University later in life was among her proudest accomplishments.

The origins of this research idea started back in 2019 through my relationship with Elder Lillian. As an urban Indigenous woman and away from my Secwepemc Elders and relatives, Elder Lillian gifted me with her counsel and has been instrumental in my healing journey and reconciling my lived experiences as an Indigenous Autistic woman. I am deeply grateful for her maternal guidance and our relationship. In the spirit world, we will continue to champion for change together. Rest in power, Elder Lillian.