



## Minute for Right Relations May 2026

Dan David, a Kanien'keha:ka Mohawk journalist and founding editor-in-chief of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, spent much of his life trying to change the narrative surrounding Indigenous people in Canada.

In 2021 when he received the Canadian Journalism Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award Mr David noted that the media narrative tended to reflect the attitude and opinion of society in general – often based on bias, ignorance, prejudice and stereotypes - of Indigenous peoples being either perpetual victims or perennial problems that would not go away. "Our job is to try to change those predominant

narratives as journalists of colour," he said.

He died on Jan 12, 2026 at the age of 73. He had a varied and distinguished curriculum vitae that included stints at TVO, Visions, TV and CBC. He got his break in 1983 when he was hired by the Regina news bureau. The newsroom director later admitted he had doubted that the rookie reporter could do the job because he was Indigenous.

Mr David's experience of the Oka Crisis as a child gave him a unique perspective. His brothers were behind the barricades. "They didn't want to go back to the way they were," he wrote. "They knew that would mean a certain and steady ride down a one-way street to an oblivion called assimilation." This experience set him apart from other journalists.

He was a teacher who spent long periods abroad training journalists in places like Azerbaijan, Indonesia and South Africa. When he returned to Canada he helped launch APTN where he was finally able to change the media narrative of Indigenous communities on his own terms and inspire others to do the same. Karen Pugliese, an APTN host and producer, said that "he was indigenous journalism in this country."

Dan David was born in Syracuse NY. His father had grown up in the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory between Canada and the US, and Ontario and Quebec. When Dan was a toddler his family moved to Kanschatk:ke, so his parents could care for his grandparents. His maternal grandfather, Daniel Peter Nicholas taught the children the

lessons of their tradition. At school whenever the siblings were confronted with prejudice and ignorance their parents taught them to counter not with fists but with explanation and reason. His sister said, “Dan did that so well.”

He became interested in journalism in a civics class in high school. During his life he served as Chair of Diversity at Toronto Metropolitan University’s journalism department and worked as a researcher and writer for both a provincial justice inquiry and a royal commission that examined the country’s broken relationship with Indigenous peoples. He was appointed to boards of various Indigenous arts journals and literary organizations. He won two National Magazine Awards and was most recently the first writer-in-residence at the non-profit webzine Montreal Serai where he wrote essays of belonging, identity, and truth-telling.

He loved sunrises, music, podcasts, political discussions and gummies to ease the pain. One of his essays begins with this:

*I am a river running through ancient lands, like veins  
carrying ancestral memories, a thousand stories whisper  
on winds and land like drumbeats on our hearts.*

Adapted from ***I remember*** *Globe and Mail Saturday Jan 31 2026; By Sylvia Carscadden, on behalf of the Canadian Shield Living Into Right Relations Team*