Yukon Coroner's Service

News Release

Coroner's Inquest to begin in April 2024

October 31, 2023 – A Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of Cassandra WARVILLE, Myranda Aleisha Dawn TIZYA-CHARLIE, Josephine Elizabeth HAGER and Darla SKOOKUM will begin on April 8, 2024, at 10:30 am at the Gold Rush Inn, 411 Main Street, Whitehorse, Yukon.

The deaths of WARVILLE, 35, and TIZYA-CHARLIE, 34, were reported on January 19, 2022; the death of HAGER, 38, was reported on February 1, 2023; and the death of SKOOKUM, 52, was reported on April 16, 2023. These individuals were accessing services at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter at the time of their deaths.

Under Section 40 (1) of the *Coroner's Act*, the Chief Coroner may direct that an inquest be held when the public has an interest in being informed of the circumstances surrounding the death. Further, under Section 46 (1), the Chief Coroner may direct that a single inquest be held in respect of more than one death if the Chief Coroner reasonably believes that the facts or circumstances of the deaths are sufficiently similar that a common inquest is the most efficient and effective way of inquiring into the deaths.

A coroner's inquest is a public inquiry that serves three primary functions:

1) to determine the facts related to a death, including the identity of the deceased and how, when, where and by what means the individual came to their death, as well as a classification for the death;
2) to make recommendations, where appropriate and supported by evidence, to prevent deaths in similar circumstances; and
3) to ensure public confidence that the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual will not be overlooked, concealed or ignored.

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By inquiring into the facts and circumstances surrounding a number of deaths at the shelter, this inquest will identify how those deaths came to be and facilitate the making of recommendations to avoid preventable deaths. Presiding Coroner Michael EGILSON and a jury will hear evidence from witnesses under oath to determine the facts surrounding these deaths. The jury will have the opportunity to make recommendations aimed at preventing deaths under similar circumstances. A jury must not make any finding of legal responsibility or express any conclusion of law.

For more information about inquests, visit: https://yukoncoronerservice.ca/inquests.

Contact

For media inquiries contact the Chief Coroner [email heather.jones@yukon.ca, or phone 867-667-5317; toll free 1-800-661-0408, extension 5317].