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Releases

Charan Gill leaves a legacy of courage, justice and solidarity: BCFED

(Unceded Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territories — Vancouver, BC) — The British Columbia Federation of Labour released the following statement today:

Our province's labour movement joins British Columbians everywhere mourning the death of Charan Gill. We will always remember his courage, warmth and compassion, along with his lifelong commitment to justice.

Co-founding the Canadian Farmworkers Union took extraordinary courage, vision and an unshakeable belief in the power of people working together for a greater good. He, Raj Chouhan and the farmworkers they organized stood their ground against bitter opposition from wealthy, powerful forces. They prevailed, dramatically improving the laws and working conditions governing farm work in our province.

That same bravery allowed Charan to stand up to neo-Nazis and the KKK, stemming their growth here with the creation of the British Columbia Organization to Fight Racism. And his faith in collective action led him to found what has become the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, an invaluable lifeline for the South Asian community, new immigrants, seniors, farmworkers, women and at-risk youth to this day.

We feel Charan’s absence especially keenly with the approach of the annual Golden Tree memorial ceremony next month. He was instrumental in winning stronger safety rules in the aftermath of the terrible accident that claimed the lives of three farmworkers, and he has played a prominent role in every one of these memorials. That he won’t attend this one simply feels impossible.

Countless thousands of British Columbians are living better, happier lives today because of Charan Gill. Nobody has done more to embody the value of solidarity. He changed our province for the better, and we will always be grateful. Now Charan will be with us all in spirit.

To Charan’s family, our deepest condolences on your loss. We grieve with you, and we offer our profound appreciation for sharing him with us all for these many years.