

Foreword

Unbreaking The Circle

This special supplement to the *Limb Preservation Journal* is dedicated to the memory of Mr. James Peters, who passed away this summer, a few days short of his 61st birthday.



James was a proud Indigenous man who survived unspeakable horrors and trauma to find hope and the will to preserve against tremendous odds. He was taken from his family in the Caldwell First Nation in Ontario, Canada during the so-called “Sixties Scoop”, a dark and shameful period in Canadian history, during which a large number of Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their communities and placed in the care of the state’s welfare system.

James’ formative years were spent enduring terrible physical and emotional abuse. In addition to psychological injuries, he developed numerous medical conditions that troubled him for most of his life. He also suffered from chronic wounds that led to the amputation of one of his legs.

Fortunately, James found refuge in a Christian support group that helped guide him to the path to recovery. He was also aided on this difficult journey by the unwavering support of his wife, Christine, who supported him with unconditional love and remained by his side to the very end. James’ remarkable story was chronicled in his acclaimed autobiography, *Broken Circle*.

At the 2023 *Wounds Canada Limb Preservation Symposium*, held in April of this year, James was the keynote speaker, talking passionately about

his life experiences. The Symposium’s theme was ‘amputation prevention in Indigenous communities’, and James’ message was that of hope and resilience, endurance and faith and the importance of not despairing in the face of adversity.

This supplement, the first published by the *Limb Preservation Journal*, summarizes James’ and other presentations from this important Symposium. It highlights the work of groups from across Canada who are heeding James’ message and working hard to improve the amputation prevention supports available to Indigenous and other communities. There are experiences shared, some by Indigenous health-care professionals, and lessons to be learned, not just for those working directly with Indigenous peoples, but for the limb preservation community.

I had the privilege of serving as James’ vascular surgeon and wound care physician. I greatly admired his wittiness and presence of mind. The last time that we connected, a few weeks before his passing, he asked me why he and many others had been allowed to suffer so much. I told him that I didn’t know. Nor did I, or anyone I knew, have any ability to erase the injustices of the past. But what is certain is that our limb preservation community is committed to doing everything possible towards building a better future for James and others like him.

May you find solace in the stars, James, and may your example continue to inspire us. You will always be loved and remembered.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ahmed Kayssi".

Ahmed Kayssi MD MSc MPH FRCSC
Editor-in-Chief