



FATALITY INQUIRY TO BE HELD IN GUYSBOROUGH, N.S.

Thursday, May 24, 2018 (Halifax, NS) – The fatality inquiry into the deaths of Lionel Desmond and his family will be held in the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, close to the community where the tragedy occurred.

On Jan. 3, 2017, the bodies of Mr. Desmond, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, his wife, Shanna, their 10-year-old daughter, Aaliyah, and Mr. Desmond's mother, Brenda, were found in a house in Upper Big Tracadie, Guysborough County. It was later determined that Mr. Desmond took the lives of his family members, before he took his own.

Dr. Matt Bowes, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Examiner, reviewed the case. Following his review, Dr. Bowes recommended an inquiry under Sec. 26 of Nova Scotia's [Fatality Investigations Act](#). Nova Scotia's Minister of Justice agreed and drafted the attached terms of reference outlining the scope for the inquiry.

The proceedings will take place in the Guysborough Municipal Building at 33 Pleasant St., in the Municipality of the District of Guysborough. Among other things, the building was previously used as a satellite courthouse, making it easy to adapt for legal proceedings.

Considering travel and the wide public interest in this matter, it is possible the inquiry proceedings will be livestreamed online. This will need to be approved by the presiding judge.

The next step in the inquiry process will be the announcement of a Provincial Court judge and designated Crown counsel to conduct the inquiry. That announcement is expected in the coming weeks.

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**IN THE MATTER OF
THE FATALITY INVESTIGATIONS ACT
S.N.S. 2001, c. 31**

WHEREAS Aaliyah, Shanna, Brenda and Lionel Desmond (the "Desmonds") died on or about January 3, 2017.

AND WHEREAS the Chief Medical Examiner has investigated the Desmonds' deaths pursuant to the *Fatality Investigations Act* (the "Act");

AND WHEREAS the Chief Medical Examiner is of the view that the Desmonds' deaths occurred under circumstances referred to in clause 9(a) of the Act and that it is necessary that a fatality inquiry be held regarding their deaths;


AND WHEREAS the Chief Medical Examiner has, pursuant to Section 26 of the Act, recommended to the Minister of Justice that a fatality inquiry be held regarding the Desmonds' deaths;

IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to subsection 27(1) of the Act, that:

1. A fatality inquiry shall be held regarding the Desmonds' deaths.
2. The Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia shall appoint a judge to conduct the inquiry in accordance with subsection 27(3) of the Act.
3. The judge appointed to conduct the inquiry shall make and file with the Provincial Court a written report containing any findings made by the judge as to:
 - a. the date, time and place of death;
 - b. the cause of death;
 - c. the manner of death; and

- d. the circumstances under which the death occurred including:
- (i) the circumstances of Lionel Desmond's release from St. Martha's Hospital on January 2, 2017;
 - (ii) whether Lionel Desmond had access to appropriate mental health services, including treatment for Occupational Stress Injuries;
 - (iii) whether Lionel Desmond and his family had access to appropriate domestic violence intervention services;
 - (iv) whether health care and social services providers who interacted with Lionel Desmond were trained to recognize the symptoms of Occupational Stress Injuries or domestic violence;
 - (v) given Nova Scotia administration of the Canadian Firearms Program, whether Lionel Desmond should have been able to retain, or obtain a licence, enabling him to obtain or purchase a firearm;
 - (vi) what restrictions, if any, applied to accessing federal health records of Lionel Desmond, by provincial health authorities or personnel;
and
 - (vii) any recommendations of the judge about the foregoing matters.

DATED this 14th day of February 2018, at Halifax, in the Halifax Regional Municipality,
Province of Nova Scotia.


Honourable Mark Furey
Minister of Justice and Attorney General