

First Alaskans Institute

News Release

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ANNOUNCING THE 2017 AWARDEES OF THE HOWARD ROCK & TED STEVENS SMOKEHOUSE GALA

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native non-profit organization, is proud to announce the awardees of the sixth annual Howard Rock & Ted Stevens Smokehouse Gala, to be held at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage on Saturday, November 18. Named in recognition of Howard Rock (Iñupiaq) and Senator Ted Stevens, the Gala celebrates the significant contributions of Alaska Native peoples and our friends in advancing our collective wellbeing.

The Smokehouse Gala Awards “remember those who have helped us, show our young people that we believe in them, and share the pride in our cultures,” said Willie Iḡḡiagruk Hensley (Iñupiaq), FAI Board Chair. With deep respect and gratitude, the First Alaskans Institute Board of Trustees and staff are honored to award the following:

First Alaskans Institute Young Native Leader Awardee: AlexAnna Salmon (Yup'ik/Aleut). *This person or organization has shown through dedication they are working to help Native peoples and our community with significant and profound purpose, and is specifically given to a young leader 40 years old and younger.*

AlexAnna Salmon was raised in the Village of Igiugig. She is the granddaughter of John and Mary Olympic, and the second oldest of Dan and Julia Salmon. She has a dual Bachelor's degree in Native American Studies and Anthropology from Dartmouth College and currently works for the Igiugig Tribal Village Council as President and Project Director for an ANA language preservation and maintenance grant.



AlexAnna also serves as a member of the Igiugig Native Corporation board, a Commissioner on the Lake and Peninsula Borough Planning Commission, and helps to manage several local businesses. She is raising six children in Igiugig, and loves putting up fish, doing cultural activities with Elders and youth, and traveling.

Friends of First Alaskans Ted Stevens Awardee: Myra Munson, J.D., MSW. *This award is given to a person(s) or organization that has shown through their support of Native issues and partnership with our common cause that they are friends of the Alaska Native community.*

Myra Munson is an attorney in the Law Firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller & Monkman, LLP, where she was a partner from 1990 to 2016. She specializes in representing tribal interests in Alaska and throughout the United States. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and her law degree and master's degree in social work with honors from the University of Denver. She served as the Alaska Commissioner of Health and Social Services before joining the Sonosky Law Firm.



Myra's practice continues to emphasize tribal self-determination, self-governance and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA). She has worked across a broad spectrum of other issues of concern to Alaska Natives, including Alaska redistricting litigation and advocacy, Medicaid and other third-party reimbursement issues, and health program operations issues. She was a technical advisor to the IHCA National Steering Committee for over 10 years; assisted in drafting and editing substantial sections of the reauthorization; and testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. She assisted in the structuring of the Alaska Community Health Aide Program Certification Board and was the principal drafter of the Board's Standards and Procedures. Myra was also a member of the National Indian Health Board Medicare & Medicaid Policy Committee, and was a technical advisor to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Tribal Technical Advisory Group. Most recently, in addition to continuing to represent tribes in self-governance, she assisted in the development and drafting of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact, recently signed by the Governor. In 2003, Myra was given the Denali Award by the Alaska Federation of Natives, in 2009 the Healthy Alaska Native Foundation honored her with its President's Award, and in 2017 the National Indian Health Board gave her the Jake White Crow award.

Howard Rock Alaska Native Leader Awardee: Poldine Carlo (Koyukon Athabascan). *This person or organization has shown through their quality of character and effort to be a leader of distinct caliber because they put their community and people before themselves.*

Poldine Carlo is originally from Nulato and lives in Fairbanks. She was an original founder and was instrumental in the formation of the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA). Poldine is also an active member of the Denakkanaaga Board of Directors, the University of Alaska Chancellor's Advisory Committee, and Alaska Native Education Advisory Board, North Star Borough Senior Citizens Commission, Alaska Bicentennial Commission Board, Aboriginal Senior Citizens of Alaska and many other organizations including the Koyukon Athabascan Singers. She serves as an Elder mentor during the World Eskimo Indian Olympics and can be seen participating in every Doyon,



Limited Shareholder meeting. Poldine continues to accept any opportunity to show support to those in times of need by volunteering her support.

Poldine wrote, *Nulato: An Indian Life on the Yukon*, a novel describing life in the 1920's and 1930's growing up in the Athabascan way in the village of Nulato. Poldine was honored with a UAF Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree in 2001, the Hannah Paul Solomon "Woman of Courage" Award in 2012, and BP Golden Citizens Chieftain Award in 2015 and the FNA Head Start Building was named the Poldine Carlo Building. Most recently, Poldine was selected to be one of four recipients of the Farthest North Girl Scout Council Women of Distinction Award.

The Athabascan tradition Poldine loves most is singing and dancing. In 1994, Poldine was profiled in "Singing We Come: Shaping our Future Through Language and Song," an Institute of American Indian Arts collection of stories about Native women singers and storytellers from throughout the United States. Poldine wrote a powerful and moving song about her daughter, and she recently shared it with our Māori whānau visiting in Fairbanks.

First Alaskans Institute is proud to congratulate each of these inspiring leaders! We thank their families and communities for supporting them in all they have done for our Native peoples and Alaska.

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About First Alaskans Institute

At First Alaskans Institute, we know we are responsible for carrying more than 10,000 years of ancestral knowledge into the future with rigor, humor, resilience, vigilance, and love.

To learn more about us and what we do, please visit our website at www.firstalaskans.org, contact us at 907-677-1700 or via email at info@firstalaskans.org.