

First Alaskans Institute

News Release

Contact: Angela Gonzalez
info@firstalaskans.org, (907) 677-1700

For Immediate Release
January 12, 2018

2018 PUBLIC POLICY FELLOWS ANNOUNCED, MARKING 11 YEARS OF PLACING NATIVE LEADERS IN THE OFFICES OF STATE POLICY-MAKERS

Anchorage, Alaska – We are excited to announce that **Jodie Gatti** (Haida/Tlingit), **Nazune Menka** (Koyukon Athabascan/Lumbee) and **Ravynn Aklasiaq Nothstine** (Iñupiaq/Yup'ik) will serve as our eleventh cohort of Fellows in the First Alaskans Institute (FAI) Public Policy Fellowship. This fellowship is based in the Alaska Legislative and Executive branches. Jodie, Nazune, and Ravynn will be immersed in the state lawmaking process, contributing their capacity to their host offices and deepening their understanding of Alaska's issues. Fellows will have the ability to strengthen their leadership skills, and sharpen their knowledge, voice, and advocacy, while serving as ambassadors of their peoples, cultures, and communities.

"Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, Thank you - to the Áak'w and T'aakú Tlingit peoples whose homelands this work will be conducted upon," said Liz Medicine Crow (Haida/Tlingit) FAI President/CEO. "We also want to thank Lt. Governor Mallott, Representative Fansler, and Representative Ortiz, and their staff, for sharing of their knowledge, time, and mentorship, and for giving them the ability to contribute to your critical work on behalf of Alaska. We look forward to all our Fellows will accomplish this spring, and we thank their families and communities for supporting them in this opportunity."

FAI launched the Public Policy Fellowship in 2008. Since that time 27 fellows have been placed in 13 legislative and executive offices with the expectation that they bring their high-caliber performance, character, dedication, and spirits into the state law-making process. In selecting fellows, First Alaskans seeks Native leaders who can jump in and swim upstream in the fast-moving waters of the legislative session. Desired outcomes of the fellowship include familiarity and comfortability in this forum in order to be stronger advocates for their communities and issues they care about. Many of our alums have continued on to pursue careers and community leadership roles directly utilizing their fellowship experience. They are involved in high level policy making, community organizing, and in political affairs at the tribal, federal, state, local and international levels.

We are proud to introduce the 2018 cohort of FAI Public Policy Fellows:

Jodie Gatti (Haida/Tlingit) was born and raised in Ketchikan, Alaska and is from the *Yahkw 'Láanaas* clan (Raven/Shark House). She is the granddaughter of Franklin Demmert Sr. and Frances Peele Demmert; daughter of Mark & Jiji Gatti and Victoria Demmert Gatti; sister to Sarah Kooy, Dennis Demmert, Joy Demmert, and Heather Gatti; and aunt to Ayuq, Gracie, and Emma. Jodie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and has held an internship with the State of Alaska Department of Revenue (2016-2017). She has experience as a teacher's assistant for the Econometrics course at UAA, and was treasurer of the Economics Club. Jodie plans to use her education and experiences to find ways to advance the Alaskan Native community at large. **Jodie will serve in the office of Representative Dan Ortiz.**



Nazune Menka (Koyukon Athabaskan/Lumbee) was born and raised in Anchorage and Chistochina, Alaska. Her parents are Leonard Menka from Fairbanks, Alaska and Dianna Knight from Lumberton, North Carolina. She graduated from East Anchorage High School in 1997. In 2016, Nazune transferred from Seattle University School of Law to the James E. Rogers School of Law at the University of Arizona where she is the recipient of the Williams Achievement Scholarship, a full tuition scholarship in the Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy program. Her work experience includes clerking at Rosette, LLP an Indian Law firm in Washington D.C. and the Native American Rights Fund in Anchorage. Other work experience includes serving at the Hawai'i State Senate Ways and Means Committee as a bills researcher, and participating in the Department of Energy Legacy program management internship. Nazune completed her Master of Science in Environmental Chemistry from the University of Arizona in 2013. **She is placed in the Office of the Lt. Governor Byron Mallott.**



Ravynn Aklasiaq Nothstine (Iñupiaq/Yup'ik) was born and raised in Anchorage, and her parents are Greg Nothstine and Gloria O'Neill. Her father's family is from the Native Village of Wales and her mother's family is from the Native Village of Levelock. Ravynn's father instilled a fervent sense of culture and Inupiaq identity throughout her life. She was raised Iñupiaq dancing with the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage. Ravynn's mother was adamant about education and provided the necessary structure for her success in academics. After graduating from West High School, she attended Dartmouth College in New Hampshire where she spent a majority of her time deeply embedded within the Native community and cultivated her home away from home. She was involved in the Native Americans at Dartmouth, an organization where she served on the executive board during her senior year. Ravynn graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Earth Sciences. Her degree provided a solid foundation for her goal of becoming versed in environmental law and policy. **She will serve in the office of Representative Zach Fansler.**



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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.