

First Alaskans Institute

News Release

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ANNOUNCING THE 2019 AWARDEES OF THE HOWARD ROCK & TED STEVENS SMOKEHOUSE GALA

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit, announces the awardees of our eighth annual Howard Rock & Ted Stevens Smokehouse Gala, to be held at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage on Saturday, November 23. Named in recognition of Howard Rock (Iñupiaq) and Senator Ted Stevens, the Smokehouse Gala celebrates the significant contributions of Alaska Native peoples and our friends in advancing our collective wellbeing.

The Smokehouse Gala is an indigenized formal affair. It is dedicated to uplifting Alaska Native leaders and our friends who work tirelessly on behalf of and for Alaska Native peoples. Through these awards we recognize the critical role Indigenous ways of knowing, living and loving our cultures and homelands shapes Alaska's brilliance. Through sharing the beauty of our diverse cultures and the friendships that shape generations, we honor the centrifugal force being good relatives to one another plays in making Alaska a special place. The event also serves to raise critical funds to benefit the work of FAI through our vision, *Progress for the next 10,000 years...*

With deep respect and gratitude, the FAI Board of Trustees and staff are honored to lift up the great work of the following people:

First Alaskans Institute Young Native Leader Awardee: Dr. Pearl Kiyawn Nageak Brower (Iñupiaq/Chippewa/Armenian)

This young leader has shown through dedication they are working to help Native peoples and our community with significant and profound purpose.

Pearl holds a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies with an emphasis in Indigenous Leadership and a master's degree in Alaska Native and Rural Development from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She has been with Iļisaġvik, Alaska's first tribal college, since 2007, and has served as its President since 2012. Prior to working for Iļisaġvik, she managed an education and culture grant for the North Slope Borough and served as the Museum Curator of the Iñupiat Heritage Center.



Photo by Jesse Darling, Amaguq Media

Friends of First Alaskans Ted Stevens Awardee: Governor Bill Walker

This award is given to a person that has shown through their support of Native issues and partnership with our common cause that they are friends of the Alaska Native community.

Governor Bill Walker served as the 11th governor of Alaska from 2014 to 2018. Born in Fairbanks and raised in Delta Junction and Valdez, Governor Walker is the second governor born in Alaska. A dedicated public servant, he previously served as mayor, city councilor, and city attorney for the City of Valdez, and as general counsel for the Alaska Gasline Port Authority. As Governor, he worked to heal and strengthen relationships with Alaska's Tribes and Alaska Native people through establishing the Governor's Tribal Advisory Council and signing the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact in 2017. Governor Walker also directed the Attorney General to provide guidance about tribal sovereignty – resulting in the AG Opinion that articulated to the State the legal status of tribal governments in Alaska. He also signed Administrative Order 300 declaring an emergency for Alaska Native languages. Near the end of his term, Governor Walker, provided a historic apology to Alaska Native peoples for the State policies, including boarding school removals, and more, that contributed to language and cultural loss, which caused intergenerational trauma. Governor Walker acknowledged that this apology was a first step in working to repair and rectify the State's role and its ongoing relationship with Alaska Tribes and Native peoples of Alaska.



Photo by Sven Haakansen, Jr.

Howard Rock Alaska Native Leader Awardee: Nelson Angapak (Yup'ik)

This person 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.

After attending Wrangell Institute, Nelson graduated from Mt. Edgecumbe in 1965 and earned a bachelor's degree in Math in 1969. An Army veteran, he earned a master's degree in Land and Natural Resources in 1978 and a degree in theology in 2002. He served as former Chairman of the Board, Alaska Federation of Natives (1979-1981); Chairman of the Board, Calista Corporation, (1978-1984) and President of Calista and retired in 2013 as a senior vice president of the Alaska Federation of Natives. After advocating tirelessly for many years to ensure Alaska Native Vietnam veterans could select their 160-acre Native allotments, the United States Congress passed a lands bill this March which included these settlements.



Photo courtesy of Nelson Angapak

FAI 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. For more information about the Smokehouse Gala, visit www.thehowardrockandtedstevenssmokehousegala.org.

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About First Alaskans Institute (FAI): *At FAI 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 visit our website at www.firstalaskans.org, contact us at 907-677-1700 or email info@firstalaskans.org.*