

# First Alaskans Institute

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## **FIRST NATIONS' FUTURES PROGRAM – 2019 ALASKA FELLOWS ARE SELECTED**

Anchorage, Alaska – First Alaskans Institute (FAI), a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit focused on advancing Alaska Natives for the *next* 10,000 years, is pleased to announce the selection of our 9th annual First Nations' Futures Program (FNFP) cohort:

- **Melissa Silugngataanit'sqaq Borton** (Alutiiq)
- **Martha Maalu Foster** (Yup'ik)
- **Mitchell Haldane** (Tlingit/Ts'msyen)
- **Joel Łiq'a yes Isaak** (Dena'ina Athabascan)
- **Jennine Qapqin Jordan** (Iñupiaq)
- **Alfred Sigoop Price** (Ts'msyen/Haida/Tlingit)

FNFP is a unique leadership partnership between the indigenous peoples of Alaska, Hawai'i and Aotearoa (New Zealand). FNFP features a two-week, on-site certificate program and the gathering of the three cohorts at Stanford, in addition to other obligations by each cohort. It was created to cultivate and challenge indigenous leadership in order to impact our Fellows, families, cultures, communities, homelands, and the world. The host organizations are FAI, Ho'okele Strategies, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (a Māori Iwi on the southern island of Aotearoa), and Stanford University Woods Institute for the Environment. It is also supported by Sealaska, Kamehameha Schools and the University of Canterbury.

Cohort members are active leaders who are in mid-career/cultural/community leadership roles or at a pivotal stage in their journey where an extra boost or challenge will amplify their abilities to advance indigenous peoples. Fellows strengthen their leadership while envisioning ways to enact our ancestral imperatives to steward and care for our peoples, lands and cultures. They participate in diverse sessions such as meeting with the local Tribe, the Muwekma Ohlone, and hearing from cultural, thought, and entrepreneurial leaders from across the cohorts. They will build relationships with one another, indigenous leaders from former cohorts, and special guests from Stanford and Silicon Valley. They will dialogue about indigenous law and policy issues, cultural paradigms and advancements, and stewardship of land, animals and resources. A core element of FNFP are the values propositions the Fellows develop to crystalize their ideas for being in service to their communities in ways that resonate with their work, passions, and needs of their peoples.

On behalf of the FAI Board of Trustees and staff, we extend our congratulations to the 2019 Fellows and gratitude to their families and communities for supporting their involvement!

**Melissa Silugngataanit'sqaq Borton** was born on Kodiak Island and has ties to Chignik Lagoon in the Bristol Bay Region. Her parents are Bertha Nielsen of Chignik and Laszlo Marton of Hungary. Her maternal grandparents are Harold Nielsen and Helen Pedersen. Silugngataanit'sqaq has spent the past 25 years working in the Koniag region helping her people. She started her career at the Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) in the Social Services Department with programs for village Elders, youth, wellness, behavioral health, tribal operations and Village Public Safety Officers. After working at KANA, she became the Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Afognak for over 14 years. She especially enjoys working with their summer youth camp, and receives much inspiration from youth.



Courtesy photo from Melissa Silugngataanit'sqaq Borton

Silugngataanit'sqaq has been a Public School Board member, the Kodiak Villages representative on the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors and recently held a seat on the Governor's Tribal Advisory Council under the Walker administration for the State of Alaska. In her free time, she enjoys fishing, hunting, kayaking and spending time with family and friends.



Photo by Laura Pleasant

**Martha Maalu Foster** grew up in Twin Hills. Her parents, Christopher Sharp, Sr. and Lucy Sharp, grew up in Quinhagak. Maalu is the third born of five. Her first language was Yup'ik and she started to learn to speak English at 3 years old. After graduating from Mt. Edgecumbe High School she took Yup'ik language classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For 9 years she was a part-time Bilingual Aide for Southwest Regional Schools. She left that position for full-time work to support her growing family. In 2006, Maalu went back to work at the school as a Yup'ik Studies Program Teacher until 2016. At that time, she moved away from home to be closer to the hospital to support her significant other. She has since returned to Twin Hills and currently works as a bookkeeper. Maalu happily accepts the responsibility of doing work on behalf of her people and values the preservation of language and Yup'ik ways of life. In her free time she enjoys engaging in activities relevant to the seasons such as egg hunting, berry picking, harvesting fish, and sharing her foods with others.

**Mitchell Haldane** was born and raised in Mountlake Terrace, WA. His parents are Patty and James Haldane. His grandparents are Alice and Stanley Haldane. As a child, he spent a majority of his summers in southeast Alaska with his dad and family. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with a Biology focus from Central Washington University (CWU) where he also played football. Later he accepted a defensive graduate assistant coaching position at CWU and pursued a master's degree in environmental resource management. Mitchell interned in Sealaska's Natural Resource Department and with Sealaska Environmental Services (SES). Later he was hired by SES and most recently returned to Sealaska's Natural Resource Department in Juneau to serve as Sealaska's Carbon Offset Administrator. Mitchell enjoys hiking, being outdoors and coaching high school football for Juneau's unified varsity football team.

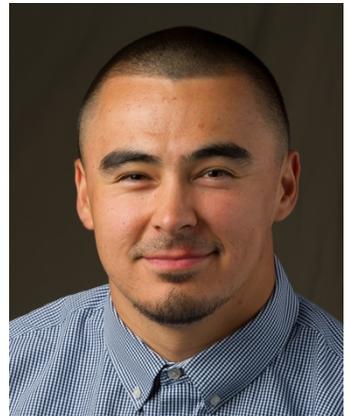


Photo courtesy of Sealaska



Photo courtesy of Joel Łiq'a yes Isaak

**Joel Łiq'a yes Isaak** is from the village of Ch'aghałnik (Point Possession) and currently lives in Soldotna. His Dena'ina name, Łiq'a yes, translates to salmon skin which relates to his pursuits of learning fish skin sewing. His grandmother was Fedora Kallander and his parents are Sharon and David Isaak. Joel is an artist, educator and lifelong learner. He uses art to uncover understanding of working in an educational environment where he combines the formal Western education model with traditional Alaska Native ways of life. Language work inspires Joel's artistic practice and education methodology. He uses multi-cultural communication as a medium to aid in language revitalization. Art has served as a safeguard for him and a medium for generating understanding and communicating hard truths to a wide range of audiences to help facilitate wellness. He enjoys being on the beach, harvesting traditional foods and running.

**Jennine Qapquin Jordan** was born and raised in Anchorage with family from Unalakleet. Her parents are Ella Anagick and David Stebing. She holds dual bachelor's degrees in Spanish and Latin American studies from the University of Arizona, and earned dual master's degrees in public policy and dispute resolution from Pepperdine University. She is a Certified Compliance & Ethics and Project Management Professional. Qapquin has experience working for Tribes, Alaska Native corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations that do government contracting. Currently she serves Bering Straits Native Corporation as the Proposal Compliance Manager. Prior to that, she worked in advocacy at Calista Corporation and as the Vice President and Special Assistant to the CEO at Gana-A'Yoo Limited. She spent time in Washington, DC at the Native American Contractors Association as the Director of External Affairs. She is an enrolled tribal member of the Native Village of Unalakleet, and a shareholder of Unalakleet Native Corporation, Bering Straits Native Corporation and CIRI. Qapquin enjoys beading, yoga, traveling and spending time with her family.



Photo by Jen Jul



Photo by Raeanne Holmes

**Alfred Sigoop "Alfie" Price** is Gisbutwada (Killerwhale clan). His parents were the late Wilma Baines of Metlakatla and Donald Price of Lax Kw'alaams, BC. His children, Katy and Joel, speak Sm'algyax (Ts'msyen language) with him at home. Sigoop is passionate about preserving indigenous languages and is eager to help his people reclaim their cultural identity. Sigoop is one of the co-founders of the Juneau Sm'algyax Learners Group that started in 2015 and uses social media and video conferencing to engage learners. He is a member of the Haida Language Learners Group. Since 2003 he has worked for Tlingit & Haida Central Council in Information Technology as a Computer Specialist. Prior to that he was a Network Administrator for Klukwan, Inc. Sigoop is a member of Yees Ku.Oo (New People, New Beginnings) Dancers and is also an assistant leader in Ldakát Naax Satí Yátx'i (All Nations Children Dancers). In his free time, he enjoys digital photography, reading, making rock 'n roll vests and volunteering at the Johnson Youth Center and the Montessori Borealis School.

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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](http://www.firstalaskans.org), contact us at 907-677-1700 or email [info@firstalaskans.org](mailto:info@firstalaskans.org).*