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PRESS RELEASE: Fairbanks Native Association board names Rev. Anna Frank as Elder Advisor

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Fairbanks, Alaska - The Fairbanks Native Association Board of Directors has appointed the Rev. Anna Frank as Elder Advisor for the Fairbanks Native Association.

The appointment is for three years.

She comes with years of experience working for the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska as a deaconate, priest, and archdeacon, as well as a health aide and counselor at Tanana Chiefs Conference.

“It’s quite an honorable place to be,” said Frank, 79. “I look forward to it. It’s a big job and a lot of responsibility. I’ll give it my best.”

FNA does important work, she said. Anna has a good understanding of FNA, but she plans to better understand all the services FNA offers, including addiction help, at-risk youth work, indigenous language programs and young children development.

“If I need to give them advice, I’ll let them know,” she said. “Even if I don’t have advice, I’ll let them know they are doing a good job.”

Frank will model the traditional way of life taught to her by her late mother Rosie David and her aunts Evelyn Alexander and Linda Charlie.

“I think all Native organizations should have an elder advisor,” she said. “It’s the way we grew up. It’s very important to our young people and to our culture.”

“We’re dealing with the world today. Our way has worked for us: think about what you say, about what you do.”

Elders have always taught people to be respectful and talk out issues, she said.



“We don’t have to make a decision that night,” she explained. “We go home to think about it and then bring it to the people the next day. If the people think it’s good enough, we move on. We always know when to move on.”

People living in a fast-paced world often don’t have time for community life Alaska Natives once had living together in villages.

“We lose it because we’re not together all the time,” Frank said. “So we have to stop for a moment and listen. That’s what our Elders always did. They always answer, ‘Ah hah,’ a word of encouragement.”

Frank said this new role will also be a valuable learning experience.

“I have to learn how to become an Elder Advisor,” she said. “I’m learning, too, but I had good teachers.”

She is amazed at how FNA has grown since 1963 when the organization began.

“We dreamed of what it would be and now we’re seeing the fruits of it,” Frank said. “Those were fun days, challenging days. We learned and we advanced.”

Frank is the 2nd Chief of Denakkanaaga, Inc. and sits on the Alaska Commission on Aging.

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Photo by Amanda Frank