

Her talents are a gift from God to use for man

"Her talents are a gift from God. She doesn't abuse them but uses them for the well-being of her fellow man," said Rachael Craig of the woman who was selected to be honored by the entire ANSWO organization.

A description of this woman is filled with the warmth and love that all who know her have felt throughout her lifetime.

Traditional healer, tribal doctor, midwife are words that don't seem to fill out the feelings that people have for Della Keats.

She "is a modest person in the finest tradition of our people," said Mrs. Craig as Della Keats watched her quietly.

Mrs. Keats first became interested in the human anatomy while in health class in grade school. She helped deliver a baby when she was 16 and not long after that was faced with a difficult delivery of her own.

Living in Noatak with her mother, Mrs. Keats gave birth to a baby boy after the child had matured only four months, 16 days of the necessary nine months inside the womb.

But, under the guidance of her mother, Mrs. Keats nursed the boy from his one-and-one-half pound birthweight to a healthy baby. At birth the child was kept in a shoebox because he was much smaller than that. But, fed a diet of eyedroppers of milk, water, and much love, he grew.

That boy, who amazed doctors by the very fact that he lived, is now a maintenance man for the Northwest Arctic School district, said Mrs. Craig.



Rachael Craig congratulates traditional healer Della Keats on her receipt of the statewide recognition from the Alaska Native Women's Statewide Organization.

Della Keats smiled softly and nodded her head as if thinking of her first child, while Mrs. Craig spoke.

Della Keats has lived a life dedicated to the health of other people throughout the state, said Mrs. Craig. She is respected by and has been honored by the medical profes-

sion and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks has started a pre-medical summer program named after her.

In 1981 Mrs. Keats was honored by the National Indian Health Board. She was selected NANA Region shareholder of the year in 1977 and she heads the Mauniilaq Corp.

Tribal Doctor's program.

She led the choir in her church and is very active in the church today, said Mrs. Craig.

"If you ever have been treated by her and heard her personal prayer you will understand her gift from God," said Mrs. Craig who recounted a story from her husband who

has sought out Mrs. Keats' healing powers.

Mr. Craig has a chronically bad back and he sought Mrs. Keats' aid. "After a workout with her, for that's what it was . . . a workout, he came to me and said 'have you noticed the feel of her hands? They are hot, full of energy.'"