

# Alaska Native Arts Festival Successful Cultural Event



**ELEGANT CREATIONS** — Sylvester Ayek, originally from King Island now living in Anchorage, is carving a polar bear out of talc (soapstone). His main media is ivory. Always athletically inclined, Sylvester has performed in the Eskimo Olympics in Fairbanks on hi-kicks and other, difficult Native sports.

then in the English translation. Tcheripanoff was a favorite for the crowd, which usually numbered around 400 every night. They demonstrated their games and crafts, too.

The Inupiat Eskimo of the north appeared Friday night. Emily Brown and Edith Tego-seak lit the Eskimo lamp to start off the evening. The Wainwright dancers entertained. There was also story telling, craft demonstrations, Eskimo games and singing.

Weir Negovanna and his wife, both Wainwright dancers, played the saw and harmonica. Weir also demonstrated iglaqusaag, the laughing game. The Negovannas also showed the audience on how in the old days Eskimos married. They ended up lying on the stage. It was a spirited and light-hearted evening. The audi-

cultures in the southeast.

The Gui-San Dancers who entertained included Mr. and Mrs. Bob Beirley, Austin Brown, Daisy Phillips, Rick Beasley, Jim Marks, Kathy Marks, John Marks and Leo Marks. Demonstrations of their crafts included wood carving, painting, beadwork, silversmithing, basket weaving, plaque carving and story telling.

The last night of the festival was devoted to the Athabascans. Mitch Demientieff was the master of ceremonies. Entertaining were the Tanacross/Northway dancers who included Annie Sam, Walter and Lily Northway, Rosa Charlie, Ida Sam, Anpie Wilson, Oscar and Martha Isaac, Steven and Emma Northway.

Poldine Carlo told stories, Ralph Perdue spoke and Simon Pilot of Koyukuk danced. Other demonstrations included beading, skin sewing, tanning, carving, basket making and snowshoe and sled making. The Nenana Dancers also entertained and along with the Tanacross/Northway Dancers gave several invitational dances.

The festival is credited to Terry Tomczak, a university physical education instructor, and Sarah Isto, an SOS English

instructor. It is hopefully to be an annual event. KUAC, the university's television station recorded the festival which will be aired later. The festival was an historical event because many of the participants and performers may not be seen again.

Natives were given the opportunity to share their heritage and teach what is seen so little of today.

The uniqueness and richness of Alaska's primitive and contemporary Native arts were proven not to be dying, or dying not as fast as one thinks, but is also passed on to the younger Natives and non-Natives for appreciation and respect. The festival proved an effective way to generate interest and concern for the Native arts. Next year's should be even greater.