

UA Native Student Orientation Services

By MARILYN RICHARDS

The Student Orientation Services is a home away from home for some 200 Native students on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. SOS was established in 1969 to provide rural Alaskan Native college students with counseling, tutoring and financial aid information.

"We intercept a lot of the student difficulties and make the going smoother than usual and not a nightmare," says Toni Jones, SOS director.

Since 1935 only 134 Natives have graduated from the Fairbanks campus with bachelor, associate and master degrees. Twenty three Native students graduated last year and among them was Helga Eakon Slaughter of Unalakleet. Helga received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She was also the recipient of the Tilly Award for the outstanding married woman student, the outstanding English student, and the outstanding student in the College of Arts and Letters. She is now a law student at the University of Wisconsin.

This spring semester there is a total enrollment of 2,779 including full and part-time students. Two hundred are Native students under the guidance of SOS though there are about 50 other Native students enrolled not under SOS.

The Native SOS enrollment is down by 25 since 40 dropped out last semester but Jones said, "that dropout rate is misleading." She explained that these dropouts aren't necessarily those who have flunked out but many students transferred, and others had personal, money and marriage problems. Others are pregnant or working. "There are a lot of other things besides ability that contribute to the drop-out rate. Many who flunked out had that ability though so there are many factors for them," she added. "We lost a few and gained some."

Last semester there were 36 Natives with a 3.0 and above grade point average and 16 on the honor roll. "Kids are coming in now with more self-confidence and that makes it easier to work with," Jones said.

Last year the SOS English students under the direction of Sarah Isto wrote and illustrated Theata, a collection of non-fiction articles about their way of life. Another Theata publication will be released later this



Helga Eakon Slaughter
1973 U of A Graduate



Toni Jones
S.O.S. Director

spring. Jones said last year's copy had coast to coast coverage with articles reappearing in several sportsmen's magazines and newspapers.

Tahetan, a Native youth group primarily made up of SOS students is sporadically active on

campus. Tahetan sponsored a potlatch and dances on campus this year.

SOS also is working on the Festival of Native Arts. The funds are still at the halfway point with only two weeks to go.

Conference Delegates

Delegates to the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks included Ronald Sam, Alutna; Bergman Moses, Allakaket; Terrence Wharton, Anvik; Gideon James, Arctic Village; Paul Williams, Beaver; Randall Baalam, Birch Creek; Stanley Jonas, Canyon Village; Leah Druck, Chalkyitsik; Allen John, Circle City; Carl Charles, Dot Lake; Horace Biederman, Eagle; Rhoda Musser, Evansville; Poldine Carlo, Fairbanks; Richard Carroll Sr., Fort Yukon; Nick Alexie, Niskolai; Henry Ketzler Sr., Nenana; Lorraine Albert, Northway; Liz Newman, Rampart; Donald Honea, Ruby; Virginia Smoke, Stevens Village; Hamilton Hamilton, Shageluk; Frank Miller, Talitna.

Also, Bob Jonathan, Tanacross; Hardy Peter, Tanana; Steve Huska, Telida; Ray Demit, Tetlin; Al Woods, Tok; Lawrence Robert, Venetie; Vernon Miller, Wiseman; Pat Sweetser, Galena; Henry Deacon, Grayling; David Joe, Healy Lake; James Walker, Holy Cross; Tim James, Hughes; Kenneth Sam, Hushia; Franklin Madros Sr., Kaltag; Regina Pilot, Koyukuk; Ernest Holmes, McGrath; Walter Woods Sr., Manley Hot Springs; Joyce Wootard, Medfra; Richard Frank, Minto; and Andrew Demoski, Nulato.

Summer job placement for employers and students is another service SOS provides. "The jobs are there but we don't seem to have the bodies to put in them," said Jones. She said there are many jobs available through the land claims and the Bureau of Land Management and financial aid and assistance in many fields ranging from accounting to law enforcement.

"The law enforcement program just opened up in Alaska. Anyone interested in a career in law enforcement is eligible. Even a sociology major who says he wants to be a probation officer. The loans are forgivable up to 100 per cent if the person resides in Alaska a certain amount of time," Jones said.

SOS offers regular college courses in math and English taught by SOS instructors. These courses enable students to move at their own rate while developing college study and language skills. Most SOS students are underclassmen. "We sort of push them out of the nest later on," quipped Jones.

In 1971 the SOS Advisory Board instituted a Native Studies program. The courses in the program include skin sewing, Alaska Native Heritage and Alaska Native Literature. The program was instituted to stress the Native culture and heritage.

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