

'Inupiat Associates' to Have Showing

Five craft workshop students at the University of Alaska postponed their graduation six days last week. They still had too much to do.

In the next month they will be showing jewelry, sculpture, and flatware soapstone carvings. A '67, the Native, Arts and Crafts show at Anchorage and First Federal Savings Bank, Fairbanks.

Two students will go with their exhibit to Anchorage. One will accompany their teacher to a conference in

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the lower 48. The others will stay home to open Inupiat Associates, a permanent craft workshop.

They finally wound up their class last Tuesday with a Memorial Day picnic.

Their teacher, Ronald Senungetuk, established the class last fall with a grant from the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. He took five promising young village craftsmen, brought them to the university and taught them contemporary craft techniques and design principles. His goal was to extend the possibilities of what could be done with a traditional design background. "There is a huge bank of Eskimo background and experience that no one is drawing on for contemporary crafts," Senungetuk explained. At first he had expected his students to return home at the end of the year to teach others what they had learned. Now he has decided the obstacles might be too great. Apparently older people are not interested in learning new techniques. Moreover, most trading posts prefer traditional ivory carvings for sale to tourists. They discourage innovation.

The students decided this spring to remain in Fairbanks as a group and to start their own business, Inupiat Associates. They are converting a cabin behind the Jade Shop into a workshop and will sell both wholesale and retail. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board is granting each student \$1,400 to act as an initial investment.

Alvin Kayouktuk, Little Diomede will be general manager. Issac Koyuk, King Island, Nome, will be secretary-treasurer. Melvin Olanna, Shishmaref, will serve as sales manager and researcher in Eskimo design.

Other participants are David Alvanna and Michael Pullock, both from King Island Village, Nome.

Alvanna has been given a scholarship for another year of study in Senungetuk's class. Pullock has been chosen as the student who made the most progress this year. His reward will be a trip to Madison, Wisc. and New York City through a gift from the Association on American Indian Affairs.

Student work and demonstrations will be presented June 11-25 in the art gallery of the Civic Center at the A 67 site, Fairbanks. Also in Fairbanks is the show at First Federal Savings Bank, Cushman and Gaffney, June 1 through 20.

The Anchorage exhibit will be in the Igloopuk, June 15-17 at the first juried Native Arts and Crafts Show, sponsored by the Alaska Festival of Music.