

Ahtna president lives by strong set of values

By Debra Pleasant

Wilson Justin is a self-sacrificing Athabascan Native born in Nabesna. Self-sacrifice is one of the many values taught to him by his elders. The ability to work for tomorrow, and to keep his identity are among the things he learned.

A former big game hunting guide, Justin is the president of one of the 13 Native corporations formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The Ahtna region is in interior Alaska. He says his role as president often involves talking to people who call and ask him about anything and everything.

Among the things he likes to do is visit with Glennallen High School students. He says he does not criticize or condemn students. Justin visits schools to show that Native leaders care about students.

When Justin met with the Alaska Native High School Media Conference participants in Anchorage,

he said his role models are his uncle Johnny Nicolai, and his aunt Elena Charlie Billy.

Justin does not speak his Native language because of the negative influence of missionaries and school of-

ficials as he grew up.

Editor's Note: Debra Pleasant is a Quinhagak High School student who wrote this feature for Native Times, a product of the Radio Conference and Indigenous Broadcast Center.

