

Williams gets Southeast health award

Frank O. Williams, Jr., of Sitka, has been honored for his outstanding contribution in the field of health to the Native people of Southeast Alaska.

At an informal board of directors dinner on June 14 at Sally's Kitchen in Juneau, Ethel M. Gonzales, President of

the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Corporation (SEARHC), gave the health award to Williams on behalf of the SEARHC Board of Directors.

Community Relations Officer for the Indian Health Service, (IHS) at Mt. Edgecumbe since 1975, Frank O. Williams Jr., started out with IHS over 20 years ago as a clerk-typist and worked his way up through a variety of positions in administration and budget. He is currently responsible for promoting Native consumer involve-

ment in regional health programs.

From 1968 until 1973, Williams served as the first chairman of the Southeast Native Board of Health. In 1969, he also became the Alaska Native Health Board's first chairman and helped organize the National Indian Health Board to which he was elected vice president.

Williams has also served as a committee member of Southeast Alaska Comprehensive Health Planning, Inc., and as a board member and organizer of the

Southeast Alaska Health Systems Agency. For over 30 years he has been active with the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) and has held several offices in that organization including past and present President of the Sitka ANB, Grand Treasurer, Grand President, and Executive Committeeman.

Guest speaker Al Widmar, also active with ANB and a member of Alaska's second State Legislature, described improvements in Native health care since Statehood. Due to efforts by Indian Health Service and Native organizations led by concerned Native people like Frank O. Williams, Jr., diseases

such as tuberculosis no longer threaten the lives of Native people as they once did twenty years ago.

Ethel Gonzales, who now chairs the Alaska Native Health Board and also represents Alaska on the National Indian Health Board, expressed her thanks to Williams for paving the way to improved Native health care.

At the end of the award presentation, IHS Mt. Edgecumbe Service Unit Director Arthur Willman, Sitka, said that like a Tlingit youngster instructed to seek advice from an uncle, SEARHC should also seek guidance from Williams.