

Also Awards 5 Native Artisans—

Gov. Miller Says Keep Alive Native Art Heritage in Alaska

Five native Alaskan artisans were presented awards by Governor Keith H. Miller on behalf of the Alaska Council on the Arts at the council's first banquet held at the Switzerland last Saturday night in Fairbanks.

Led by Gov. Miller, the banquet speakers stressed the importance of keeping alive, and to revive, the artistic heritage of native Alaskans.

"It constitutes in fact a renaissance," said Gov. Miller.

Miller said that in Kodiak the almost lost art of weaving Attu baskets was being revived by a small group of dedicated women "who are determined to preserve this ancient art for posterity."

He said that Mrs. Henry Neseth of Kodiak organized the effort because "she exemplifies the attitude towards art that seems to be growing in Alaska today. It constitutes in fact a renaissance."

"We in Alaska," Miller went on, "realize that we have the opportunity to revive the ancient ethnic arts of our many peoples and assure that those art forms will not be lost forever as is the case in so many other parts of the world."

"What is more important is the fact that we are taking advantage of that unique opportunity."

Gov. Miller cited as an example the totem pole restoration project under the direction of Mrs. Jane Wallen, Director of Alaska State Museum. She is assisted by Dennis Demmert, a Tlingit Indian.

The restoration was initiated by the Alaska State Council on the Arts headed by its chairman Mary Hale. Smithsonian Institution is also aiding in the restoration project.

The art awards were presented by Gov. Miller to the following native men and women:

—Mrs. Mildred Sparks, who was Alaska's Mother of the Year about two years ago, was the first recipient of a certificate designed by Ronald Senungetuk.

Mrs. Sparks has long been active in the preservation and continuation of the traditions of her people—the Chilkat Indians of Haines and Klukwan.

—Mrs. Emily Ivanoff Brown of Unalakleet who has, and is now writing, the songs and legends of her people handed down through the women in her family for generations.

—Anfesia Shapsnikoff who is now involved in the development of a historical society in Unalaska on the Aleutian Chain "which

has as its objective the thoughtful preservation—and just as importantly—the interpretation of traditional Aleut culture."

—Amos Wallace, a Tlingit totem pole carver. Wallace has consistently pursued his interest in carving.

"He combines a concern for the traditional with a realistic

ability to succeed as a contemporary carver," said Mary Hale.

—Bea Starkweather who, along with her interests in the performing arts (she is a member of the Saxman Indian Dance Group), has shown concern for the retention of Southeastern Alaska's rich cultural heritage.

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Chaired by Mary Hale, the members of the Alaska Council on the Arts are: Greeta Brown, Jean Mackin, Fr. James Poole, Ronald Senungetuk, Betty Myser, Jan Craddick, Carl Heinmiller,

Charlotte Symonds, Augie Herbert, and Dale De Armand.

The banquet and the program was in conjunction with the Festival of the Arts programmed by the University of Alaska.