

# RAHI graduates 41 Alaskans

FAIRBANKS — Forty-one Alaskans graduated from this year's edition of the Rural Alaska Honors Institute earlier this month.

Thirty-four students earned certificates of participation in the cap-and-gown ceremony Aug. 7.

Willie Hensley, state senator and NANA Regional Corp. president of Kotzebue, delivered the keynote address. University of Alaska-Fairbanks Acting Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Wayne Thomas, Professor of Anthropology Jean Aigner and UAF student Sandra Erlich, the 1983 RAHI co-valedictorian, represented the university at the ceremony.

Molly Paukan of St. Marys was valedictorian and co-salutatorians were Wassillie Kassel of Kasigluk and Brian Leal of Grayling. In all, 13 students graduated with honors.

Honors students were selected from among the top RAHI academic achievers. Individual effort and willingness to help others during the program were also factors in honors selection.

The institute, a six-week intensive academic program begun in 1983, is held annually at UAF.

The Alaska Federation of Natives had advocated the creation of an introduction to college program for rural Alaskan students. RAHI is designed to promote academic success for college-bound rural students, and Alaska Natives in particular.

This year's graduates came from 35 communities. They were selected for RAHI from among 85 applicants. Student selection was based upon academic achievement in their home schools, leadership and support from within their home communities.

According to RAHI Director Jim

Kowalsky, one of the program's key objectives is early preparation of participating students for successful academic life on a large, urban campus. Students are selected for the program at the end of their junior year in high school.

Students who come from small rural Alaska communities often suffer extreme culture shock when they are thrust into life on a large, urban, Western-style campus, according to Kowalsky. RAHI, through its rigorous six-week academic and social program, attempts to prepare students for college.

The academic portion of the program emphasizes math, writing and reading skills. College survival skills, as well as academic skills, are taught to all students to prepare them for the different world they face on a college campus.

RAHI instructional staff consists of teachers from rural and urban school districts and members of the UAF faculty. Recreational and residence hall staff members are UAF undergraduates and adults from Alaska school districts.

Honors students selected from the 1987 RAHI class were: Anne Marie Amarok of Martin Olsen High School, Golovin; Wilma Brown of White

Mountain High School; Rachel Dick of McGrath High School; Amy Eubank of Sand Point High School; Howard Farley and Lynn Fricke of Nome-Beltz High School; Wassillie Kassel of Akula Elitnaurvik High School, Kasigluk; Brian Leal of Grayling who attends Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka; Dawn Salesky and Diane Schaeffer of Kotzebue High School; Lisa Jo Thomas of Buckland High School and Molly Paukan who attended St. Marys High School in St. Marys.

Paukan will attend Andreafsky High School in St. Marys this year.

RAHI is sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts at UAF.

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