

Albert Reetz:

Piano is his First Love

"I came from a very large, musical family of 5 sisters and 9 brothers. All of my sisters and some of my brothers played the piano so I learned a lot from them," Albert said sitting at the keyboard. Albert Reetz, long time Anchorage resident and second year student at Sheldon Jackson College, is one of many talented and energetic Native students at the college. Albert has given many piano recitals and played for many people in Anchorage, as well as in his original home, Alakanuk. "I have been playing the piano for seven years now. Once I even played the piano on a ferry in the Alaska Marine Highway System from Haines to Juneau," Albert remembered.

While continuing his musical education at Sheldon Jackson, Albert is one of many other Native students studying towards a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education. "I first heard about Sheldon Jackson through one of my brothers who was spending some time in Sitka. He told me about the music program at the college and I thought it would be a great place to go to get an education."

Albert worked a year for the Alaska Youth Conservation Corps, so he initially came to Sheldon Jackson with the idea of being a forestry major, but then he changed his program of study to better fit his musical
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aspirations. "The Forestry Program," Albert Said, "is very good here, but I decided I wanted to study piano further and the education field, because I know there is a great need for teachers in Alaska." The Sheldon Jackson Teacher Education Program is specifically designed to prepare Native students so that they can go back into rural areas and perform as effective teachers. Albert Reetz doesn't know where he would like to teach, but his students are bound to learn a lot about music, wherever they are. "You have to start them out young," Albert said.

