

GROWING OUR OWN: INDIGENOUS RESEARCH, SCHOLARS, AND EDUCATION
Proceedings from the Alaska Native Studies Conference (2015)

Statement from the Conference Host - University of Alaska Southeast

Richard Caulfield¹

¹Provost's Office, University of Alaska Southeast Juneau, AK

The University of Alaska Southeast was privileged to host the 2014 Alaska Native Studies Conference in Juneau, which took place on *Áak'w Kwáan Aaní*—the homeland of the *Áak'w* people. The UAS Juneau campus is located along the shores of *Áak'w*—or “little lake” in the Lingít language. We honor the Lingít Elders and other distinguished culture bearers from across Alaska who participated in this important conference and the dedicated work of UAS faculty and staff in making it a success.

I want to formally acknowledge and thank the keynote speakers, Dr. Malia Villegas, Dr. Joann Archibald, and Tlingit elder *Kaalkáawu*, Cyril George. They shared their words and wisdom, some of which are in this volume. Sadly, Mr. George, and noted poet and scholar Richard Dauenhauer both have gone into the forest and are no longer with us. This volume is dedicated to these two individuals and their contributions to Alaska Native literature, language, and culture.

Participants included Alaska State Writer Laureate Nora Marks Dauenhauer and her husband Dr. Richard Dauenhauer. Together they have been instrumental in passing on Tlingit knowledge and wisdom to future generations. Dick, who served as president's professor of Alaska Native Languages at UAS, passed away the summer of 2014. As planning for the next Alaska Native Studies Conference moves forward, we hold in our hearts the wise words of Dr. Dauenhauer:

“None of us will live forever...[but] we need to cherish our languages today, and the people who still speak them, or who might someday learn to understand or speak them in ways that are meaningful to them. We need to cherish each other and ourselves. We need to recognize what we need to do, achieve the skills we need to do those things, and then do them, and in so doing, hope to make a difference.”