Dinner and Presentation

Monday, May 11, 2015
6:30 pm
Kahiltna Court
Dinner and Presentation

We are privileged to have William L. Iggiagruk Hensley join us as our dinner speaker. Hensley is currently chair of the First Alaskans Institute and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Business and Public Policy at the University of Alaska - Anchorage. He is also author of the book _Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: a Memoir of Alaska and the Real People._

**Speaker:**
William L. Iggiagruk Hensley, author and chairman, First Alaskans Institute Board of Trustees

**Biographical Information on the Speaker**

Born in a small house where the Kotzebue Sound washes seafoam onto the Baldwin Peninsula’s gravel shores, William L. Iggiagruk Hensley is an Inupiaq and lifelong Alaskan. His memoir, _Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People_, was published in December 2008, and presents his perspective on his life – personal and public – beginning with his childhood in the Arctic. Hensley’s other significant written work, _What Rights to Land Have the Alaska Natives: The Primary Issue_, was drafted in 1966, 42 years before his book, when he was a college student in Fairbanks. Shared with people throughout Alaska, this paper catalyzed a movement of many, and helped shape Alaska as we know it.

Despite these written works, few people know Hensley primarily as an author. Instead he is known for his service to Alaska in the public and business sectors. He has worn many hats. He was a legislator in the House and Senate for 10 years; was a founder of the Northwest Alaska Native Association (now Maniilaq Association); served Alaska Federation of Natives as a founding member, former president, executive director, co-chair and president emeritus; was the founding president of Alaska Village Electric Cooperative from 1967-1971; was a director of NANA Regional Corporation for 20 years, serving as president and secretary, as well as president of NANA Development Corporation; is a former commissioner of commerce for the State of Alaska; and retired from Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, which he represented in Washington, D.C. for nine years.

Lest you worry retirement has taken him out of circulation, Hensley is currently chair of the First Alaskans Institute. He has spent the last few years promoting his book and discussing Alaska with people across the country and throughout the state, with the goal of clarifying and deepening people’s understanding of our history – as Inupiat, as Alaska’s indigenous people, as Alaskans, and as Americans.

Hensley is currently distinguished visiting professor of business and public policy at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. His graduate course is entitled “Alaska Policy Frontiers.” The course is an exploration of Alaska’s history,
economics, colonization, indigenous impacts and modern day issues such as the proposed Pebble Mine, energy, mining and the history of the American Indian boarding school system.

Discussion of Hensley’s life would not be complete without mention of his wife and partner of 40 years, Abbe. Together they have four children – Priscilla Naungagiaq Hensley-Holthouse, Mary Lynn Auvik Hightower, James Umiivik Hensley and Elizabeth Frances Saagulik Hensley. He also has a son, Eric Aqpayuk Mason and a step-daughter, Jennifer Goldberg. Willie and Abbe have 11 grandchildren.