CLARE SWAN SHAREHOLDER OF THE YEAR

Swan recognized for 40 years of service

Since 1989, when CIRI recognized Shem Pete with the CIRI Shareholder of the Year Award, CIRI has been honoring shareholders for their exemplary dedication to Alaska Native culture, heritage and communities. The award acknowledges the recipient’s life accomplishments and contributions to Alaska Native people.

At the Fall Friendship Potlatch in Kenai earlier this month, CIRI President and CEO Sophie Minich presented the 2013 Shareholder of the Year Award to Clare Swan. Swan’s service to the Alaska Native community and rural Alaska spans more than 40 years.

“Clare’s contributions are many and she remains an inspirational role model for our youth,” Minich said when presenting the award. “It is an honor to recognize Clare on behalf of CIRI and all of our shareholders.”

Swan served on the CIRI Board of Directors from 1991 to 2006 and is currently the chair of Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), a position she has held since 2000.

“As chair of Cook Inlet Tribal Council’s Board of Directors, Clare brought her vision to CITC, helping CITC to grow into a premier Native organization impacting Alaskan Native and American Indian peoples nationwide,” said CIRI shareholder and CITC President and CEO Gloria O’Neill.

Swan also chaired the Kenaitze Indian Tribe for 15 years and led the effort to secure the Traditional Educational Fishery for the Kenaitze Tribe. She was instrumental in helping to establish the Dena’ina Health Clinic as well as youth programs and a community agricultural program. As a certified substance abuse counselor, a volunteer with the court system and an active participant in the effort to revitalize the Dena’ina language, including relearning the language herself, Swan has helped countless Alaska Native people.

Elder Shareholder of the Year

Betty Gilcrist

Betty Gilcrist was honored with the recognition of CIRI Elder of the Year. Gilcrist received the award from CIRI President and CEO Sophie Minich at the Fall Friendship Potlatch in Kenai.

“Thank you, Betty, for all you have done. Your work of documenting the cultural traditions and history of Point Possession will be a benefit for generations to come,” Minich said.

Gilcrist was an effective advocate for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and testified in federal court to help create the group status for the village of Point Possession. She also served on a CIRI Shareholder Participation Committee and worked with the Cook Inlet Historical Society as the Point Possession representative.

Raven’s Circle

The new look and the efforts being made to develop relevant and engaging content.

CIRI SHAREHOLDER AND ELDER SHAREHOLDER OF THE YEAR
A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT
By: Sophie Minich, CIRI President and CEO

The CIRI Potlatch season is upon us and I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with shareholders and their families in Kenai and Anchorage earlier this month. I also look forward to our meeting with shareholders when we gather in Puyallup, Wash., next month. This is a special time for the CIRI family to rekindle friendships, make new friends and acknowledge those who have passed away.

I especially want to congratulate Clare Swan who received the recognition of CIRI Shareholder of the Year and Betty Gilcrist, our CIRI Elder of the Year. Clare has an impressive lifetime of contributions – from being a leader in the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and helping to achieve an educational fishery for our people, to battling region-wide unemployment, racism and alcoholism. Meanwhile, Betty’s commitment to researching the history of Point Possession and passing on cultural knowledge and traditions will be a benefit for generations to come.

“We are fortunate for the collaboration shared among shareholders, Board members, employees, nonprofits and business partners – a welcome contrast to the bitter divide we see in our nation’s political dialogue.”

– SOPHIE MINICH

Also receiving well-deserved recognition at the Potlatches are CIRI descendants Amiel Crandall and Autumn Ridley, the winners of the first-ever CIRI Youth Recognition Awards. The new award category is part of CIRI’s commitment to deepen its engagement with the next generation of CIRI shareholders. Amiel and Autumn each demonstrated a strong dedication to personal growth and leadership. Please take the time to read about their accomplishments in this issue of the Raven’s Circle.

I suspect those of you paying attention to the national news have been frustrated watching the bitter divide we see in our nation’s political dialogue. It feels like we’re listening to a broken record. I often wish our political leaders would try to run government more like a business. If so, they would realize that their failure to work together and compromise only serves to cause our nation damage.

While the government shutdown had only limited impacts on CIRI businesses, it affected some nonprofits, tribal organizations and other services on which our shareholders and descendants rely. Even before the shutdown, these organizations were feeling the effects of the sequestration cuts that came earlier this year. These cuts have impacted the Indian Health Service, education funding, substance abuse programs, Head Start, infrastructure projects and others.

Many Alaska Native corporations have also felt the impacts through cuts in federal contracting programs. While CIRI is not as dependent on federal contracting as some Alaska Native corporations, our businesses that do work with federal agencies have been impacted by an overall reduction in the number of contracts and delays in awarding contracts. CIRI is taking appropriate measures to respond to the uncertainty while encouraging our elected leaders to resolve their disagreements in a timely manner and limit the effects of the political stalemate.

While Congress finally reached agreement to re-open the government and extend the debt ceiling, it is only a three-month extension. This creates uncertainty in the financial markets and among those companies doing business with the federal government.

The National Congress of American Indians is closely following the events in Washington, D.C., as they pertain to services offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service and other agencies. You can find more information about these issues and how on-going developments could impact the organization’s website, at www.NCAI.com.

In the meantime, CIRI will remain focused on those issues we can control as we manage our investments to deliver the highest return for our shareholders.
FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARD ROOM

Aaron Leggett

At 32 years of age, CIRI shareholder Aaron Leggett has played a vital role in preserving and perpetuating the Dena’ina language and culture. As the Special Exhibits Curator at the Anchorage Museum, Leggett has been instrumental in bringing the first exhibition of the Dena’ina Athabascan people to a major museum.

The exhibit “Dena’ina’aq Huch’ulyeshi: the Dena’ina Way of Living” opened September 15 and runs through January 12 featuring artifacts and artsheets from museums all over the world. A crowning achievement for Leggett, the exhibit is but the latest in a lifetime spent exploring the Dena’ina culture and elevating its prominence.

Born in Anchorage in 1981, Leggett was raised at Idlughet (Eklutna). “She instilled in me a sense of being proud of who I am,” said Leggett.

He first learned of his ancestry in preschool after telling his grandmother about a school project where students made jars of cranberry sauce to take home for Thanksgiving. “I remember giving it to her and saying, ‘Grandma, we dressed up as Indians in school.’” She replied, in her husky voice, “Aaron, you are Indian.”

Until about 15 years ago, most of the region’s history focused on the tent city that became Anchorage and the pipeline days. Outside of a few mostly out-of-print publications on the region’s original inhabitants, it was difficult to find relevant information about the Dena’ina people. After earning his degree in anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Leggett set out to change the historical narrative.

“I have never encountered a man so passionate about his culture, about getting the story right and about making it his life’s work,” said CIRI Board member Halie Bassett who served with Aaron at CIRI. “He has truly returned Dena’ina to a level of prominence in the community that was unheard of such a short time ago.”

Leggett’s work includes scholarly articles about the Dena’ina language and people and he has also co-authored several publications including “Dena’ina Heritage and Representation in Anchorage, AK: “Dena’inaNat’uh. Our Special Place” and “Sakuukk’agut: Alaska Native Corporations, An Overview of ANCSA.” He also served as one of the editors and contributors to the exhibition catalog for “Dena’ina’aq Huch’ulyeshi: The Dena’ina Way of Living.”

The students, including three CIRI employees and five CIRI shareholders, heard about Native land battles from former CIRI President Marjie Brown; they heard about the political struggle to accomplish the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) from Willie Hensley; they listened to Andrew Guy as he discussed the land claims from a Yup’ik perspective; and Byron Mallott shared wisdom about the importance of communicating across cultural lines, collaborating and cultivating long-lasting relationships.

Students also heard from attorney David Case, who talked about some of the legal issues created by the settlement, and from CIRI’s Vice President of Government Contracting Gregory Razo who spoke about ANCSA federal Indian policy and the reorganization of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The graduate-level program covers nine weeks of intensive study in the history, operation and challenges of managing Alaska's Native corporations. Each student who completes the program will receive a certification and nine credits that can be applied to a master's degree.

“Who’s Who in the history of Alaska Native land claims became the first instructors for the inaugural class of the Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program. The classes got underway in September at Alaska Pacific University (APU).”

“This is an impressive inaugural class. I am especially proud of the CIRI shareholders and employees who are embarking on this challenge.”

— SOPHIE MINICH

The Fire Island Wind project celebrated its one year anniversary in September, just in time to begin work on what could become the second phase of the project.

In early October, crews started clearing pads and access roads to add 11 more turbines to the island. By starting construction now, CIRI would be able to take advantage of an investment tax credit offered by the federal government that will only be available through the end of 2013. The credit would provide up to $15 million in savings, should the second phase of the project proceed.

In a review of the first year of operations, it appears the 11 turbines that make up the first phase of the project are doing exactly what they were built to do.

As of September, the turbines have produced a collective 51,800 megawatt hours of energy – just slightly above the project’s goal of 51,000 megawatt hours – and enough electricity to power 6,000 Southcentral Alaska homes, according to Suzanne Gibson, vice president of Fire Island Wind, LLC.

“It’s exactly in line with our expectations,” said Gibson.
CIRI presented its new Youth Recognition Awards at the Fall Friendship Potlatch in Anchorage on October 20. CIRI descendants Amiel Crandall and Autumn Ridley received the awards for different, but equally impressive, accomplishments.

Amiel Crandall is recognized for his personal growth and community service. After his initial difficulty completing the Southcentral Foundation RAISE program, Crandall successfully turned his life around. He volunteered for community programs, improved in school, became a better communicator and inspires others to follow.

Crandall ultimately received numerous awards from the RAISE program’s staff and his peers. Another notable accomplishment was his recent acceptance into Season 2013-2014 of the Alaska Youth Orchestra due to his talents as a cellist. Crandall is the son of CIRI shareholder Amy Roehl-Hanson.

Nominated by Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Autumn Ridley is a talented athlete who has numerous awards from the Native Youth Olympics, including a world record Alaska High Kick set in 2012. The physical strength and mental toughness that led to her success in the games is now focused on mentoring Native youth. Ridley recognizes the importance of teaching others the skills she acquired and passing along this important connection to the cultural heritage of CIRI shareholders. Ridley is the daughter of CIRI shareholder Jacqueline Lee and granddaughter of CIRI shareholder Sophie Nolstine.

CIRI introduced the Youth Recognition Award as part of its outreach to descendants and future owners and leaders of the corporation. Deepening its engagement with shareholders and descendants is one of CIRI’s strategic focus areas. The Youth Recognition Award acknowledges youth who are 12 to 17 years of age for superior academic achievements, demonstrated leadership qualities, dedication to Alaska Native culture and heritage, outstanding contributions to community and family, and exceptional determination and stamina in overcoming significant life challenges.

The following CIRI shareholders do not have a current mailing address on record. Shareholders can fill out the change of address form at CIRI’s offices, download it from the CIRI website or call CIRI President and CEO Sophie Minch at the Anchorage Potlatch. Photo by Joel Irwin.
CIRI shareholders from the Kenai Peninsula gathered at Kenai Middle School on October 12 to participate in the Fall Friendship Potlatch. Traditional foods, such as salmon peroke and moose stew were served.

Shareholders participated in an Athabascan cloth ceremony and enjoyed a performance from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Jabila’ina Dance Group.
New book offers Autism insight

CIRI shareholder Win Quier is the author of “Jeremiah’s Journey: Gaining Our Autistic Son By Losing Him to the System,” which chronicles the life of her son with autism through his mother’s eyes. It addresses the roller coaster ride of finding the correct diagnosis, medication and counseling.

Hope is the main goal of sharing Jeremiah’s story from birth to graduating high school and moving into his first apartment. The book provides suggestions to make the journey a little easier and tools to keep organized.

Jeremiah’s Journey is intended to offer encouragement to those who have autism and their families.

Quier shares her book with organizations and support groups in Oklahoma. She is also working on two additional books, an Amish romance novel and a children’s book, both featuring an autistic character.

To follow the writings of Win, you can like her Facebook page, “Win Quier, Author.” To order autographed copies of the book, please email win.quier@yahoo.com. Non-autographed copies can be ordered at www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore.

NOW OPEN, NEW DENTAL CLINIC IN MAT-SU VALLEY

Southcentral Foundation is now offering general dental services Tuesdays through Fridays inside the Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center in Wasilla. The services, primarily for adults and children ages 7 and older, include examinations, cleanings and fillings. Pediatric dental services are offered on Wednesdays for children ages 6 and under.

For appointments, please call (907) 631-7690. All specialty services will continue to be referred to the Southcentral Foundation Fireweed Dental or Alaska Native Medical Center Dental Clinics in Anchorage.

SHAREHOLDER- AND DESCENDANT-OWNED BUSINESSES

CIRI shareholders and descendants own and operate a variety of small businesses, ranging from arts, entertainment and restaurants, to construction. Visit the CIRI website at www.ciri.com for a directory of CIRI shareholder- and descendant-owned businesses.

Alaska’s Event Designer
www.aksevenindexigner.com/alaska-s-event-designer
(907) 398-3112
Shay Jackinsky, Owner

CIRI descendant Shay Jackinsky owns Alaska’s Event Designer. The business provides special event planning services for individuals, groups and businesses. Jackinsky helps to coordinate and create unique and memorable events through innovative planning and professional execution. For more information, visit www.aksevenindexigner.com/alaska-s-event-designer.

EBSC Engineering LLC
www.ebscengineering.com
eddie.hakala@ebsc.us
11301 Olive Lane,
Anchorage, AK 99515
(907) 222-1085
Edward L. Hakala, P.E., Owner

CIRI shareholder Edward Hakala owns EBSC Engineering LLC. The business provides civil and environmental engineering services to architectural firms, municipal governments, state and federal agencies, tribal organizations and private developers. Their greatest interest is in providing engineering support to Alaska Native communities.

To list your shareholder- or descendant-owned business on CIRI’s website, email info@ciri.com.

Disclaimer: CIRI provides these links to shareholder- and descendant-owned businesses as a service to CIRI shareholders and their families and for informational purposes only. CIRI does not endorse and takes no responsibility for any of the products or services these businesses offer, or the ways in which they offer them. CIRI does not investigate or evaluate the listed businesses in any way, and makes no warranty, express or implied, about the truthfulness of any statement a listed business makes. CIRI reserves complete discretion in deciding whether to list any business, to maintain any listing, and to update any listing or link.
Growing up in Point Possession during the summer, Gilcrist learned the traditional subsistence lifestyle just as her mother did. Gilcrist continues to share her cultural knowledge and traditions with others to ensure that the next generation of providers will carry on the traditions and customs to sustain their extended families.

“My Aunt Betty is a pioneer,” said niece Deborah Jacobson. “We all look up to her leadership and she serves as a mentor with our family’s history and culture. She is the caretaker of the old village.”

This is CIRI’s third year of recognizing an Elder who exemplifies the highest values and qualities important to CIRI shareholders and Alaska Native people. The Elder is recognized as a leader, an educator, a mentor with our family’s history and culture. She is the caretaker of the old village.”

The representatives were pleased with the turnout from tourism and construction to nonprofit entities, and other organizations to discover new employment opportunities for employment.

“The way I was spoken to by company representatives was friendly and courteous. I received lots of information about jobs of which I can and will apply for,” commented a 2013 shareholder attendee.

The 2013 Fair created the opportunity for shareholders and descendants of all ages to meet with representatives from CIRI-affiliated companies, tribal and village entities, and other organizations to discover new opportunities for employment.

CIRI is reaching out to more vendors to attend the 2014 Job and Resource Fair. If your organization is interested in being a vendor, please contact the CIRI Human Resource department at (907) 274-8638.

As the CIRI Job and Resource Fair draws closer, additional information will be provided about specific companies attending, what positions they are seeking to fill and on how to prepare for the event.

HAVE YOU EVER?

- Worked for a union
- Operated heavy equipment
- Held a CDL
- Expended material
- Worked as a heavy laborer
- Worked as a mechanic
- Set grade
- Worked in masonry
- Prepped footing forms
- Used hand tools
- Used power tools
- Framed a structure
- Constructed scaffolding
- Worked with sheet-metal
- Completed plumbing installations
- Run electrical wiring
- Roofed
- Installed fustures
- Worked as a finish carpenter
- Cleaned a construction site

If you have experience in any one of the above listed skills and are seeking employment, please contact CIRI’s Human Resources department at (907) 274-8638.

To learn more about educational funding opportunities, please contact The CIRI Foundation at (907) 793-3575 or by email at tcf@thecirifoundation.org.

CIRI seeks to hire shareholders to build the Fireweed Business Center. The now vacant 8.35-acre site at the corner of Fireweed Lane and the New Seward Highway will soon be home to CIRI’s corporate offices, as well as upscale, commercial office space available for lease.

Site preparation began this month and construction is scheduled to begin next spring. The building is projected to be completed in the winter 2014. CIRI Land Development Company (CLDC) is leading the project with RIM Architects and Davis Constructors & Engineers, Inc.

If you have experience in the construction industry, have a skill listed in the box to the right or have worked for a union and are interested in being added to a list of candidates for employment consideration, please contact CIRI’s Human Resources department at (907) 274-8638 or email info@ciri.com.

If you do not have experience but are interested in learning more about construction training and licensing opportunities, visit the Alaska Department of Labor website at www.jobs.state.ak.us/training.htm.

Shareholders and descendants that decide to pursue additional training or licensing opportunities may be eligible for scholarships and grants to help with the cost of tuition and other direct educational expenses.

CIRI JOB AND RESOURCE FAIR, JANUARY 2014

Building on the success of the 2013 CIRI Job and Resource Fair, CIRI is pleased to announce the opportunity for shareholders and descendants to attend the next fair scheduled for Jan. 28, 2014.

The 2013 Job and Resource Fair created the opportunity for more than 120 shareholders and descendants of all ages to meet with representatives from CIRI-affiliated companies, tribal and village entities, and other organizations to discover new opportunities for employment.

“The way I was spoken to by company representatives was friendly and courteous. I received lots of information about jobs of which I can and will apply for,” commented a 2013 shareholder attendee.

During the 2013 Fair, various industries were present from tourism and construction to nonprofit businesses and law enforcement agencies.

The representatives were pleased with the turnout and the potential of CIRI shareholders and descendants that attended. When asked the reason for attending the job fair, the majority stated, “To increase Alaska Native hire.”

In order to increase relevance to the attendees, CIRI has created an online survey to find out what types of employment opportunities and industries shareholders and descendants would like represented at the 2014 Job and Resource Fair. To complete the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/X5QHPPG.

CIRI is reaching out to vendors to attend the 2014 Job and Resource Fair. If your organization is interested in being a vendor, please contact the CIRI Human Resource department at (907) 274-8638.

SEEKING SHAREHOLDERS TO HELP BUILD THE NEW FIREWEED BUSINESS CENTER

CIRI is seeking shareholders to help build the Fireweed Business Center. The now vacant 8.35-acre site at the corner of Fireweed Lane and the New Seward Highway will soon be home to CIRI’s corporate offices, as well as upscale, commercial office space available for lease.

Site preparation began this month and construction is scheduled to begin next spring. The building is projected to be completed in the winter 2014. CIRI Land Development Company (CLDC) is leading the project with RIM Architects and Davis Constructors & Engineers, Inc.

If you have experience in the construction industry, have a skill listed in the box to the right or have worked for a union and are interested in being added to a list of candidates for employment consideration, please contact CIRI’s Human Resources department at (907) 274-8638 or email info@ciri.com.

If you do not have experience but are interested in learning more about construction training and licensing opportunities, visit the Alaska Department of Labor website at www.jobs.state.ak.us/training.htm.

Shareholders and descendants that decide to pursue additional training or licensing opportunities may be eligible for scholarships and grants to help with the cost of tuition and other direct educational expenses.
Harry Hogenson, 78
Harry Hogenson passed away July 14 at home in Ketchikan, Alaska. Mr. Hogenson was born Aug. 20, 1934, in Seldovia, Alaska.

Richard C. Larson Sr., 71
Richard C. Larson Sr. passed away June 28, 2012, at Mercy Medical Center in Redding, Calif. Mr. Soosuk was born June 27, 1954, in Fairbanks, Alaska. He is survived by his wife, Agnes M. Larson; daughters, Sophia Larson, Christina Larson-Dike and Tamara Larson-Benedicto; sons, Dwayne, Richard Jr., Emil and Boris Larson; and many grandchildren.

Eddie Lee Oldaker, 65
Eddie Lee Oldaker passed away April 17 in Las Vegas, Nev. Mr. Oldaker was born May 26, 1947. He is survived by his wife, Helen Rose Oldaker; and daughters, Samantha Barber, Brenda Rice and April Ceniseus.

Gilbert Ollesstad, 89
Gilbert Ollesstad passed away August 10 at Providence Seward Mountain Haven in Seward, Alaska. Mr. Ollesstad was born Dec. 27, 1923, on Yukan Island outside of Seldovia, Alaska. He was a life-long fisherman in Cook Inlet and also fished in Kodiak, the Bering Sea and Bristol Bay. Mr. Ollesstad is survived by his sons, Burt, Jeff and Tellak Ollesstad; daughter, Dorene Ollesstad; sister, Thelma Patton; five grandchildren; and many great-great-grandchildren.

Gerald Lars-Monroe Sosuk, 59
Gerald Lars-Monroe Sosuk passed away August 17 at Mercy Medical Center in Redding, Calif. Mr. Sosuk was born June 27, 1954, in Fairbanks, Alaska. He is survived by his sisters, Lena, Ruth, Betty, Rose and Annelle; and brothers, Grant and Myles.