A driving force behind the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and former president of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), CIRI shareholder Don Wright passed away peacefully in his home in Kenai on July 5. He was 84.

Wright was born in Nenana in 1929. His father was of Athabascan descent from the village of Tanana and his mother was from Wyoming. He impacted the state through his work in construction, air service in the Interior, community organizations and his immense ability to connect with people from all walks of life, with which eventually landed him in politics. He will be remembered most for the pivotal role he played in seeking the fairest settlement possible for Alaska Native people during a tumultuous era.

As AFN president from 1970 to 1972, Wright fought to secure Alaska Native land rights, meeting with President Nixon in 1971 to encourage the nation’s leader to pass the bill that would grant 40 million acres to Alaska Native people and create today’s Alaska Native corporations.

CIRI Chair Emeritus Roy Huhndorf stated, “Don was the right man for the challenging time. He was a tough negotiator and skillful leader.”

“Don was the right man for the challenging time. He was a tough negotiator and skillful leader.”

– CHAIR EMERITUS ROY HUHNDORF

Dedicated to settling Alaska Native land claims, Wright spent nights sleeping on the streets in Washington, D.C., and maxed out his credit card to pay for 20 individuals from Alaska to travel with him to lobby for the legislation.

“He was in a very difficult position because we were desperately trying to hold the [AFN] organization together,” said Debra Call, Tyonek Native Corporation corporate administration director, in an email sent to the Tikahtnu Forum before the fire had been contained. “This is a very stressful time for all of us; however, it is so appreciated to have members of the Tikahtnu Forum stand beside us in our time of need.”

VILLAGE OF TYONEK UNITES TO FIGHT AND RECOVER FROM RECENT WILDFIRE

On May 27, when a much-needed rain descended upon Southcentral Alaska, residents of Tyonek saw the beginning of an end to a wildfire that had blazed for almost 10 days. The fire burned through 1,906 acres, causing a temporary evacuation of the village and displacing more than 100 residents for several days.

In response, several organizations and the community of Tyonek itself came together to fight the fire and help the people affected to get back on their feet.

“Since we are a rural community, our families have not only been fighting the fire alongside the firefighters, we have also been preparing meals and providing housing,” said Debra Call, Tyonek Native Corporation corporate administration director, in an email sent to the Tikahtnu Forum before the fire had been contained. “This is a very stressful time for all of us; however, it is so appreciated to have members of the Tikahtnu Forum stand beside us in our time of need.”
A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT
Sophie Minich, CIRI president and chief executive officer

Every year, federal, state and local governments make decisions or pass laws that affect Alaska Native people. Subsistence rights, educational funding, development of Native-owned land – so many aspects of our lives are impacted by decisions made at one level of government or another. It’s easy to get frustrated with lawmakers when the regulations they put in place don’t reflect our Native values.

“I encourage every CIRI shareholder and descendant of voting age to make sure they are registered to vote, then put that voting power to work by showing up at the polls on Election Day.” – SOPHIE MINICH

Whether you live in Alaska, where Alaska Native issues are frequently debated, or in the Lower 48, it’s important to remember that you have a say in whether and how laws get made. When you cast your vote in primary and general elections, you help determine the future not only for Alaska Native people, but for your community, as well.

In Alaska, the primary is coming up on August 19, followed by the nationwide general election in November. Alaskans face a lot of big voting decisions. Two of our congressmen, Senator Mark Begich and Congressman Don Young, are up for re-election. Three Republican candidates will compete in the primary election for a chance to represent Alaska in the U.S. Senate. All 40 members of the Alaska House of Representatives, as well as 14 of Alaska’s Senate seats, will be up for reelection. Not to mention the gubernatorial race, in which Alaskans will select from seven candidates to determine who will govern our state for the next four years.

Additionally, primary voters in Alaska will be asked to approve or reject Ballot Measure 1, which makes significant changes to the oil and gas production tax. CIRI, along with five other Alaska Native corporations, formed a coalition to advocate against Ballot Measure 1. Participating in primary and general elections is our chance to let our elected officials know what issues are important to us.

When you cast your vote, though, you also have the potential to become part of a larger voice. According to the Get Out the Native Vote movement, the Alaska Native people constitute about 14 percent of the adult population in Alaska. If all Native people voted during a normal turnout year, roughly 25 percent of the electorate at the polls would be Alaska Native. This voting bloc has the potential to be more powerful than the Republican, Democratic and non-partisan vote.

For those shareholders who live in Alaska, you can find more information, including how to register, at http://www.elections.alaska.gov/. For those living outside Alaska, I encourage you to inquire with your appropriate state agency to ensure your vote can be counted.

In the meantime, you can cast a vote of a different kind by submitting a nomination for the CIRI Shareholder and Elder Shareholder of the Year Awards. Every year, we honor shareholders who have shown dedication to Alaska Native culture, heritage and communities. So many CIRI shareholders have made incredible contributions to Alaska Native people, worked to preserve our culture and passed traditions and knowledge on to others. Let’s celebrate their work!

In addition to the Shareholder and Elder of the Year Awards, we’re also taking nominations for the Youth Recognition Award. There’s an entire generation of CIRI shareholders and descendants who are already making strides toward becoming tomorrow’s Alaska Native leaders, and we want to honor them.

The criteria and the nomination form for each award is on the CIRI website. I encourage you to nominate a shareholder or descendant who you feel deserves recognition this year.

Sophie Minich

HIGHLIGHTS PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
• Every vote counts! Make sure you’re registered to vote.
• In Alaska, the primary election is August 19.
• You can also submit a nomination for the CIRI Shareholder, Elder Shareholder and Youth Recognition awards at www.ciri.com.

SHAREHOLDER PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

CIRI welcomes the following new Shareholder Participation Committee (SPC) members:

Alaska SPC Committee
Teresa Axias, Kake
Herbert Butler, Fairbanks
Georgia Mario, Nikolaevsk

Anchorage SPC Committee
Arnold Hagans
Debbie Jacobson
Luanne Pelagio

Lower 48 and Hawaii SPC Committee
Hope Hagans, Michigan
Paul Shippey, Washington
Pamela Youngs, Tennessee

Each year, SPC members are chosen through a random drawing from the names of voting shareholders who are at least 18 years of age, and have indicated an interest in participating on a committee and correctly answered the questionnaire about CIRI that is mailed to all voting shareholders prior to the Annual Meeting of Shareholders. The correct answers for the 2014 questionnaire are shown to the right.

Which of the following statements are true? (Check all that apply)

- Non-Native CIRI shareholders do not have voting rights associated with their CIRI stock. (This was the most-often missed question this year.)
- When CIRI stock owned by a non-Native shareholder is inherited by a descendant of a Native who furnishes adequate documentation to CIRI to prove his or her Native descent, the shares will carry voting rights.
- If a potential heir does not furnish adequate documentation to CIRI to prove his or her Native descent, the shares may still be inherited, but would not carry voting rights. (Because the right to vote is so important, even if the documentation is not initially provided, CIRI encourages that it be furnished as soon as possible so that the shares may be reissued to carry voting rights.)
- Whether a shareholder owns 100 shares of stock or only 2 shares, as long as he or she has provided appropriate documentation to CIRI to substantiate his or her Native descent, the shares will carry voting rights.
- An individual may demonstrate Native descent by submitting a birth certificate showing that he or she is descended from someone identified on CIRI’s records as a Native shareholder. In some cases, it may also be necessary to provide additional documents (e.g., a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption decree, other individuals’ birth certificates, etc.) to demonstrate ancestry.
- An individual may demonstrate Native descent by submitting to CIRI a Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), obtained from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, indicating the degree of Alaska Native Blood quantum.
Youth Art Contest entry forms can be downloaded and printed at www.ciri.com.

An interested CIRI shareholder or descendant who is 5 to 12 years of age may submit original artwork interpreting the theme “Cultural Diversity” and a completed entry form to CIRI by 5 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time on August 14 to be entered in the 2014 Youth Art Contest. Winning entries will be displayed at the CIRI and The CIRI Foundation Potlatch this fall.

Youth Art Contest entry forms can be downloaded and printed at www.ciri.com.

REMAINDER: AWARD NOMINATIONS, YOUTH ART CONTEST ENTRIES AND YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE APPLICATIONS. DUE AUG. 14, 2014

SHAREHOLDER OF THE YEAR, ELDER OF THE YEAR AND YOUTH RECOGNITION AWARD NOMINATIONS

We need your help to recognize CIRI shareholders who have made incredible contributions to Alaska Native people, worked to preserve our culture and passed traditions and knowledge on to others. There's an entire generation of CIRI shareholder and descendant young people who are already making strides toward becoming tomorrow's Alaska Native leaders, and we want to honor them, as well.

Help us celebrate their work by submitting a nomination to CIRI for the CIRI Shareholder and Elder Shareholder of the Year Awards and the Youth Recognition Award by 5 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time, August 14.

Visit www.ciri.com to learn more.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

2014 Youth Representative Position
CIRI is currently seeking applications from CIRI shareholders and descendants who are 13 to 17 years of age to fill the 2014 Shareholder Participation Committees (SPC) Youth Representative positions.

Youth representative applications and supporting materials must be received by CIRI by 5 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time on August 14 to be considered.

Youth representative application packets can be downloaded and printed at www.ciri.com.

Youth Art Contest
For younger CIRI shareholders and descendants who are 5 to 12 years of age, we are pleased to host an annual art contest.

An interested CIRI shareholder or descendant who is 5 to 12 years of age may submit original artwork interpreting the theme “Cultural Diversity” and a completed entry form to CIRI by 5 p.m. Alaska Daylight Time on August 14 to be entered in the 2014 Youth Art Contest. Winning entries will be displayed at the CIRI and The CIRI Foundation Potlatch this fall.

Youth Art Contest entry forms can be downloaded and printed at www.ciri.com.

Cynthia Darosett: Reunited

Early on the morning of February 4 of this year, four words took Cynthia Darosett's breath away: “The twins found us.”

The CIRI shareholder stood in her Colorado home with her phone to her ear as her youngest son explained that the twin boys she'd long ago given up for adoption had made contact. Three months later, Cynthia was back in Alaska, face-to-face with the sons she thought she'd never see again.

“I thought about the twins all the time, especially on their birthdays,” Cynthia says.

“This year, I was so upset because I really felt like giving up. I thought I would never find them.”

Instead, Cynthia's sons, 26-year-olds Jerome and Mark, found her by connecting with a cousin on Facebook.

“To this day, I feel guilty for giving them up, but I think I made the only decision that I could at the time – to give them a better home than what I could provide.”

— CYNTHIA DAROSETT

Born as Bruce Allen and Christopher Michael, the boys were the second and third children for an already-struggling 17-year-old Cynthia. Her first child was only 13 months old when she brought her premature twins home from Providence Hospital.

Trying to care for three babies as a young mother was simply too much. “I was feeding one, and then the other would wake up and need feeding,” she recalls. “My husband at the time was working nights, so I was by myself with a twin in each arm and a toddler who was getting into everything. And the twins required so much attention because they were so little. To this day, I feel guilty for giving them up, but I think I made the only decision that I could at the time – to give them a better home than what I could provide.”

Cynthia’s reunion with her sons took place at a Thai restaurant in Wasilla. “When I walked in, they each gave me a hug, and the embrace was just overwhelming.”

In the days after meeting her twins, Cynthia spent time with her new extended family, which includes three grandchildren and one granddaughter on Facebook.
ARTFULLY DONE: CIHA RAISES AWARENESS WITH POP-UP PROJECT

If you’re out and about in Anchorage this summer, you may have already noticed some unique works of art popping up around town. In June, Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) kicked off Housing Matters, a pop-up art project that features house-shaped paintings commissioned from nine local artists.

The project is meant to invoke a conversation about the importance of affordable housing for all Alaskans, says CIRI shareholder and CEO Carol Gore.

“Housing matters to everyone,” she says. “It’s essential for economic success for families and the business community, for the well-being of children and elders, and for a thriving, vibrant community. We know the cost to build in our community is especially challenging, so we’re working community-wide to catalyze local housing incentives and new resources.”

CIRI descendant and artist Danielle Larsen knows first-hand how tough it can be to find affordable housing, “I chose to be part of this project because – as an emerging artist – it’s great exposure, but CIHA also helped me buy my first house,” she explains.

Larsen is completing her bachelor’s degree in painting and Alaska Native art with the support of scholarships from The CIRI Foundation. She works in a variety of mediums, including skin sewing, beadwork, carving and casting.

SIGN UP FOR eNEWSLETTERS AND BE ENTERED INTO PRIZE DRAWINGS, 7” KINDLE FIRE HD

Your email address must be valid to win!

The winner of the second quarter eNewsletter drawing for a 7” Kindle Fire HD was CIRI shareholder Vanessa Marie Keene of Bakersfield, Calif.

Shareholders enrolled in the eNewsletter Program receive interactive versions of the Raven’s Circle in lieu of paper newsletters. They receive their CIRI news faster, and CIRI saves on printing, processing and postage costs.

To increase participation, CIRI is conducting quarterly drawings for a 7-inch Kindle Fire HD from the names of all shareholders enrolled in the eNewsletter Program. Shareholders have two more opportunities to win this year, with drawings conducted for the quarters ending Sept. 30 and Dec. 31.

An email is sent to each winner at the email address specified for receipt of CIRI eNewsletters. If the email address is not valid, another winner will be selected.

$200 STOCK WILL PRIZE WINNER

The winner of the June 2014 Stock Will Prize Redemption is Kira Mae Bouwens.

APPLE iPAD MINI WINNER

The winner of the second quarter drawing for an Apple iPad Mini with Retina display is Flora Violet Beuning.

Shareholders will have two more opportunities to win an Apple iPad Mini in 2014, with drawings conducted for the quarters ending Sept. 30 and Dec. 31.

To be eligible for the $200 monthly prize drawings and the quarterly drawings for an iPad Mini with Retina display, you must have a valid will on file in CIRI’s shareholder relations department and you must comply with CIRI’s fractional share policy. The CIRI Stock Will form, instructions and information on the fractional share policy may be found on the CIRI website.

Do you have a valid stock will on file?

As of June 30, 2014, 2,580 CIRI shareholders did not have stock wills on file at CIRI. There are issues with the stock wills of an additional 426 shareholders, and these shareholders have been so advised. Contact CIRI’s probate staff at (907) 263-5191 or toll-free at (800) 764-2474.

Not enrolled in the eNewsletter program?

Download an eNewsletter subscription form from the CIRI website at www.ciri.com or call (907) 263-5191 or toll-free at (800) 764-2474.
Decades of planning and anticipation came to a joyful conclusion on June 12 when the Dena’ina Wellness Center celebrated its grand opening in Kenai, Alaska. The new state-of-the-art healthcare facility offers integrated health and wellness services, including medical, dental, behavioral health, chemical dependency, physical therapy, lab and X-ray and pharmacy services, all under one roof. Optometry and traditional healing services are planned for the future.

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe (KIT) invited the public to help mark the occasion with a three-day celebration featuring music, drummers, traditional foods, a blessing from Russian Orthodox Bishop David Mahaffey, special speakers and a cloth ceremony. On June 13, CIRI shareholder Joel Isaak unveiled an art installation he designed for the building site called “Łuq’a Nagh Ghilghuzht” (Fish Camp), a trio of bronze statues depicting a family gathering and processing fish.

Tours were given of the new 52,000-square-foot facility, which houses 15 exam rooms, four treatment and four consultation rooms, 13 talking rooms, 10 dental operation rooms, six classrooms and a demonstration kitchen that will be used to teach preparation of traditional and healthy foods. Signs throughout the building describe the use of each room, not only in English and Braille, but with Dena’ina translations as well.

After many years of hopeful planning, development of the Wellness Center got a boost when KIT received a highly competitive Indian Health Service (IHS) joint venture award in 2011. Additional funding came from the state and from CIRI and nonprofit organizations. In just two years, the building went from artist’s renderings to reality.

Already, the Dena’ina Wellness Center is providing the Alaska Native and American Indian people of the Kenai Peninsula and surrounding communities with high quality, fully integrated healthcare that will be supported by the IHS award for a minimum of 20 years.

CIRI congratulates the Kenaitze Indian Tribe on the completion and opening of this vital new resource.
the way. Family dinners, barbecues and birthday celebrations offered an opportunity for her to get to know Jerome and Mark.

She also made a special trip to the CIRI offices in Anchorage. “One of the very first things I wanted to do was add the twins to my CIRI stock will,” she explains. “That was important to me. And from the moment I walked into the CIRI offices, I felt at home and cared about.”

Though she lives in Colorado, “home” is Alaska – and now, Cynthia says, she has more reason than ever to return. “I made this trip specifically to reunite with my twins. For years, my family experienced a lot of loss, and that drove me away, but Alaska will always be home, no matter where I go. This is where my boys are. After so many years of loss, now I’m gaining family.”

**HIGHLIGHTS CYNTHIA DAROSETT**

- After 26 years, Cynthia Darosett was recently reunited with the twin sons she gave up for adoption. The twins, Jerome and Mark, located their biological mother by connecting with a cousin on Facebook.
- Today, Cynthia celebrates her newly reunited family, which now includes three grandchildren, with one granddaughter on the way.

> Cynthia’s five sons’ mast in Alaska. Courtesy of the Darosett family.

**TYONEK FIGHTS WILDFIRE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

While Forum members like CIRI, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Dikulina, Inc., Southcentral Foundation, Salamatof Native Assoc. and Tyonek Native Corporation donated to the Tyonek Fire Fund, Donita Sawson, tribal administrator for the Native village of Tyonek, tackled the difficulties of fighting a fire off the road system. As fire crews nearly doubled the local population of the village, Sawson organized efforts to fly in food, gas, other vehicle fluids and supplies into the area.

By May 28, the fire was 100 percent contained. Soon after, firefighters launched a “mop up” effort and warned locals of potential hazards like ash pits and standing dead trees that might fall.

As the community recovers, village administrators are taking the opportunity to help residents prevent future fires.

“At this point, we are connecting with federal and state authorities to make Tyonek a more fire-wise community,” says Sawson. “We’re bringing in resources to remove foliage, vehicles and debris near homes, and also supplying homes with fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.”

**WHAT IF ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE ACROSS THE STATE VOTED IN EVERY ELECTION?**

- Would rural Alaska still be fighting for education funding?
- Would our subsistence lifestyle continue to be threatened?
- Would the development of natural resources on Native-owned land be continually up for debate?

If you live in Alaska you can find more information, at http://www.elections.alaska.gov/.

**YOUR LIFE DOES DEPEND ON IT. GET OUT THE NATIVE VOTE.**

Visit www.aknativvote.com for the latest news.

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Submit your stories & ideas to info@ciri.com

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**I WANT TO EXPRESS MY HEARTFELT APPRECIATION TO THE TIKHANAQ FORUM. LIVING IN TYONEK, I WITNESSED THE DEDICATION OF MY PEOPLE WHO WORKED ALONGSIDE THE FIREFIGHTERS, THE ONES WHO Couldn’t DO ALL THE PHYSICAL WORK DELIVERED WATER, CHAINSAWS AND FUEL, AND THOSE WHO PREPARED FOOD, INCLUDING MYSELF, WITH Whatever WE HAD IN OUR HOMES, SHARED WITH THE FIREFIGHTERS AND TRIBAL MEMBERS WHO WERE WORKING SO HARD TO SAVE OUR HOMES. ALL OF US WITH LACK OF SLEEP, DUSTY AND SMOKY — STILL EVERYONE DIDN’T STOP. EVERYONE WHO HELPED US IS IN OUR PRAYERS.**

With deep appreciation,

Harriet Kaufman
Tyonek Village