



CENTRAL COUNCIL

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

320 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite 300 • Juneau, AK • 99801
907.586.1432 • Fax: 907.586.8970 www.ccthita.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tribal Leaders Elect Edward K. Thomas President

The Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Central Council), the governing body for over 27,000 tribal citizens, adjourned its 75th Annual Tribal Assembly "Moving Forward, Meeting Challenges" Saturday, April 24, 2010 with a new president, Edward K. Thomas Sr. of Juneau. President Thomas previously served over 20 years as the Tribe's president before retiring in April 2007.

"Tlingit and Haida people are facing serious problems with weak rural economies, higher cost of living and fewer resources. We must do more to collaborate with local governments and other organizations to meet our challenges," said President Thomas.

Tribal elections were held Friday, April 23, 2010. The Tribe's president and vice presidents are elected every two years. Vice presidents elected included 1st Vice President William Micklin of San Francisco, 2nd Vice President Robert Sanderson Jr. of Ketchikan, 3rd Vice President Yodean Armour of Klawock, 4th Vice President Richard Peterson of Kasaan, 5th Vice President Harold Houston of Juneau, and 6th Vice President Lowell Halverson of Seattle. Also seated were Youth Representatives Shawn Eby of Sitka and Megan Gregory of Kake, Tribal Court Judge Doug Luna of Seattle, and Delegate/Citizen of the Year Jerry Bennett of Juneau.

On Wednesday, April 21, 2010 Dennis E. Wheeler of Coeur d'Alene Mines Corporation provided the keynote address during the Assembly's Welcome Dinner. The evening included a special message from Jeff Jessee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) presented President William E. Martin and President Emeritus Edward K. Thomas Sr. with Eagle and Raven staffs to commemorate the Forest Service's acknowledgement that the removal of fish camps and smokehouses in Southeast Alaska during the mid 1900's had a devastating impact on "our food is our way of life." By Central Council and the USFS acknowledging the past, the way was paved for respectful and honorable relationships, and continued partnership.

Marking the Tribe's 75 year milestone, nine paddles—one for each of the Tribe's past presidents—were ceremoniously presented to the president or representative. Each paddle was carved by Doug Chilton and displays a clan crest of a past president. The paddles will be hung in the Tribe's main headquarters.

The evening closed with former Juneau delegate Ethel Lund being honored with the Tribe's President's Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing her outstanding accomplishments and proclaiming Thursday, April 22, 2010 Ethel Lund Day.

On Saturday, April 24, a panel provided information on subsistence issues and took questions and comments from the delegation. In addition, 56 resolutions on issues affecting our citizens were introduced. The Assembly concluded shortly after adopting the budget.

Other Assembly highlights included: speeches from Tribal Hostess Phyllis Alexander Almquist, Ida Boeckstiegel representing her father Tribal Host Frank O. Williams, outgoing Youth Representative Kevin Skeek, and representatives from the University of Alaska Southeast Wooncheen student; and a moving dance performance by Harborview Elementary School's Tlingit Culture and Language Program, which prompted a well-deserved standing ovation.

"Notwithstanding some very heated debates over some critical and divisive issues the delegates adjourned the Tribal Assembly with a strong commitment to remain united in finding positive solutions to our common concerns," said President Thomas.

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Contact:

Jodi Garrison, Office of the President
Ph: 907.463.7123 | Fax: 907.463.7316
Email: jgarrison@ccthita.org

Ashli Colón, Office of the President
Ph: 907.463.7142 | Fax: 907.586.8970
Email: acolon@ccthita.org