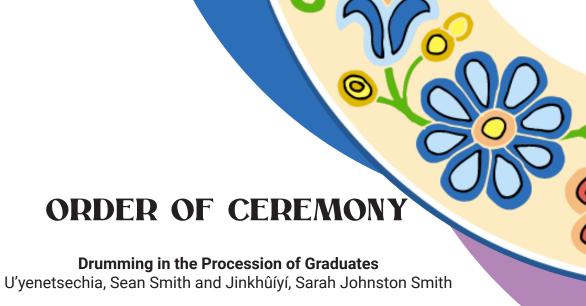


2021 GRADUATION CEREMONY PROGRAM

Friday, May 28, 2021 Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre







Welcome by Master of Ceremonies

Shaa Tlein, Christine Genier

Opening Prayer

Zhürá, Elder Shirley Adamson

Opening Remarks on Behalf of the Program Partners

Grand Chief Peter Johnston, Council of Yukon First Nations Skáyda.û, Tina Jules, Director, Yukon Native Language Centre Marianne Ignace, Director, Indigenous Languages Program and First Nations Language Centre, Simon Fraser University (Video Message)

Keynote Address

Kaaxnox, Dän Nätthe Äda, Chief Steve Smith, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

Presentation of Fluent Speaker Recognition Awards

Grand Chief Peter Johnston Skáyda.û ,Tina Jules, Director, Yukon Native Language Centre

Presentation of Graduation Certificates

Grand Chief Peter Johnston Skáyda.û, Tina Jules, Director, Yukon Native Language Centre

Appetizers and Entertainment

U'yenetsechia, Sean Smith and Jinkhûíyí, Sarah Johnston Smith

Group Photos

Closing Prayer

Zhürá, Elder Shirley Adamson

A MESSAGE FROM THE GRAND CHIEF

To the graduates of the inaugural Yukon Native Language Centre Language Certificate Program, I commend each of you for completing your program and fulfilling your graduation requirements. In addition, I applaud each of you for the added commitment and dedication you have demonstrated in completing your studies during such a challenging time.

In a time when most of our Yukon First Nations languages are in a critical state, this unique program is a key part of our vision to support the development of fluent Yukon First Nations language speakers.

We recognize that much of our progress in language revitalization would not be possible without our Elders who so generously share their valuable language knowledge. Their contributions are instrumental in safeguarding our Yukon First Nations languages for generations to come. I hold my hands up to the many fluent speakers of our traditional languages that we will honour today for their time and commitment in sharing their knowledge and setting an example to inspire others.

As a final word to the graduates, as you move forward my hope is that your accomplishment will inspire others to embark on their own language learning journey. It will be through your efforts as leaders in our communities that we realize a new tomorrow for our children and families where knowledge of one's traditional language is common and our languages flourish once again.

This graduation signals that our vision of Together Today for our Children Tomorrow remains as powerful today as it was 48 years ago. Together we are realizing our collective vision to improve outcomes around language preservation and revitalization.

Gunalchish,

Peter Johnston Grand Chief Council of Yukon First Nations



A MESSAGE FROM SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Weytkp xwexwéytep, kukúkwpi7 ell tk'wenm7íple7ten, stetet'ex7ém, re semséme7 te kukúkwpi7, xwexwéyt te tsqwetsten, graduands ell re k\mathbb{N}wséltkten-emp.

Good day, chiefs and councillors, elders and fluent speakers, dignitaries, guests, graduands and families.

I would like to honour and recognize the Taa'an Kwachan Council and the Kwanlin Dun First Nations on whose territory you are gathered for this Graduation Ceremony, and all of the Indigenous Dene and Lingít peoples in your beautiful homelands in the Yukon.

In partnership with Yukon Native Language Centre and the Council of Yukon First Nations, Simon Fraser University's Indigenous Languages Program in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is proud to celebrate the accomplishments of eight of our students who have taken the courageous and utterly important step to learn or even re-learn and reclaim your languages, including Kaska, Tlingit, Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone and Hän. In addition, we are pleased to honour 13 of your fluent speakers and elders who have given their time and energies to help the next generation learn and reclaim your languages and to become the torch-bearers into the future of your beautiful languages.

I was deeply honoured in the past three and a half years to work with many of these elders and with all of the graduands to help enable your learning of your languages. You yourselves as elders, fluent speakers, students, teachers and staff at YNLC have taught me much about your languages, your lands and cultures.

Kukwstsétselp, háw'aa, Gunalcheech and maasi cho to all who worked hard to enable this!

Marianne Ignace

Director, SFU Indigenous Languages Program



GRADUATE BIOGRAPHIES

LUKE CAMPBELL

Ägunda äch'e, Shadhel yū nänje. Luke has been working in the field of Dákwänje for four years and has been learning Dákwänje for more than 10 years. He says Dághą Shäw níthän to all the äshäw that mentored him over his learning path including; Tułasin, Gushāka, Chughäla, Ayedindaya, Akhuma, Khela, Kaxnoox, and Hut'āla.



PAUL CAESAR-JULES

Paul Caesar-Jules is a part of the Mountain People, and is a Wolf Clan member of Liard First Nation. He is the son of Colleen Caesar and Ray Jules. After Paul graduated high school, he began to work at Gūzagī Koʻa (LFN Language Department), digitizing cassette tapes that held stories that our Elders passed down from our ancestors. Paul is passionate about language learning and he finds that Traditional Knowledge and linguistics are beneficial to learning Kaska. He was able to have access to both, through his training at YNLC and from his family at home. Traditional knowledge assisted him in understanding Kaska from his Elders' and ancestors' perspectives, as well as linguistics for writing in his language, he was able to transcribe and share recordings and videos of Kaska stories. Learning his language and the traditional knowledge that goes with this, has shown him respect, patience and humility. Paul learns a great deal from his Grandma Leda, whom is always generous in sharing her knowledge of the Kaska language and traditional ways.



GU'KHAWKE'T EILEEN FIELDS

Gu'khawke't is a Northern Tutchone, Crow Clan member of Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN), and is the daughter of Big Salmon and Leda (Jimmy) Charlie of the Big and Little Salmon area, she is one of ten children. Eileen would like to give homage and to honour her parents for instilling their Northern Tutchone language in her as a child, as today she is a fluent listener, meaning she hears and understands her Northern Tutchone language. It was her first language up until age five, and then she was taken away to the Residential School in Lower Post, BC, 500 miles away from her home. During this time in her young age, she put her language in a safe place in her heart.

Eileen has been employed by LSCFN for 23 years as a High-Risk Outreach and Brighter Futures Coordinator. She started her language journey in 2017. She extends a thank you to LSCFN past Chief Russel Blackjack and Council; Health and Social

Director, Paul Sahagian; past Executive Director, Alen Steel and Life Long Learning Director, Karmen Cozens for all of their support that made it possible for her to learn her language. Eileen would also like to thank her husband and sisters for always being there for her, Tina Jules and the staff at YNLC and Marianne from SFU for making learning enjoyable. Finally, to her Northern Tutchone language mentor Elder Alyce Joe – thank you (Long ago Way).



Nut'aw etc'lee dato' dinzhe de – "May you walk over many windfalls"

SHAYAWDUSTEE PRICILLA DAWSON

Shayawdustee is a part of the Kookhitaan Clan and is a citizen of Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Her language journey started in grade one at Whitehorse Elementary School, and she continued to learn Southern Tutchone all the way through grade 12. Pricilla has always had a desire and enthusiasm for learning her language. She attended the Yukon College to earn her B.Ed. and she always knew that she wanted to be a teacher. She taught Kindergarten for three years before the opportunity arose to become a Language Trainee, and this is when all of her hard work to learn language began. Though she is not yet fluent, she will continue to work towards becoming a fluent speaker of Southern Tutchone.

Pricilla is humbled by her position to have the ability to teach all that she has learned, she says that it helped build her character and that she is currently teaching her language and culture to the future generation. She is truly grateful to have many teachers along her language journey. She thanks Ätsuhja - Bertha Moose, Chughäla – Lorraine Allen, Nakhela – Hazel

Bunbury, Äyèdindäya - Margret Workman, Tlein Káa - Daniel Tlen, Luke Campbell and Kałx'òkw - Mary Jane Leger.



EDARUME' ALYCE JOE

Edarume' is a Northern Tutchone, Crow Clan member of Selkirk First Nation, and is the daughter of Peter and Leta (Johnson) Isaac. Alyce has eight children, four boys and four girls, 19 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Alyce and Charlie have been married for 57 years.

Alyce worked at Eliza VanBibber School as an Education Assistant Teacher for 14 years and 16 years as a Native Language Teacher; she retired from the school afterwards. As the years went on, Alyce started mentoring language for CYFN and Selkirk First Nation and she did studies at Chase and Kamloops University in BC, which is where Alyce gained her Certificate to read and write the Northern Tutchone Language.

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anguage apprentice, for all the support and ileen worked with two different dialects –
Tom – for helping her regain her Language.

Alyce loves her language and culture; she enjoys sewing and beading and loves to teach her grandchildren. Alyce would like to say Mussi Cho to Eileen Fields, her language apprentice, for all the support and for keeping each other on track and organized to bring them this far. Alyce and Eileen worked with two different dialects – Selkirk and Little Salmon/Carmacks. To Elder Betty Joe and the late Rachel Tom Tom – for helping her regain her Language. Alyce would like to say Mussi Cho from the bottom of her heart to CYFN for their support, and last but not least Tina Jules and YNLC staff, and Marianne from SFU – for four great years of teaching and for all of the love and respect.

GADZÛSDÀ TAHYAH VAN BIBBER

Gadzûsdà is a member of the Selkirk First Nation. She was born in Vancouver, BC and was raised as Daklashaa (Eagle Clan Woman). Her matrilineal heritage comes from Teslin, Yukon and she is also of Kaska ancestry from her late paternal grandmother, Eileen Van Bibber and is Northern Tutchone from her late grandfather, Dan Van Bibber. She has studied the Lingít language since 2017, and is working towards fluency. Tahyah is now continuing on by studying Lingít at the Diploma level for the Language Proficiency Program offered through the Yukon Native Language Centre and Simon Fraser University. She currently works as the Digitization Technician and Language Revitalization Champion for YNLC. In the future, she strives to work on developing Lingít Language nests in the Yukon. Tahyah is very grateful to all of her teachers that have helped her to learn the Lingít language and cultural ways. Gunałchéesh aatlein to Khâganè, Grandpa Gordon and Atlee for all the help. Gunalchéesh to Anyałahash, Dzeiwsh, Keyishí and Kaakligéi, for making all those recordings and for your support.



HÄTR'UNOHTÄN TR'ÀY ALLISON ANDERSON

Hätr'unohtän Tr'ày is a Crow Clan member of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and she is Hän and Tukudh. She started her language journey when she was 21, taking classes offered to employees through her First Nation. Later on, an opportunity arose for her to learn and teach Hän language at Robert Service School. Since then, she has grown a love and deep connection for learning language. She dedicated much of her time learning as much as she could, as well as teaching what she learned to others.

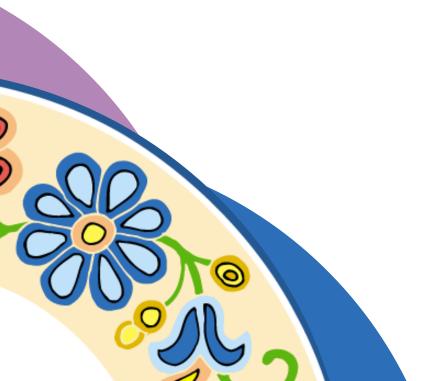
For Allison it has been an honour to have spent so much extra time with her aunty and uncle, learning from them and creating language with them. She is very thankful to be working alongside them. Shäk'ày Mabel has been there for her since the beginning of her language learning. Allison says she would not have come this far, if it wasn't for her (Mabel's) help and the work they did together. Allison would like to say Mähis Cho Shäk'ày for always supporting and being there for her, and Mähis cho to the Yukon Native Language Centre for giving her such an amazing opportunity.



LËGIT GEORGETTE MCLEOD

Lëgit has worked as the Hän Language Administrator at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government since 2014. She teaches the Hän language at the Aboriginal Headstart Program and teaches adult language classes for the citizens and community of Dawson City. Georgette has worked closely for the past three years with the Yukon Native Language Centre on curriculum and textbook development, and has also instructed the very first YFN Instructor led Hän Level 1 course and is currently developing the Level 2 language course to support oral language acquisition and language revitalization. Georgette is happy to complete the Indigenous Language Proficiency Program. She would like to say Mahsi to YNLC for providing the opportunity and place to learn more about the Hän language.





FLUENT SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

KHUT'ÄLA AUDREY BROWN

Khut'äla was born in Fort Selkirk Yukon to Jimmy O' Brien and Selena O' Brien. Living off the land with her family taught Audrey perseverance, respect, hard work, and gratitude. She survived six years at the Carcross Residential School, and she didn't let her negative experiences affect her future. She was forced to maintain her ancestral languages; Northern Tutchone and Southern Tutchone in secret, she learned how to speak both from her mother.

Audrey leads with a quiet dignity, a heartwarming smile and a very quick wit. She has been instrumental in Champagne and Aishihik's Adult Language Intensive Program; her wisdom and knowledge of the ancestors has been a guiding force since the first day of class. She is a master speaker of both Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone, moving effortlessly through stories, often unaware she is speaking Southern Tutchone when helping to translate stories.

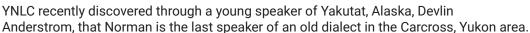


Khut'äla exemplifies what it is to be Dän, to be respectful at all times, to think before she speaks, to share what she has with others, to help her Elders, to walk the Dän trail. We all hold our hands up to her and say, nghą shäwnìthän for everything you do for your people!

KAAKLIGÉI NORMAN JAMES

Kaakligéi was born at Sand Point in 10 Mile in July 1931 and he is the oldest child of his late mother, fluent Lingít and Tagish speaker, Lucy Wren. He has worked tirelessly recording and sharing the Lingít language at YNLC and at the Gooch Tlaa Community School from approximately 2008 to 2018 ensuring the beautiful language of Lingít is not lost in the fast-moving times. He also works with CTFN's Language Department when called upon, assisting with translations.

Norman has vast amounts of knowledge of the Lingít way of living on Traditional Territories of the Carcross/Tagish People because he was raised in the old traditional Lingít way. He carries a lot of knowledge about clan law and knowledge and memories of being on the land as a young child.





SARAH SI IRENE JOHNNY

Sarah Si is a member of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, born into the Crow Clan in August of 1955 at the old hospital in Mayo, Yukon. She is the daughter of the late Sarah and Doc Johnny. Irene grew up in the traditional way at the family's home, located at 17 Mile on the Silver Trail Highway. Sarah Si, Irene's traditional name, has an Indigenous reincarnation meaning that she comes from Sarah's grandfather, Billy Davis.

Irene has devoted many hours to listening to old recordings, looking up words and collaborating with her brother Jimmy Johnny, which is where she has been able to refine and sharpen her skills. She continues to practice proficiencies by leading the Rammi Elin Women's drum group within the community, where she encourages all to use their native tongue as much as possible. She has also been devoting new songs with respect to her cultural teachings.



Irene has proven herself to be a great mentor, as she is very willing to share her knowledge and is very actively learning to write her language to ensure that it never fades away.

ÄNJI ÁTÀ LOUIE SMITH

Kwanlin Dün First Nation Elder Änji átà was born in 1933 and grew up at Tot'awte-dashe - Winter Crossing with his family. Louie spent many years working as a labourer, woodcutter and then truck driver for Kwanlin Dün First Nation. His time learning his traditions, stories, and culture and using his language provided Louie with a strong foundation to share with Elders and relations from many communities throughout Yukon. In his later years Louie shared his knowledge with employees and citizens of Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and he took it upon himself to be dedicated to one of his life-long goals which was to learn how to read and write. Remarkable determination and courage were a couple of strong values that he uses to this day, at 88 years of age, he continues his studies to read and write. A lot can be learned from Louie by the younger generations, as his stories show that with a strong foundation in your identity and culture, one can find a pathway to accomplish what may seem impossible, and that anything can be possible with dedication and commitment.



GUSHÀKA GRACE MARGARET JOHNSON

Gushàka was born in Burwash Landing, Yukon in November of 1929, and she is of the Kajet (Crow) Clan. She was raised and taught to live a traditional lifestyle by her parents, which she continues to practice today.

Grace graduated from the Native Language Teaching program in the early 1970's under the teaching and direction of her nephew, Linguist Daniel Tlen and John Ritter. The work she continues today is something that she hopes will continue long into the future of her people. At the age of 91, she continues to teach at the Kluane Daycare, but this has been restricted by COVID regulations. She continues to do translation work, recording stories and mentors two young people in the Kluane dialect. She has dedicated her life to the language and culture of her people of Kluane Lake; teaching as many as she can. She always believes in sharing her language and not keeping it within herself.



GAH JOCELYN WOLFTAIL

Gah was born in Upper Liard village to Andrew Dick and Annie Mollay Dick. Her Kaska name is Gah, which means 'Rabbit'. Jocelyn is a fluent speaker of the Frances Lake dialect of Kaska. Even though she attended the Lower Post Residential School, she kept her language, continuing to speak it with pride. She was able to do that thanks to her mother, who was a fluent speaker, her grandparents and many aunts and uncles, who continued to speak to her when she returned from school. She enjoys sharing the language with her grandson and granddaughters whenever she can.

Jocelyn became a language teacher in 1991. She taught at Johnson Elementary School and Watson Lake Secondary School. She received her Yukon Teacher's Certificate in 1994 and taught in the secondary school until 1998. Jocelyn continues to teach sewing and other traditional Kaska skills in various land-based culture and

speak. Even one new word a day is a pathway to beginning to speak."

language camps. Currently, Jocelyn works for the Liard First Nation's Language Department as a teacher, translator, and interpreter. Through all her work and teaching, Jocelyn wants to make a difference in her community and hopes to inspire the younger generation to keep carrying the language forward into the future. "We need more of our young people to



DA-MAA ELIZABETH HALL

Da-maa was born in June of 1935 at Little Kalzas Lake to Jimmy and Annie Silverfox and was raised at her dad's trapline up the Pelly River. She was taught to hunt and fish, and learned the traditional values of life such as respecting everyone. Lizzie went to residential school from age 11 to 16, where she started to forget her language. One day, while home for the summer, Lizzie spoke English to her grandma and her grandma told her in her language, "You take a good look at your face before you talk to me like that" and she talked to her about the importance of her language and culture.

From that day forth Lizzie vowed to re-learn her language. Later, she taught language all over Northern Yukon and in the late 90's she became an interpreter, translating English to Northern Tutchone for her people at many meetings. Currently she works for the SFN Language Programs when she can, as well as at the YNLC and she is also a member of the Northern Tutchone Doóli Working Group.



PERCY HENRY

Percy Henry was born in 1927 on the Ogilvie River to Annie and Joe Henry. He was raised in Blackstone country, but moved to Moosehide in 1935 with his family. This is where Percy learned and grew with the Hän Language and learned many stories from his Elders. Percy worked for many years on riverboats, ferries, and highways in the Dawson area and along the Dempster Highway. Between 1968 and 1984 Percy took on a much larger role as the Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on top of his highway job to help initiate the land claims process in the Yukon. He traveled to Ottawa along with other Yukon Chiefs to present Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow in 1973.

When Percy retired as Chief and from his job with Yukon Highways and Public Works, he immediately became an active Elder member on many Yukon committees and councils, such as the Elder's Representative with the Council of Yukon First

Nations, and a member of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board. In 2013, Percy received an honorary diploma in Northern Studies from Yukon College, now Yukon University for "his positive impact on his community and his significant contribution to northern studies through his commitment to sharing his knowledge of his people, culture and language." At 94 years old, Percy continues to inspire, mentor, and share his experiences with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Teachers, Language Learners, and Youth. Percy is one of the last fluent Hän speakers of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in dialect.



NAKHELA HAZEL BUNBURY

Hazel "Nakhela" Bunbury was born March 1st to her parents, Irene and John Adamson. Her uncle, Owen Slim, gave her the name Nakhela, meaning crocus in Southern Tutchone, because she was born in the springtime. She is a citizen of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) and is from the Wolf Clan.

Nakhela has been around native language all her life with her mother, grandmother, grandfather and aunties and uncles. She holds the Native Language Instructor Certificate and Diploma from Yukon College. She went on to teach Southern Tutchone at Whitehorse Elementary School for many years before retiring. As well, Nakhela taught Southern Tutchone at Yukon College.

Nakhela also assisted in the development of Native Cultural curriculum for several grades and has worked with the (TKC) Heritage Department to develop a

Ta'an phrasebook in the Lake Labarge dialect and a book of stories titled, "Dashaw Ts'an Kwandur"- Stories From Our Elders. She continues to be very active within her First Nation community, providing prayers, translations, and language consultation. She is the Elder representative on TKC's Culture and Heritage Committee and works closely with the TKC Heritage Department to develop a language working group.



ANYAŁAHASH SAM JOHNSTON

Anyałahash was born in November of 1935 near the Morley River to Rosie and David Johnston. Sam is the Ishkeetaan Clan Leader and a child of the Yanyeidi. He lives in his hometown Teslin and is a fluent speaker of both Lingit and English, and lived a traditional lifestyle in his youth. He has remained active in the Teslin community his whole life, coordinating events and groups such as handgames tournaments, outdoor winter festivals, and the Teslin Tlingit Dancers. Sam was elected Teslin Tlingit Council's Chief in 1970 and served until 1984. In 1985 he was elected as an MLA for the Yukon NDP and served until 1992, while also acting as the first native speaker of the Legislative Assembly in Canada.

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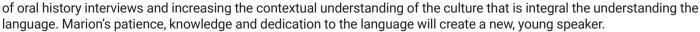
Since leaving territorial politics, he has been a member of TTC's Elders Council, helping guide the government's direction along with other Elders and speakers and he was made a member of the Order of the Yukon in 2019. Aside from his

endeavors in politics, he has worked with the Lingít language for decades. He is a legendary storyteller and is deeply knowledgeable about Lingít oral history and culture. Sam has worked with linguistics for many years, and has also mentored youth at Khàtìnas.àxh Teslin School. He is a true pillar of Teslin, the Yukon, and the wider northern Indigenous community.

NAANTSAIH MARION SCHAFER

Naantsaih is Vuntut Gwitchin. Her mother is Ellen (Tetlichi) Abel, her father is Charlie Abel. Her grandparents are Sarah (Joseph) Abel Chitze and Abel Chitze, John Tetlichi and Caroline Josie. Marion has lived the majority of her life in the Gwich'in heartland of Old Crow, choosing to raise her family of four children and currently her grandchildren in the community. She is fluent in Gwich'in and gifted with a clear, loud speaking voice which has reached many in her work with Elders, the church, the Health Centre, the school and the community. Marion is strong in her knowledge about her culture and is committed to her language and to her people.

Marion has recently found time since retiring as a language teacher at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School to intensively mentor Brandon Kyikavichik in Gwich'in. Brandon has developed a unique approach to language learning utilizing his strong ability to speak and write the language. Marion and Brandon are working their way through a wealth





TA' MÒH PATRICK JOHNNY

Ta' mòh was born in Tayh Chįįn in the Scottie Creek area to White River Johnny (Little John) and Cecelia John on February 2nd 1951. His maternal Grandparents were Skookum Lucy and Andrew Tobey. His paternal Grandparents are unknown, as they passed when his father was a young boy. His clan is Nisüü and was adopted into the Naltsįįn Clan.

Patrick Johnny has contributed his knowledge of the Upper Tanana language by helping in the literacy sessions that YNLC had through the years. He is currently mentoring his daughter Jolenda Johnny by helping her with her own language proficiency and with her Upper Tanana language classes and with translations and recording for the language lessons for the last couple of years. In Patrick's own words, "Upper Tanana is and will always be my first language and like what my sister Bessie John said, we are a part of the land and the land is a part of you".

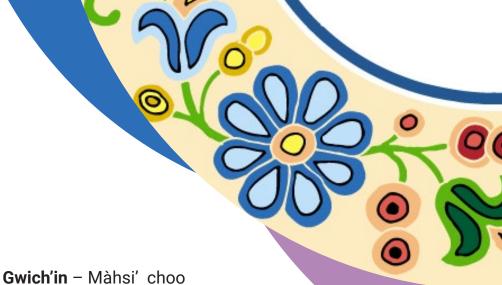


NANCY STERRIAH

Nancy is a member of the Ross River Dena Council and is fluent in the Kaska language. She has taught for many years at the Ross River School and she has a love for lifelong learning of her language. Nancy enjoys taking courses in the community, in Watson Lake or at the Yukon Native Language Centre. She especially enjoys learning linguistics and writing down her language.







Hän – Mähsi' cho

Kaska - Sógá sénlá'

Northern Tutchone - Másin cho (or) Niyę sáw nîidhín

Southern Tutchone - Shaw níthan (or) Kwanaschis

Tagish - Gùnèlchīsh

Lingít - Gunałchîsh

Upper Tanana – Tsin'įį choh

English – Thank You





