

Learned One — Lisngasqaq

GUI LISNGASQAQ ALUTHIT'STUN. – I AM LEARNED IN THE ALUTHIQ LANGUAGE.



Photo: Elders Florence Pestrikof and Mary Haakanson sharing their knowledge of artifacts, 2011.

The Alutiiq word *lisngasqaq* is a respectful term, used in reference to someone who is considered wise. You might use this word to talk about a teacher, a mentor, or an Elder with the ability to share valuable knowledge. For example, young adults who are currently learning the Alutiiq language by apprenticing to fluent Elder speakers call their teachers *lisngasqaq*.

The association of this term with efforts to revive the Alutiiq language illustrates its deeper meaning. A learned person is not simply an instructor but someone whose breadth of knowledge is to be respected. Through current language projects, community members are learning about Alutiiq history and traditions while they learn to pronounce Alutiiq words, memorize vocabulary, and build sentences. They are absorbing the wisdom of Elders. In addition to master-apprentice arrangements, learners also meet with Elders in the weekly Alutiiq language club, consult with speakers on the creation of learning materials, and practice conversations with Elders using immersion methods. Through these connected efforts, today's learners of Alutiiq hope to become

learned in their ancestral language.