In honor of Valentines Day, the Alutiiq Museum likes to show some love for its volunteers. We are fortunate to have many people who contribute time and assistance to our work. To show our gratitude, we recognize one outstanding contribution with our annual Volunteer of the Year award. For 2017, we picked Alice Ryser.

Ryser has been a member of the museum’s Collections Advisory Committee since its inception in 1999. This nine-member committee meets four times a year to review all objects offered to our collections. The meetings are filled with lively discussions. Members consider how objects could help to tell the Alutiiq story, whether the items can be legally accepted, and if the museum can care for the pieces. It’s an important job that helps the museum make tough decisions and use its limited resources wisely. It’s also interesting.

Ryser enjoys the work, as it connects her to Alaska history, a subject she loves. Raised in Prince William Sound communities, Ryser grew up exploring abandoned buildings. Her step-father, an Aleut man who fished the waters off Kodiak, also fueled her interest in the past with lesson about traditional lifeways. Ryser began volunteering at the Baranov Museum in the mid-1970s and joined the staff in 1983 as an archivist, a position she held for almost thirty years. She had no formal training, but learned on-the-job and discovered a talent for working with photographic collections.

Alutiiq Museum volunteers help set up for events, greet visitors, identify historic photographs, organize collections, work with archaeologists, serve on our advisory committees and much more. To learn more about volunteering at the museum, please contact Jeff Garcie (844-425-8844, x19, jeff@alutiiqmuseum.org). We welcome all volunteers. No prior experience is necessary, and we will find an opportunity to fit your schedule.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and culture of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.