Discover Kodiak Honors Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial

The Alutiiq Museum is the 2019 recipient of Discover Kodiak’s Chinook Award, an honor recognizing a contribution to the community and its tourism industry by a non-profit organization. The museum received the award for building the Alutiiq Ancestors’ Memorial, a new public park in downtown Kodiak. Alutiiq Museum Executive Director Dr. April Counceller, who envisioned the memorial and led its creation, accepted the award at Discover Kodiak’s Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 18th.

Developed in partnership with the City of Kodiak, the park transformed a vacant city lot into an attractive public education space. Here people learn about Kodiak’s Native heritage and are invited to reflect on local history and their own ancestry. A central feature of the park is a walkway with engraved bricks memorializing people and places. Over 200 businesses, community organizations, and individuals of all heritage remembered relatives and friends and supported the park, by purchasing bricks with personalized messages. Completed in 2019, the project was a three year effort funded by more than $200,000 in grants and donations. Additional information about the park and a full list of supporters is available on the memorial’s website at https://ancestorsmemorial.org.

“We are grateful for this kind recognition,” said Counceller. “The memorial creates a visible space for Alutiiq heritage in downtown Kodiak and reminds us of the many people, past and present, that are part of the cultural fabric of Kodiak. It’s a place for everyone to reflect on community history. We are especially grateful for the partnership with the City of Kodiak that made the memorial possible, and we are continuing to work with the City to maintain it.”

This is the fourth award for the project, which has also been recognized by the Alaska Anthropological Association, the Alaska Historical Society, and Museums Alaska for its unique contribution to Kodiak and as a model partnership between a municipality and a tribal organization.

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.

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