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Museum Adds Bear Gut Jacket to Collection

KODIAK, Alaska—The Alutiiq Museum has added a *kanaglluk*—gutskin jacket to its permanent collections. Created by Sugpiaq artist June Pardue, the garment is a waist-length hunter's coat with a hood. Alutiiq/Sugpiaq ancestors wore these flexible, lightweight, waterproof garments for protection from rain and sea spray. A \$7,400 grant from the Alaska Art Fund, administered by Museums Alaska with support from Rasmuson Foundation, paid for the commission.

The jacket is made from the intestines of a brown bear harvested near the Alutiiq village of Old Harbor by Rolf Christiansen. Christiansen donated the gut to the project. Pardue combined it with ryegrass, salmon skin, and synthetic sinew to complete the jacket. A well-known arts educator and professor of Native Arts at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Pardue involved volunteers in the project to teach gut working. In her Wasilla home, learners used teaspoons to scrape the outside of the gut clean, invert the entire length, and scrape the inside. They included Pardue's daughter Serenity Chya, and Jocelyn Johnson, Sophia Johnson, Ethan Johnson, and Steven Hall. The finished jacket is titled Taqakaraam Pilit'Ilra — What the Bear Gifted.

"This is a very special jacket," said Alutiiq Museum Executive Director April Counciller. "June is a master skin sewer. It's an honor to have her make this piece for the museum. We are thrilled she used gut and grass from Kodiak and passed cultural knowledge to others through the project."

The garment will be added to a large, focal display on Alutiiq kayaks in the museum's new exhibit hall. An Alaska Maritime Heritage grant from the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology and the National Park Service is supporting the production of this display. Counciller explained.

"Visitors love learning about kayaks. Standing in front of a complete boat helps people understand what it was like to travel by kayak. It also shares our ancestors' ingenuity. For millennia, they engineered kayaks from driftwood and animal skins, boats that were expertly designed for Kodiak's challenging water. Their knowledge is stored in boats, paddles, gear, and clothing—all of which will be part of the display. For many years, we only had photos of an adult *kanaglluk*. Now we have June's jacket to share."

The kayak display with Pardue's jacket will be available for public viewing when the museum reopens its renovated facilities on May 22. The museum will also create an online tour of the kayak display for the exhibits page of its website (www.alutiiqmuseum.org).

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