

A guide to
**Pacific
Coast
Native
Art**

in the William
A. Egan Library
University of
Alaska Southeast

**JUNEAU
CAMPUS**

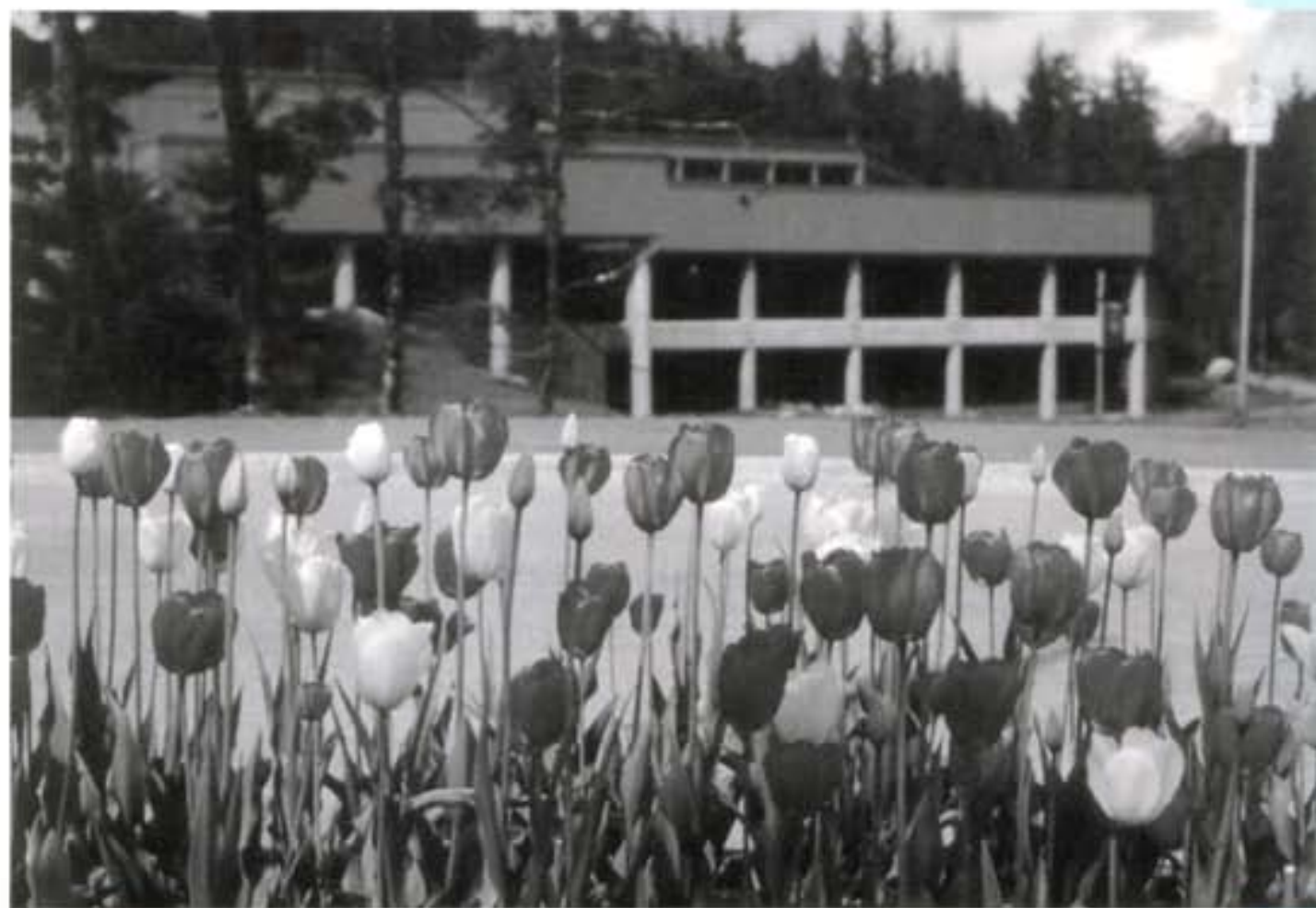
Welcome to the Egan Library

Long before the University of Alaska Southeast William A. Egan Library opened its doors on January 15, 1990, the process of selecting the building's artwork was well under way. The Alaska Percent for Art committee began recommending artwork for the library in 1988 after soliciting proposals from 14 artists. The committee's work was approved by the UAS chancellor and the University of Alaska Board of Regents, and a total of \$72,114 in art commissions was awarded. All of the

artwork in the library is from the Northwest Coast region.

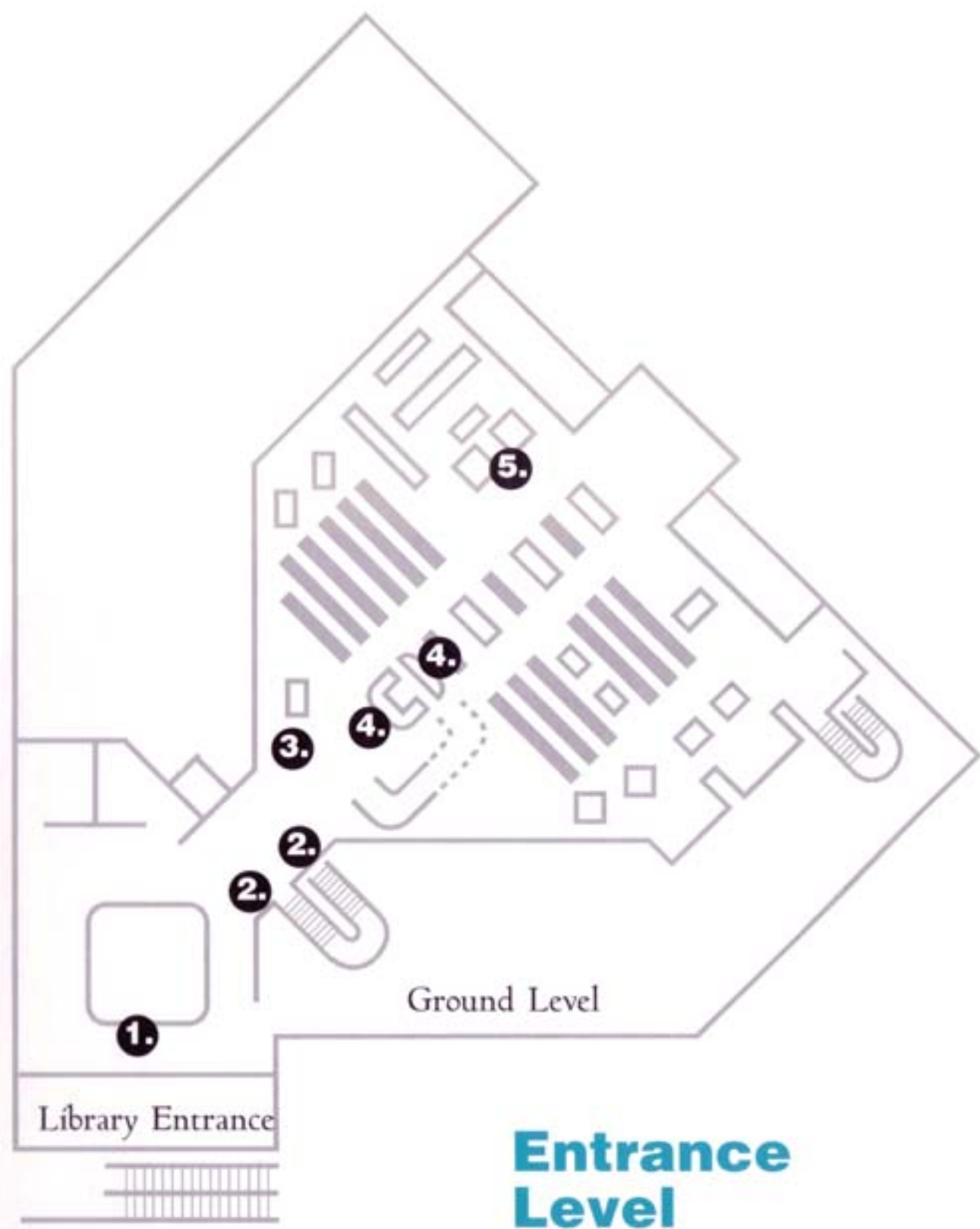
William A. Egan served as Alaska's governor for 12 years between 1959 and 1974, and he devoted nearly 50 years of his life to Alaskan politics. In overseeing many of the changes that swept Alaska from territorial status to statehood to booming oil producer, he became one of the state's most respected leaders. Egan's belief in the need for higher education in Alaska never wavered.

Tulips in bloom outside the Egan Library.



Guide to the Northwest Coast Art Collection

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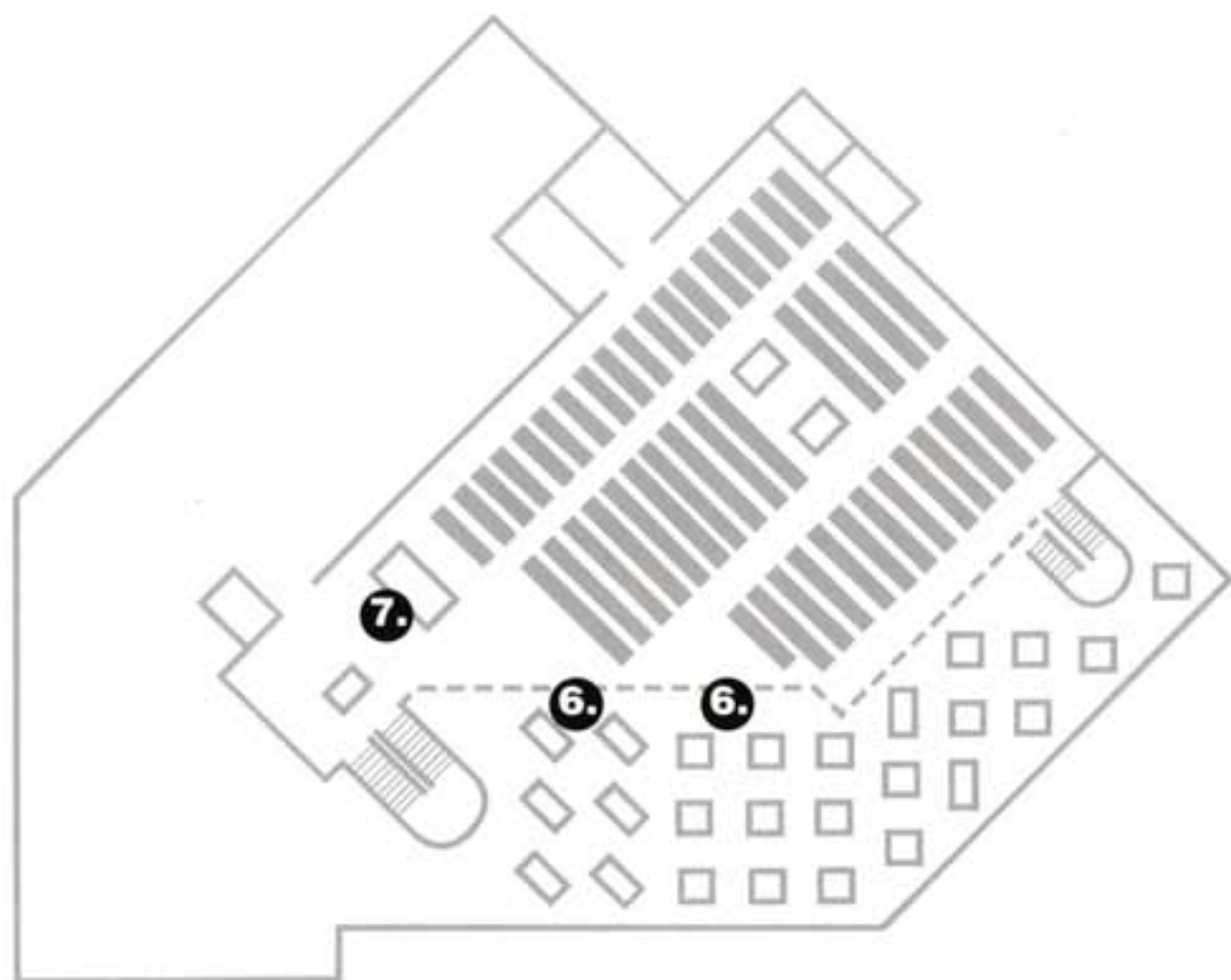
Bentwood Box

Cylindrical Basket

Carved Bowl, Seal Design

Raven Headdress

Ravenstail Apron



**Ground
Level**

Entrance Level

1. Four Masks

EDNA JACKSON

Located in entry display case.

The four female masks are made of cedar bark paper. Below the two center masks are shredded and



spun cedar bark rings which encircle Eagle and Raven. Designs representing Eagle or Raven are painted on two of the women's cheeks.

The artist initially deemed her attempts at this artwork unsuccessful because she sought to duplicate traditional carved wooden masks. Paper is not a traditional material used in Tlingit art. After experimentation in the papermaking medium, however, she discovered a more successful approach by focusing on the inherent qualities found in handmade paper.

2. Aak'w House Posts

STEVE BROWN AND
WAYNE PRICE

Located at the top of the stairwell.

The house posts, carved in red cedar, are derived from an early Stikine Tlingit style. Each portrays characters from

Tlingit legends. Tlingit society is divided into two sides, Raven and Eagle, with each side subdivided into clans and each clan characterized by one or more emblems or crests.

As you face the house posts, the Raven post on the left recalls how Raven stole the sun and carried it into the sky. The Dog Salmon, a Raven crest, is shown swimming upstream. On the lower portion of the post is "L'enaxxeet'ak'w," Good Luck Woman. Tradition has it that anyone who comes in contact with her will have good luck. Misfortune, however, awaits wandering children who meet her for they are carried away into the forest. At the base of the post are stacks of mussel shells from a recent meal.



The Eagle post on the right shows the big Dipper in human-animal form wearing a crown of stars. The nest figure shows the "Ixt" or shaman. He wears the bear's ears and fringed robe as a sign of his role as spiritual healer and prophet. The Weasel is an Aak'w tribe emblem and sometimes acts as the Ixt's helper.

3. Head Canoe

STEVE BROWN

Located on the upper wall across from the stairs.

This red cedar panel symbolizes that all humans and animals share in the spirit of life. The canoe carries some of the animal spirits of Tlingit mythology, representing each side of Tlingit society and some clans. The prominent figure is Raven holding the moon in his beak, a reference to the story of Raven bringing moonlight to the world. Next is Bear, from the Eagle side, clutching the gunwales of the canoe. Behind Bear is Frog, from the Raven side. Behind Frog is Eagle, Raven's opposite; on the bow and the stern are figures of Killer Whale. The dorsal fin of the rear Killer Whale extends above the gunwale, suggesting that he is part of the canoe, but in some respects, apart from it. On the bow is a human figure grasping the gunwales as he is carried along on the supernatural ocean by his spirit friends.



The head canoe is a reminder of the benefits and kindness given by the animal spirits. Their gifts include medicines, dreams, intuitive wisdom and inspiration that lead mortals through the voyage of life.

4. Circular Wooden Panels: Raven and Eagle

NATHAN JACKSON

Located above both sides of the reference desk.

These panels are made of red cedar and are four-and-a-half feet in diameter. They are four inches thick in the center and taper off to a thickness of one-and-a-half inches at the edges. In Northwest Coast art, Raven's beak is long and pointed, while Eagle's beak is shorter and curved downward.

Raven is a leading figure in Northwest coast mythology. He is the trickster and creator; he loves to tease and trick, to woo and win; he is clever and cheats. It is Raven who gave the world the sun and moon, the stars, the rivers and lakes, the fish and other animals.

Entertaining stories of Raven's adventures are found along the Northwest Coast,



throughout Alaska and even in parts of Siberia.

Eagle is a symbol of power and prestige and is, in many respects, Raven's opposite. In traditional Tlingit culture, persons must marry opposites: Ravens to Eagles, Eagles to Ravens. The panel reflects this social balance in Tlingit society.

5. Eagle-Shark Panel

JENNIFER BRADY MORALES

Located on the wall near the floor-to-ceiling windows.

This panel is comprised of sixteen yellow cedar boards with the grain running vertically. The paint is acrylic. Graphite was added to the black paint to make it glisten like old, traditional paint. Shark is the principal crest of the Wooshkeetaan clan of the Eagle side of Tlingit society. This relationship is illustrated by having Eagle's head and claws form the

upper portion of Shark. The "S" shapes on the upper side of Eagle's wings serve a dual purpose: they represent the backbone of Eagle and Shark.

The human figure in the front dorsal fin depicts a husband while the figure in the second dorsal fin symbolizes his wife with a lip plug or labret. The lower pectoral fins show their son and daughter. The children are shown without teeth and only four fingers to symbolize their immaturity. This combination of family figures, symmetrically balanced in splayed design, honors the importance of clan and family in Northwest Coast societies.

6. Big Dipper Panels

NATHAN JACKSON

Located on the wall above the first floor desks.

The "Yax-te" or Big Dipper is an important crest of the



Aak'w Tlingit. The crest is said to have been given to the Aakw' warriors after a battle near Klawock. One panel depicts Raven and the other Bear. The copper discs not only highlight the animal crest, but also show the big dipper in the night sky over Aak'w village and the city of Juneau.

7. Display Case

Located at the bottom of the stairs.

Plaited Utility Basket

JAN CRISWELL

This square basket is made from plaited red cedar bark. Northwest Coast weavers used various local materials for their baskets. Red cedar grows in southern Southeast Alaska and in British Columbia and was used by Tsimshian and Haida craftsmen in making many objects. Farther north, among the Haida and Tlingit, most weaving was done with spruce roots, as red cedar is seldom found north of Prince of Wales Island.



Midwinter Ravenstail Robe

CHERYL SAMUEL

The ravenstail style of weaving was a predecessor of the technique used in making Chilkat robes and tunics. The technique had not been used for the past 150 years until its recent revival by artists such as Samuel. This modern blanket does not use traditional colors or fibers. It represents the colors of the winter beach, with a black warp and silk strands of mauve, blue-green, steel blue and pink.

The center is black with a design in the color of mussel hearts. The pattern across the top represents dark mountains with a single ray of golden hope streaming from the peaks. The long tassels flow with the tides, reflecting the hues of winter light. The collar is trimmed with marten fur.



Open Weave Clam Basket

JAN CRISWELL

This basket is made with spruce roots gathered in Juneau. The open weave was designed for baskets used for harvesting shellfish and other resources so that the items could be washed after being collected.



Haida Storage Basket

MARY LOU KING

This is a mid-sized storage basket woven from spruce roots collected in the Juneau area. Bas-



kets such as this were woven in various sizes and used for holding household items. The skip-stitch pattern in the weaving on the top section is called "st'alaaw" in Haida, meaning slug or snail.

Haida Ceremonial Hat

MARY LOU KING

The ceremonial hat is made of woven spruce roots. Since spruce roots swell when wet, the hat is water proof when worn in the rain. The pattern in the weave is called "k'uhichihaangat" in Haida, meaning spider web.

In the past, such hats were sometimes topped with small spruce root rings known as potlatch rings. An important person could add a ring for each major memorial feast or potlatch sponsored.



Bentwood Box

RAY WATKINS

Bentwood boxes were made throughout the Northwest coast and some of the finest were made by Tlingit and Haida craftsmen. To make such a box, a plank was grooved, or kerfed, into four sections. The wood was then steamed or moistened with boiling water and quickly folded into rectangular form. The final corner, where the ends come together, was fastened with spruce root



lacing. A cover and bottom were then added. Such boxes were used to store food, ceremonial items and family heirlooms.

The Tlingit design on this box portrays a Killer Whale with bared teeth. The small face on top represents the spirit of the whale at the blowhole.

Cylindrical Basket

DELORES CHURCHILL

The top section of this basket, woven from spruce root, represents Tlingit weaving. The cresting wave design is at the top and bottom of the Tlingit section. The center design is called "Tying."

Tsimshian weaving is represented in the middle section which is woven from red cedar bark. The cresting wave design is



woven from sun-bleached grass.

The bottom third of the basket represents Haida weaving from spruce root. The cresting-wave design is woven from sun-bleached grass that has been dyed red.

Carved Bowl, Seal Design

RAY WATKINS

The bowl is made of alder wood and inlaid with operculum shells. Bowls like this were used for storing



and serving foods such as dried fish, fish eggs, dried berry cakes, seaweed, eulachon oil and seal oil. The bowl represents a seal sitting on a rock, warming itself on a sunny day, arching its long hind flippers and stretching its head upwards.

On ceremonial occasions a bowl such as this was sometimes filled with food and oil and presented to a distinguished guest. A gift of this sort brought great honor to both the recipient and the donor.



Raven Headdress

HARRY CALKINS

This modern piece was inspired by the traditional headdress of the Nuxalk {Bella Coola} Indians of British Columbia. The Nuxalk design is a variation of the styles used by more northerly people such as the Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit. Traditional headdresses were made of cedar. The attached pieces such as the head, tail and wings are trimmed with cedar bark.

This is a modern interpretation in which the head, tail and wings trimmed with cedar bark.

The head, body and tail are formed of one piece to which the wings are attached. The surface design is Nuxalk, but differs in that traditional hats were painted black, red and blue on natural wood. Here the artist used silver and black.

Such headdresses were worn on ceremonial occasions by the celebrants. Today, old hats are family treasures, and only out for display at major ceremonies.

Ravenstail Apron

DELORES CHURCHILL

The design and weaving of this apron incorporates Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian art forms. The materials used include merino wool, fur and deer hooves. The weaving is done with a handspun warp.

The top portion is a Haida weave called spider web. The central section, traditionally made of leather with a porcupine quill trim, represents the seasons of the mountains and is a Tlingit design. The bottom section, representing lightning, is a Tsimshian design.



8. Outside the Egan Library

Haa Shagoon Gaas'ee Totem Pole

TOMMY JIMMIE, SR.; WES
WILLARD; LEO JACOBS; AND
NATHAN JACKSON

Located on the campus grounds across
from the Whitehead Building.

The totem pole is visible from
the library's outside
entryway.

The 38-foot red cedar totem pole
overlooks University of Alaska
Southeast buildings and Auke
Lake.

Raven is
the top figure
on the totem pole.
Raven, a symbol of
the Aak'w Tlingit's
heritage and a source of
creativity and worldly
wisdom, stands on the
sun.

Other carved figures on
the totem pole, from
the top down, are a per-
son holding a copper
which is the symbol for
wealth; the sea lion
split by the man which
is strength; and the bea-
ver at the base refers to
diligence.

Four Tlingit carvers
from Haines created
this totem pole. Tommy
Jimmie, Sr.; Wes

Willard; Leo Jacobs; and Nathan
Jackson did the carving during
an exhibition at the 1964
World's Fair in New York. The
pole was later raised by Chev-
ron, USA at their refinery near
Nikiski on the Kenai Peninsula
south of Anchorage. After the
refinery closed in 1991, the pole
was donated to the University
of Alaska Southeast by Chevron,
U.S.A. and Robert F. Williams,
a former president of the Uni-
versity of Alaska Board of Re-
gents who worked for the com-
pany.

The totem pole raising cer-
emony on the UAS Ju-
neau campus took
place on October 3,
1993. About 300
people from
throughout South-
east attended.



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Bentwood Box



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