

## Marie Meade

Marie is Yup'ik Eskimo from Southwestern Alaska. She was born and raised in Nunapicuaq, little village of about 300 on the tundra between Kuskokwim River and the Bering Sea, Southwest region of Alaska. Her late father Upayuilnguq and his family were from the Kuskokwim River Bay area, and her late mother Narullgiar was from the Nelson Island.

Marie states, "I am a modern Yup'ik woman living a contemporary life in Anchorage, the biggest city in Alaska, while remaining connected to a long lifeline of Yup'ik women who were strong and determined in their ways." Marie says she doesn't have a conventional college degree, but she received most of her knowledge and education from her parents, family, and community. After graduating from high school in Bethel, she went to University of Alaska Fairbanks campus and attempted to study college level academics, but it was a tremendous struggle for the village level formal education and high School failed to prepare her to compete in that level of schooling.



Soon after that in 1970 Marie was chosen by her community to teach the first bilingual program in her village under BIA. In preparation to teach little first graders in their language she learned how to read and write in Yup'ik. She grew up speaking Yup'ik. After a year of teaching Marie went back to University of Alaska Fairbanks and continued to study the grammar and structure of her language while employed by the Yup'ik Language Workshop creating teaching materials in Yup'ik.

After several years of involvement in the initial development of the Bilingual Programs in Alaska, Marie started teaching again and has taught in the Anchorage School District and Kuskokwim Community College in Bethel. In the last 15 years she's been involved in extensive research and documentation of the cultural knowledge of Yup'ik Elders.

She helped put together the traveling mask exhibit called Agayuliyararput; Our Way of Making Prayer that opened in Toksook Bay in 1997 and traveled to Anchorage, New York, Washington D.C. and Seattle. The book accompanying the exhibit titled Kegginaqut, Kangiit-Illu/Yup'ik Masks and the Stories

They Tell was published under her name by University of Washington Press. She traveled to Berlin, Germany in 1997 with a team of Yup'ik Elders to look at 2000 objects in a museum that were collected in 1882-83. The cultural information, stories and songs provided by this team of elders has recently been published by University of Washington Press. The book is published under Marie's name and is titled Ciuliamta Akluit/Things of Our Ancestors.

In 2002, she received the Governor's Award on Distinguished Humanities Educator. Presently, she teaches Yup'ik language and culture at the University of Alaska Anchorage campus. She is also a dancer and a storyteller, a mother of three adult men, and a grandmother.