

Anna Klanott Katzeek

The Tlingit “Boat Song,” which records the great migrations of the Shangukeidí or Thunderbird Clan from Duncan Canal to the Chilkat region, the Chilkat Thunderbird House expeditions into the interior of Alaska and Canada to trade with the Athabascan Indians, and the Tlingit encounter with the “First Peoples of the Horizon” of the La Pérouse Expedition to Lituya Bay in 1786, are all reflective of the life’s journey of esteemed Juneau Tlingit Elder and Naa Tláa (Clan Mother) of the Shangukeidí, Anna Klanott Katzeek. She died peacefully at the age of 86 in Juneau, Alaska and “Walked Into the Forest” on September 2, 2011.



Anna Klanott Katzeek was a Chilkat Eagle Tlingit of the Shangukeidí Clan from the Thunderbird House, the House Lowered by the Sun, and the Tree Bark House in Chilkat Kwáan Klukwan, Alaska. Mrs. Katzeek was a Child of the Raven Lukaax.ádi, Sockeye Clan, and was married to George J. Katzeek, of the Raven Gaanaxteidí Clan of the Raven-Otter-Whale-Frog House in Klukwan, Alaska.

Mrs. Katzeek devoted her life as a Tlingit cultural advocate and teacher through her many contributions to the Alaska Native Brotherhood, Alaska Native Sisterhood, Tlingit and Haida Central Council and Sealaska Heritage Institute. Her detailed knowledge of the Tlingit language and clan songs, legends, histories and objects was a major resource for Tlingit people seeking to learn about and preserve their traditions. She and her husband contributed their personal funds to support the early land claim leaders including William L. Paul, Sr., Roy Peratrovich, John Borbridge and Roy Brown to pursue the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Court of Claims decision and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. She played a major role as a witness and translator in the Klukwan Whale House case ensuring the clan at.óowu or clan regalia and objects would remain in Klukwan.

Mrs. Katzeek was graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Sciences in 1984. Later she used both her traditional knowledge and her academic training to introduce and integrate Tlingit culture and teaching techniques into the Juneau Public School District. Her contributions to the Juneau Public School District include the development of a Tlingit cultural scope and sequence curriculum, elder guidance in the award-winning Indian Studies curriculum and Tlingit language instruction. She was also responsible for the naming of Yaakoosgé Daakaahídi High School, which translates to ‘House of Knowledge’. She and other notable peers served as cultural consultants to the National Museum of Natural History

Smithsonian Institution. She also did cultural work for the Alaska State Historical Library. Through this work she met with the visiting La Pérouse family on their yacht (1990s) and gave them the Tlingit perspective and oral traditions of La Pérouse's historical visit.

She, along with Lily and Jake White, identified clan at.óowu (clan regalia and ceremonial objects) from numerous Tlingit villages in various national museums across the United States. She loved our land and our people and lived the fullness of her Tlingit language, culture, and faith, and in so doing enriched all who knew or happened to meet her. She was a believer and a follower of Christ Jesus/Yeshua.

She was preceded in death by her husband George J. Katzeek, sons George E. and James, and daughter Janice. Survivors include her sons David G., who serves as the clan leader of the Chilkat Thunderbird Clan, Dennis, Daniel, and Rodney, and daughter Doris, along with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and family and members of the Thunderbird Clan, including Clara Abbott, George Abbott, Helen Abbott Watkins, Darlene Sheakley Belts, Ross Sheakley, Lawrence Sheakley, Joe Sheakley and Lewis Sheakley.

The Memorial Ceremony will be held at the Juneau Tlingit and Haida Community Council Building on September 15 beginning at 4:30 PM followed by the funeral service on September 16 at the Northern Lights Church beginning at 4:30 PM.