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Doyon, Limited Presents Unique Fish Skin Basket to MTCVC

Fairbanks, Alaska –A unique king salmon skin Athabascan Chiefs basket representing the Interior region has been donated by Doyon, Limited to the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center (MTCVC) for the center’s Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) display case. That case features artwork from each of the 12 regional corporations established under ANCSA.

Doyon Chairman Orie G. Williams and President and CEO Norman L. Phillips, Jr. recently presented the basket to Cindy Schumaker, MTCVC project director, and Dixie Alexander, display curator. Doyon commissioned the basket from Athabascan artist Audrey Armstrong.

It took Armstrong three years to gather the king salmon skins for the basket and three months to make it. Armstrong said that the king salmon skins and the beads and shells used for the basket “represent the respected status of Native chiefs and leadership that guide Native people. The blue of the beadwork symbolizes the sky and water – both important elements of the Athabascan culture and subsistence lifestyle.”

Armstrong said that making the basket “was one of the biggest honors for her as an artist” because she knew Mr. Thompson and his family personally.

Phillips, Jr. said that “Doyon, like the other corporations established under ANCSA, has strong ties to its culture and land. Doyon is pleased to provide a unique piece of artwork that represents our cultural connection to the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center.”

Schumaker said MTCVC is thrilled to receive the basket for the ANCSA case. She said that the case “not only shares information on the claims act to visitors, but is also an important tool in educating Alaska Native youth about the regional corporations and their unique formation.”

Headquartered in Fairbanks, Alaska, Doyon is one of the regional Native corporations set up under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 and is one of the top 10 Alaskan-owned businesses in the state. It is the largest private land owner in Alaska and one of the top 10 in the nation. The company currently has nearly 18,000 shareholders and 2,600 employees across the state and country. Doyon’s mission is to continually enhance its position as a financially strong Native corporation in order to promote the economic and social well-being of its shareholders and future shareholders, to strengthen its Native way of life, and to protect and enhance its land and resources. For more information, visit www.doyon.com.