

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Indigenous Representation in the Media & MMIP Advocacy



Rick A. Garcia, Co-Director, Law & Policy

Kendra Kloster, Co-Director, Law & Policy

Yatibaey Evans, Creative Producer, GBH Kids

Vera Starbard, Author, Editor, Playwright

Sydney Isaacs, Associate Producer, GBH Kids



Meet the AKNWRC Team



Rick A. Garcia serves as the Co-Director of Law and Policy for the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC). Rick was born in West Germany and raised in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Since 2018, Rick has provided training and technical assistance to Alaska tribal courts and justice systems and has served as the Tribal Justice Director and Associate General Counsel for AVCP and as the District Court Magistrate Judge for the Alaska Court System's 4th Judicial District, based in Aniak and Hooper Bay. Rick graduated *cum laude* from the Southern Illinois School of Law in 2009 and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science *cum laude* from Florida Atlantic University in 2004. Rick has been a licensed Attorney for over a decade and is licensed in the state courts of Florida and Alaska and in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida.



Kendra (Kahtle-et) Kloster was born in the beautiful community of Wrangell, Alaska, and spent most of her childhood in Juneau, and is currently raising her three children on Dena'ina lands in Anchorage. Kendra is Tlingit Raven/Kiks.a'di of the Sun House and is a tribal citizen of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and a minor in Literature from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, Kendra worked at the Office of Senator Ted Stevens in Washington, D.C, and then moved to Juneau to work at the Alaska State Legislature. She obtained her Master's Degree in Public Administration and Policy Analysis at the University of Alaska Anchorage.



Meet the Panel of Special Guests



Yatibaey Evans is the Creative Producer for the PBS series, *Molly of Denali*. Yatibaey is Ahtna, Athabascan from Mentasta, Alaska. She is the proud mother of four incredible boys. Over the last decade, she held the position of Alaska Native Education Director and is an advocate for culture, language, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recently, Yatibaey was awarded, Champion for Kids, by the Alaska's Children's Trust. In her spare time, she volunteers for United Way and enjoys hiking, snowboarding, and swimming.



Vera Starbard, T'set Kwei, is a Tlingit and Dena'ina playwright, magazine editor, and Emmy-nominated TV writer. She was Playwright-in-Residence at Perseverance Theatre through the Andrew W. Mellon National Playwright Residency Program, and longtime newspaper and magazine editor for various publications, including *First Alaskans Magazine*. She is a writer for the PBS Kids children's program "*Molly of Denali*," which won a Peabody Award in 2020 and was nominated for two Children and Family Emmys in 2022. She is currently a staff writer for ABC's "*Alaska Daily*."



An Alaska Native Tlingit storyteller and artist, Sydney Isaacs, carries with her a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Cinematic Arts and Technology along with a Certificate of Business and Entrepreneurship from the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). After graduating, Sydney was awarded the inaugural IAIA Fellowship at GBH which led to her current role as an Associate Producer on the PBS KIDS show, *Molly of Denali*. In addition to her production role, she shares her creative skills and unique point of view as a new writer for the series. Sydney continues to work on the *Molly of Denali* production while creating art and living with her family in Craig, Alaska.

About AKNWRC

Since 2015, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center has been dedicated to strengthening local, tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes, especially against domestic and sexual abuse and violence.

AKNWRC board members are Alaska Native women raised in Alaska Native Villages and have over 141 years of combined experience governments, nonprofit management, domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy, and other social service experience.

Our Mission

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center envisions our Tribal women, communities and families free from violence, healing the trauma and utilizing the wisdom of our ancestors to create effective community/Tribal responses to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, trafficking, sexual assault, and related injustices.



Indigenous Representation in the Media

Whether we like it or not – media is integrated into lives. It connects, educates, and influences at home, work and play. Which is why it's all the more important that representation in the media is accurate. How are Native American/Alaska Native people seen in the media? Or are we not seen at all? It's important that Native voices are helping to shape the narrative and why we must be in these spaces to ensure the accurate history and culture is shown. In the wake of growing visibility on MMIP/MMIWG2S, the sharing of stories of our loved ones needs to be done with respect and led by Indigenous people. We will explore these ideas and more in our presentation and talk about the advocacy work AKNWRC and our partners are doing in Alaska.



Indigenous Representation in the Media

What did each of the shows you worked on do to ensure that Indigenous representation was done respectfully and culturally appropriate?



Indigenous Representation in the Media

What challenges did you experience in your respective shows in changing the narrative, education, and production regarding indigenous representation?



Indigenous Representation in the Media

How do we move past sensationalistic tendencies?



Indigenous Representation in the Media

What happened before and subsequent to production - describe the effects of each of the shows representation?



Indigenous Representation in the Media

The shows and plays that you have been writing and producing address some tough issues such as missing and murdered Indigenous women (Alaska Daily) and the history of boarding schools (Molly of Denali) - Why do you feel these topics are important to be in the media and how are you changing the narrative as Native people developing these story guidelines?



MMIWG2S/MMIP in Alaska

Alaska has some of the highest rates of MMIWG2S/MMIP across the country and severely lack adequate public safety in a vast majority of our communities. What are organizations like AKNWRC doing to make changes to end this crisis.



MMIP/MMIWG2S Statistics

2021 Alaska Baseline Report - “We are Calling to You” from Data for Indigenous Justice

- 229 cases of MMIWG (149 missing/80 murdered)
- These are baseline numbers

2018 Urban Indian Health Institute Report

- Alaska had the 4th highest MMIP cases by state
- Anchorage had the 3rd highest MMIP cases by city
- Anchorage ranked in the top five cities with the highest number of cases not in law enforcement data.

NAMUS Monthly MMIP Update

- <https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/missing-indigenous-persons>
- Counted 292 Unresolved Missing Indigenous Persons Cases in 2021
- Murder is the third leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska Native women (UIHI)
- While women and girls are the primary victims of violence and human trafficking among Native Americans, they are not alone. People of all ages are victims of these horrific crimes, including men, boys, infants, and the elderly. In fact, 82% of indigenous men are victims of violence in their lifetime and Native children are more likely to experience trauma and abuse than their non-Native peers. When educating yourself about the struggles of Native Americans, it's important to recognize and remember *all* victims of these crimes. (CRS MMIP Research and Native Hope)



Disproportionality of Victimization for Alaska Native People

- 80% of Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) women will experience violence in their lifetimes - Rosay, 2016
- 55.6% of Alaska's sexual assault victims are AN/AI people - DPS 2018
- AN/AI people twice as likely to be victims of homicide - AJiC 2020
- An overwhelming number of sex offense cases reported in Alaska are not prosecuted – barely 50% accepted for prosecution from 2018-2019. - ACJC 2020
- Alaska Natives and American Indians (ANAI) represent around 19% of the state's population, yet statewide 50% of the children in out of home care are ANAI.
- AN/AI Youth are over 2x more likely to experience physical dating violence in high school compared to white peers.
- AN/AI Youth are 5x more likely to be trafficked in Alaska among homeless youth.



About MMIWG2S Working Group

The Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit (MMWIG2S) Alaska Working Group is an Indigenous Peoples-led statewide working group supported by partner organizations: Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, Alaska Native Justice Center, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Data for Indigenous Justice, and Native Movement. Members began meeting in 2018 and have continued to meet weekly in effort to have shared communications, strategy, actions, and community building to address this crisis in our state.

The MMIWG2S Alaska Working Group works in collaboration to share initiatives that impacts MMIWG2S/MMIP work, share and create strategies for change, and host healing centered community events. With partnership from statewide organizations, we leverage our collective resources and skills to analyze local, state, and federal policies, have a unified voice on advocacy, and create meaningful out-facing events for the community. Across our organizations we are able to support this work group administratively, through a policy subcommittee, community organizers, cultural education, research and data, and communications. As Indigenous peoples leading the change we want to see, we are rooted in our shared values and commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our people.



AKNWRC MMIP/MMIWG2S Advocacy & Education



The AKNWRC and MMIWG2S working Group provides education, gathers and shares information on MMIP/MMIWG2S to ensure policy makers understand different strategies to address this issue that affects so many Alaskan families.

In order to really address the crisis of MMIWG2S/MMIP we must ensure we are addressing the interconnected issues related to public safety reforms and find ways to reduce violence.



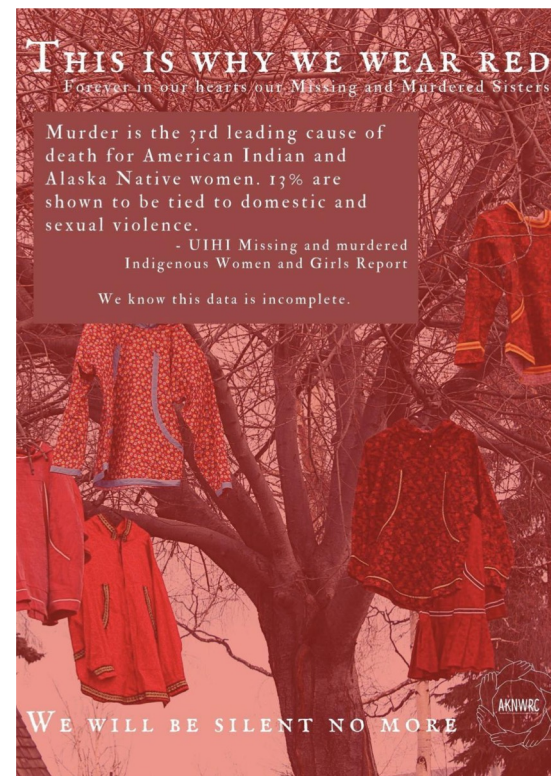
Resources for Your Community

The AKNWRC created a toolkit to help communities develop their own action plan.

[This is Why We Wear Red – MMIWG An Action Plan For Native Communities](#)

The MMIWG2S Working Group created a resource list that we share with communities and continue to build upon. Note this is not a comprehensive list of all survivor services in Alaska.

[MMIWG2S AK Working Group Resource List](#)



Advocate for Change in Your Community

Everyone has something to contribute. Every Voice Matters.

We cannot make change alone – it takes all of us to come together to protect all our people across Alaska.

What Can You Do?

- Create community action plans
- Review state statutes – are there gaps that can be addressed?
- Contact your federal, state and local policy makers to ensure they are enacting policies that will enhance public safety and directly impact MMIP/MMIWG2S
- Create an MMIP Council to share information and gather recommendations



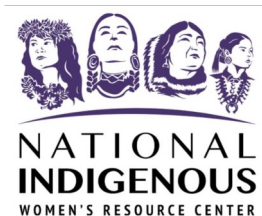
Standing Together For Action

We recognize the work that organizations, communities, Tribes, and others all across Alaska, the country and the world.

We do not stand alone.

We do not do this work alone.

We need everyone at the table to keep people safe.



Urban Indian
Health Institute
A Division of the Seattle Indian Health Board





Gunalchéesh - Háw'aa – Quyana - Mahsi'Choo - Baasee' -
Maasee' - Dogedinh - Thank you

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