

Mary Ciuniq Pete Appointed to the U.S. Arctic Research Commission

Arlington, VA, July 16, 2010-President Obama recently announced his intention to appoint Mary Ciuniq Pete, of Bethel, Alaska, to become a member the U.S. Arctic Research Commission (USARC). Ms. Pete is a Yup'ik Eskimo, born and raised in Stebbins, Alaska, who speaks and writes Central Yup'ik. She has been selected to represent the needs and interests of Arctic indigenous residents. In so doing, she replaces Ms. Vera Kingeekuk Metcalf, a Siberian-Yup'ik Eskimo, currently of Nome, Alaska, but born and raised in Savoonga, on St. Lawrence Island.

The USARC (www.arctic.gov) is an independent federal agency that provides advice and guidance on Arctic research. The commissioners are a presidentially appointed advisory body of scientists and representatives from industry and Arctic indigenous residents.

In response to the appointment, Ms. Pete said, "I look forward working on the USARC because it will give me the opportunity to identify and recommend research that can be used to address the many challenges and opportunities faced by Arctic communities."

Michele Longo Eder, the Commission's Acting Chair noted, "Ms. Pete's rich heritage and extensive experience in the Arctic will contribute significantly to the work of the Commission. We welcome her on board."

Since 2005, Ms. Pete has been the Director of the Kuskokwim Campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) in Bethel. She holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Anthropology from UAF and she has extensive background and experience in subsistence (i.e., noncommercial and traditional uses of fish and wildlife resources).

Prior to 2005, Ms. Pete served in the Division of Subsistence for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as a Subsistence Research Specialist (from 1984 to 1993) and then as Director (from 1996 to 2005). In this capacity, she managed an applied social science research program that implemented the State of Alaska's subsistence hunting and fishing priority law. Ms. Pete also conducted and directed research on subsistence issues in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region. From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Pete was an instructor at the UAF Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development.

Ms. Pete has served on various boards and committees, including the North Pacific Research Board's Science Panel, a National Science Foundation Oversight Committee to review the science programs of the International Arctic Research Center, the Alaska Women's Commission and the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Ms. Pete was elected to the Board of Directors of Stebbins Native Corporation in 2002 and continues to provide her knowledge and experience to the corporation. She is also on the Board of Yuut Elitnaurviat (The People's Learning Center). Ms. Pete and her husband Hubert Angaiak have two children.

The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 established the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. Its principal duties are to develop and recommend an integrated national Arctic research policy and assist in establishing a national Arctic research program plan to implement the policy. Commissioners also facilitate cooperation between the federal government, state and local governments, and other nations with respect to Arctic research, both basic and applied.