ARTS AND CULTURE NUNAVUT ᓄᓇᕗᑦ

Family hopes to display boots at heritage centre



Elva Pigalak holds her freshly-made kamiks in Kugluktuk, then called Coppermine, in 1986. (Image courtesy of Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto, Ontario Canada © 2025) ᐃᐅᓪᓚᒃ ᓗᑕ ᐱᒋᓪᑲᖅ ᑎᒍᕆᐊᖅᓴᖅ ᓴᓇᓵᖅᑕᒥᓂ ᑲᑎᒪᓂ ᖃᐅᔨᓂᖅᓴᖅᑎᑦ, ᑕᐃᔨᓯᒪᓂ ᑕᐃᔨᐅᐊᒃ Coppermine-ᒥ, 1986-ᒥ. (ᐸᑕ ᐃᓯᒪᐅᔨᓴᓂᑦ ᑐᑯᓇᓚᖅᑐᕐᓚᖅᓂ ᐊᐅᔨᔪᑎᖅᓚᖅ, ᑐᖅᑲᖅᑐ, ᐊᓇᑎᐊᓗᐅ ᑲᓇᑕ © 2025)

"It was just an amazing feeling. I still remember coming back home for Christmas from high school in Yellowknife and seeing her working on them."

— Rita Pigalak

CONTINUED FROM PAGE **1**

invited her to come to Toronto and take back the boots, which had been in the museum's collection for the past 37 years.

The repatriation process was uncharacteristically quick.

It took only two months after Emily Angulalik, executive director of the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, visited the Bata Shoe Museum in May and connected the museum with the Pigalak family, Woods said in an email.

Another recent repatriation process that Angulalik took part in dragged on for nine years. It was that of a century-old loon dance hat, returned to Cambridge Bay this summer.

This time, things were different, thanks to meticulous notes taken by a pair of scientists, Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe, who bought the boots from Elva in 1986 for the Bata Shoe Museum.

The notes not only included Elva's name, photo and exact location, as well as measurements of the kamiks, but the price for which they were purchased — $80 — a hefty sum at the time, Rita said.

"I'm just so over the moon thrilled that by documenting everyone's name and all the details, that now we're able to connect the boots back to the North," said Oakes, professor emeritus at the University of Manitoba, in a phone interview.

Oakes and Elva bumped into each other by chance in Kugluktuk in the 1980s (the hamlet was then called Coppermine). Elva, a lifelong seamstress, taught her guest the art of making sealskin boots.

"She was just so incredibly warm and caring and, oh man, those memories are just one of those gifts that you hold on to," Oakes said.

Now that the kamiks are back in Kugluktuk, the Pigalak family hopes to put them in the local heritage centre — the family is large, so they want to give the community the chance to admire them as well, Rita said.

"As an outsider, when I pick them up I hear only what Elva taught me," Oakes said.

"But it's just a tip of the iceberg of what they actually mean to the family. To Inuit, those boots must carry a whole library, rather than just one story. And to me, it's very exciting."



Elva Pigalak's sealskin boots, shown at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto before they were picked up by her family to be brought back to Kugluktuk. (Photo courtesy of Rita Pigalak)

ᓴᓇᐅᑎᐃᓕᓴᒃ ᐊᒻᒪ ᐃᓕᓴᖅᑯᓯᒪᔪᓄᑦ NUNAVUT ᓄᓇᕗᑦ

ᑲᓇᑕᖅ ᐅᖃᖅᑐᑦ **1**

"ᐊᑲᓯᒪᓗᒃ ᓴᐅᕐᓴᐳᖅᓱᒻᒪ ᑎᑎᕋᖅᑕᐅᓂᖅᓚᓂ ᑭᑲᑦᓗᒥᓂ ᐊᑎᖅᑭᓂ ᐊᒻᒪ ᑕᒪᑭᓂ ᐅᓂᑲᑎᓯᒪᓂᐅᔪᓂ, ᑲᑎᖅᑎᕋᖅᑭᓇᖅᓴᐃᑦ ᑲᒪᒋᑦ ᑕᐃᑯᓱᒻ ᐅᑭᐅᖅᑕᖅᑐᒍᑦ," ᐅᖅᑕᒪᐅᖅᓴᖅ ᐅᒃᓴ, ᐃᓕᓴᕐᕕᒪᓕᒃᑲ ᑎᒍᕆᐊᖅᑎᐅᒪᐅᖅᑐᒍᑦ ᓯᓚᑦᓂᓕᕆᓂᖅᓴᖅ ᓯᓚᑦᓂᓕᕆᓂᖅᓴᖅ ᐊᐱᖅᓯᖅᑕᐅᓂᐅᔪᓂᒃ ᓴᓇᓵᖅᑕᖅᑐᑦ, ᐅᖅᑕᒥᔨᑎᖅᑐᑦ ᐊᐱᖅᓯᖅᑕᐅᓂᐅᔪᓂᒃ ᓴᓇᓵᖅᑕᖅᑐᑦ.

ᐅᒃᓴ ᐊᒻᒪ ᐃᐅᓪᓚᒃ ᐸᖅᑕᑕᐅᑎᓪᓗᐊᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ ᓴᓇᓵᖅᑕᖅᑐᑦ 1980–ᖃᑎᖅᓂ (ᐊᒋᓕᖅᓄᑦ ᑕᐃᔨᓯᒪᓂ ᑕᐃᔨᐅᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ Coppermine–ᒥ). ᐃᐅᓪᓚᒃ, ᐃᓅᓯᓕᕆᓂᖅᓂ ᒥᖅᓯᖅᑎᐅᔪᖅ, ᓗᑕ ᐅᖅᑕᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ.

"ᑐᙵᓚᓐᓇᕐᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ ᐊᒻᒪ ᓇᓪᑕᔪᓯᑎᐊᖅᑲᓂ ᐊᒻᒪ, ᐅᐊᐳᖅᓕᖅᓱᒃ, ᑕᐃᑲᓂᐊ ᐃᖅᑲᐅᒪᓂᐅᔪᓂ ᐊᑕᐅᓯᐅᓪᓕᓂ ᑐᓂᓯᔪᓐᓇᐅᔪᖅᑐᕐᓂᓂ," ᐅᖅᑕᒪᐅᖅᓴᖅ.

ᑲᒥᓂ ᐅᑎᖅᓯᒪᓕᕆᒪᑦ ᓴᓂᓗᖅᑐᒍᑦ, ᐱᑕᖅ ᐃᓕᖅᑎᑦ ᐃᓕᓴᕐᕕᒪᓂ ᓄᓇᓕᖅᓂ ᐃᑎᑎᕐᓂᑲᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ — ᐃᓕᑎᓂ ᐊᒥᓱᒪᒪᑦ, ᑕᐃᒪᓐᓇ ᑐᓂᓯᔪᓐᓇᓕᖅᑐᒍᑦ ᓄᓇᕗᓂᓂ ᐱᕕᖅᓴᓂᖅᑎᓂ ᐱᐅᓚᐅᓂᖅᑎᓂᓕᕆᓂᖅ, ᓗᑕ ᐅᖅᑕᓕᐅᖅᑐᖅᓴᖅ.

BUSINESS IQALUIT ᐃᖅᓗᐃᑦ

No funding promises from federal government

CONTINUED FROM PAGE **1**

Thompson didn't make any concrete commitments to providing that funding. But she did say her government, under Prime Minister Mark Carney, is prioritizing support for major projects.



Community Services Minister David Akeeagok speaks at a news conference in Iqaluit on the state of Nunavut's fisheries sector Aug. 29. (Photo by Jeff Pelletier)

"We live in historic times," Thompson said.

"Part of growing this country, which is expanding our own productivity, is having the points of entry and exit, and this is part of that. But again, I want to stress that things happen with the co-operation of the people in the region."

Overall, both ministers described the discussions as being positive and informative.

"By sharing best practices, upholding environmental standards, and investing in innovative technologies, I believe Canada can become a global leader in the next generation of aquaculture production," Thompson said.

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Publisher
ᐅᖅᑕᓪᓚᓪᓕᐅᖅᑎᑐ
Julia Roberts ᔪᓕᐊ ᖁᔭᓕ

Advertising
ᒪᓂᖅᐅᓯᓕᓐᓄᑦ
Taylor Roberts
ᑕᐃᓗᓐ ᖁᔭᓕ
(613) 299-1413
ads@nunatsiaq.com

Managing Editor
ᐊᐅᓚᓕᑎᓄᑦ ᐊᖏᖅᑯᓯᐃᓄᑦ
Corey Larocque
ᑯᓘ ᓚᐅᖏᖅ
coreyl@nunatsiaq.com

Web Editors
ᖃᖅᖁᓇᐅᖅᑯᓯᒪ ᐊᖏᖅᑯᓯᑐᐃᓐᓇᓕ
Randi Beers ᐅᖁᓐᑎ ᐱᐅᓴ
randib@nunatsiaq.com

Gord Howard
ᔪᐊᑦ ᕼᐊᐅᐅᓕᑦ
gordh@nunatsiaq.com

Translators
ᑐᐸᓚᐅᓕᓐᓄᖅᓴᖅ
Ruth Kadlutsiak
ᑭᑎ ᖃᖅᓗᓪᓕᑎᐊᖅᓴᖅ

Therese Kunuk
ᑎᓴᓯ ᑯᓄᒃ ᐅᑯᒻᓗᒃ

Reporters ᑐᓴᒃᖃᓚᓕᐅᖅᓴᖅᑎᑦ
Jorge Antunes ᔪᐊᒃ ᐊᖓᑐᓂᔭ
jorgema@nunatsiaq.com

Nehaa Bimal ᓂᕼᐊ ᐱᒻᒪᑦ
nehaab@nunatsiaq.com

Dominique Gené ᑕᒥᓂᒃ ᖃᓂ
dominiqueg@nunatsiaq.com

Daron Letts ᑎᐅᕐᓄ ᓪᓚᐅᔭ
daronl@nunatsiaq.com

Jeff Pelletier ᔭᐊᖏ ᐱᓪᑎᐃ
jeffp@nunatsiaq.com

Arty Sarkisian ᐊᑎ ᓴᑭᔭᐃᐊᓄ
artys@nunatsiaq.com

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ᐊᖅᑭᑲᓴᓪᓕᐅᕐᓄᑐᖅᑐᑦ ᐱᓇᓱᐊᕈᓯᑕᒪᓐ
ᓄᐊᑕᑲᓴᑯᓄᑦ (ᐃᖅᓗᐃᑦ)
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