

Elizabeth (Elisapee) Killiktee Ootova

January 6, 1931 - May 18, 2021

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our mother Elizabeth (Elisapee) Killiktee Ootova. She passed away peacefully and surrounded by loved ones on the morning of May 18th, 2021.

Our Mother was born on January 6th, 1931 at Dundas Harbour on Devon Island. She spent her childhood in Nalluat with her parents Anna and Kippomee and her maternal grandparents, often staying with her grandmother after the passing of her grandfather. By all accounts she was a great help to her grandmother Muckpainnu, and because she did chores for her grandmother without complaint, her grandmother blessed her with long life.

In the early 1960's her grandmother and her father were evacuated to Hamilton, Ontario for TB treatment where they died away from home. Our mother often remembered her grandmother and her father with love and fondness as well as gratitude as they taught her the practical traditional Inuit way of life.

She met our father in 1946 and before their first child was born, they divided their time between Igarjuarq and Inalugarjuk with our paternal Great-Grandfather and our paternal Grandparents. Through the years our parents lived a traditional nomadic life spending winters in Igarjuarq and Inalugarjuk before moving closer to Pond Inlet. In 1966 our parents settled in Pond Inlet.

In early 1967 our father was sent to Toronto for TB Treatment and soon after their 9th child turned 5 months old our mother Elisapee was also sent to Toronto, having to leave behind her 9 children at a short notice which was very difficult for her to do. Happily, both our parents came home to Pond Inlet to raise two more children.

In January of 2014, Jedidah the eldest daughter of Elisapee reached out to the children of Reginald Taggart Elisapee's biological father. July of that Year the youngest child of Reginald Taggart (Peter Taggart) came to Pond Inlet to meet his sister. Alice Casson daughter of Reginald Taggart came to visit her sister in May of 2016, it is fair to say that it was love at first sight. Our mother along with our sister Jedidah went to BC in 2017 to meet her newfound siblings.

This January we celebrated our Mother's 90th birthday with limited family members in attendance due to COVID. We learned that our mother had 11 children (Jayko, Bethule Jr., Caleb, Boazie, Jedidah, Joasie, Abigail, Amos, Asaphe, Mekai and Nathan) and 171 Grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren.

As Elisapee's children, we were always proud of our mother in all she accomplished, both private and publicly. Through all the years she sat on many committees, community, groups and regional boards. Over this time, our mother acquired many stories, friends, and admirers. Our mother was also outspoken and was a strong believer in family and the church. Her favourite saying to her family was always "Even rough seas must eventually calm".

Any gifts she received were always met with welcome and gratitude. She would mention every gift and said prayers of thanks for each visitor. She devoutly believed in her church in such a way that her tithing envelopes that she gave to church at the end she had only two envelopes left. She served many years as a choir member before taking on lay minister roles.

Our Mother was an active community member helping others in ways that we cannot begin to count, the numerous pieces of clothing she made or gave to those in need, and all the times she secretly gave grocery bags of food or money, even if it was her last dime, to those she loved. Over the years she gave counsel and advice to so many people, and words of encouragement and support to those who needed it.

The many stories she told and the songs she passed on to everyone that she heard from her grandfather Qamaniq and her father-in-law Joshua Komangapik, live on thanks to our mother's remarkable memory.

There are a great many private family stories we will remember and the words of wisdom she left behind

to comfort those she loved. Words are not enough to convey how much our mother Elisapee meant to us her family and friends. Anyone who was close to her will surely miss her sense of humour.

Elisapee is survived by 9 of her children; Jayko, Bethuel Ootova Jr., Caleb, Boazie, Jedidah, Joasie, Asaphe, Mekai and Nathan, 5 children in-law; Philippa, Ida, Reglie, Gary and Lily. And her siblings Annie Pewatoaluk, James Taggart, John Taggart, Alice Casson and Peter Taggart. And many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Our gratitude and great appreciation goes out to all the nurses and doctors who looked after her, the home caregivers, the friends who often visited, the CBC programs Tausunni and Sinnaksaut who kept her company and to the many storytellers who entertained her. But most especially to our sister Jedidah and our brother Joasie for their constant care of our mother making her comfortable during her last days. And to all the condolences given and prayers sent our love goes out to you. Thank you.

Often Elisapee emphasized that she never pursued recognition nor did she actively compete for any committee or board seats, only that those roles needed to be filled, though sometimes hesitant she filled the roles with energy and love for her fellow Inuit. And because she was so open to discussions, her wisdom was always sought out. These are just some of the community, committee and board activities she has participated in:

1960-1970 - Midwife, Advised young women on pregnancy and assisted in deliveries.

1960-1990's - Anglican Women's Auxiliary

1970-1980 - Educator, Pond Inlet, counselled and taught groups of young women land skills, child-raising techniques and caribou and seal-skin preparation and sewing.

1974-2001 - Vestry, Pond Inlet St Timothy's Anglican Church of the Anglican Arctic Arch Diocese.

1975-1976 - Organized a co-operative sewing group to help teach traditional sewing skills to women and encourage small business with its economic benefit for women.

1980-1990 - Iqqat Organizing Committee, Researched community problems under the community empowerment strategy.

1985-1995 - Community Counsellor, helped organize counselling group for the victims of spousal assault and child sexual assault. Also participated in a suicide prevention group for youth in Pond Inlet

1985-2002 - Member of the Drug and Alcohol Education Committee, Pond Inlet.

1985-1998 - Member of the Health and Social Services Committee, Pond Inlet. Helped review health care policies and practices related to child welfare, community corrections, aged and handicapped services.

1985-1995 - Inuktitut Language Specialist, Arctic College and Takijualuk School, Pond Inlet. Worked with elders and youth in an effort to preserve the Inuktitut Language.

1985-1995 - Co-author, *Ilmmaqtkkuk Encyclopedia*. Helped compile *Ilmmaqtkkuk*, an encyclopedia of Inuit traditional knowledge, along with an accompanying glossary of Inuktitut words.

1987-2001 - Tuniit Elders Group, Member of an Elder's Group in town which addresses community issues related to the preservation of Inuit traditional knowledge.

1988-2001 - Member of the Youth Justice/Community Justice Committee. Helped develop policies related to the management of justice in the community, counselled youth who were in trouble with the law, collaborated with representatives of the Canadian Justice System to develop culturally appropriate legal practices for Inuit communities. She was also integral in the development of community justices services in Pond Inlet.

1988 - Performer. Part of a group that performed Inuit song and dance at a multicultural festival in Cambridge, England.

1990-2000 - Co-Author, *Inuktitut Dictionary: Tununiq Dialect*. Collected words and prepared information for the draft of a full-scale Inuktitut



syllabic dictionary. This 630 page book (published in 2000 by Baffin Divisional Education Council) has more than 15,000 entries. It is being used in schools and homes throughout the Eastern High Arctic.

1990 - Cultural Consultant, Interviewed on camera as part of the Investigative Productions/National Film Board of Canada's **Between Two Worlds**, a documentary of colonial change in the Eastern High Arctic.

1992 - Contributor, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Acted as one of the main contributors of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's women's governance report entitled: **Pond Inlet Women Speak about Power**. This report is now included in the RCAP CD Rom.

1992 - Caribou and Seal-skin Seamstress. Sewed traditional clothing and made props for youth in the settlement to perform at the Experience Canada (125 Celebrations). Also sewed traditional costumes and attended the Aboriginal Heroes Celebrations in Ottawa.

1993-1996 - Elder Advisor and Performer, Pond Inlet Takijualuk Drama Group. Assisted groups in designing and sewing costumes and developing the script for the production of "**Giving Voices to our Elders**" a play based on an Inuit legend showing the importance of animals and the land to the Inuit way of life. In May 1993 - Elisapee and the group toured Europe and performed this play in celebrations of the United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. She also performed with this group at the 1996 Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, Ontario.

1990-1998 - Elder Advisor, Pond Inlet Nattinnak Visitors Interpretive Centre. Served on an advisory committee for the curation, exhibit, and interpretation of Inuit cultural artifacts at the Pond Inlet visitor's centre.

1999 - Elder representative from the Baffin Region for the ceremonies in Iqaluit celebrating the creation of the new Nunavut Territory.

1999-2002 - Elder Consultant, Qikiqtani School Services-Working to document, in writing and on tape, stories of colonial change in the Eastern High Arctic.

HONOURS AND AWARDS:

1992 - Anglican Church of Canada, Lay Reader Award
1993 - Government of the Northwest Territories Wise Woman Award

2000 - Baffin Divisional Board of Education Special Recognition of Services, Inuitut Program Consultant.

2000 - Hamlet of Pond Inlet Special Record of Achievement and Volunteer Service

2001 - Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, Recognition of an effort to preserve the Inuktitut Language

2002 - Queen Elizabeth II 50th Jubilee Medal-presented at Rideau Hall, Ottawa

2002 - Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Person's Case

2003 - Order of Canada Award for her contribution to the preservation of the Inuktitut language.

2012-Queen Elizabeth II 60th Diamond Jubilee Medal-presented at the Hamlet Office of Pond Inlet.