

**The original documents are located in Box 5, folder “6/10/75 - Alaskan Eskimo Basket” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR  
THE ARTS

WASHINGTON  
D.C. 20506



A Federal agency advised by the  
National Council on the Arts

March 20, 1975

To: Sheila Weidenfeld

From: Florence Lowe *Florence*

Subject: Presentation to Mrs. Ford... Alaskan Eskimo basket

A highlight of the statewide hearings sponsored by the Alaska State Council on the Arts was presentation of an Eskimo basket for Mrs. Ford. This was to be given to Nancy Hanks to present to Mrs. Ford as a token of appreciation for the First Lady's interest in support of indigenous American crafts. Nancy, however, became ill en route to Alaska and the presentation was made to Michael Straight, Deputy Chairman of the Endowment. This was a highlight of the final dinner, attended by 120 arts, civic and education leaders from throughout this vast state, representing communities from Anchorage to the smallest and most remote village.

The basket is a handsome example of Eskimo art; I have the descriptive background and the name of the artist. Confidentially, it is sold at the museum for \$150, a price described as a "bargain" by the arts experts. So much work goes into these crafts that the prices are high and therefore there is a problem marketing them. Now that Alaska is a boom town there is a growing interest in the arts, particularly folk arts.

|| SUGGESTION:--Nancy Hanks meet with Mrs. Ford to present the basket as the nucleus for a White House crafts collection. The purpose of the presentation would be to get pictures and a story for Alaskan papers and possibly for specialized publications such as CRAFTS HORIZONS. One thought might be to invite the three-man Alaskan Congressional delegation to coffee with Mrs. Ford and Nancy. There are many advantages to latter idea; they could come with wives or perhaps wives alone and media coverage could be broadened.

Let's talk about it and set up a date very soon. The entire "ceremony" should take only 15 minutes.

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR  
THE ARTS

WASHINGTON  
D.C. 20506

Official Business

Mrs. Sheila Weidenfeld  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500



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and the Humanities



*Alaskan Eskimo Basket  
Presentation File  
Daily Event*

# Alaska State Council on the Arts

360 "K" Street, Suite 240 • Anchorage, Alaska 99501 • (907) 272-5342 or 279-3824

June 25, 1975

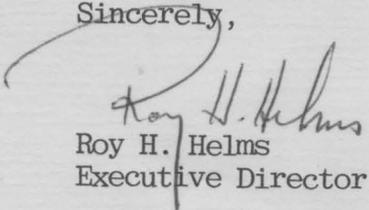
Patti Matson  
Linda S. Smith  
OFFICE OF PRESS SECRETARY TO MRS. FORD  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Matson & Smith:

The photographs of Nancy Hanks and Mrs. Ford have arrived in good order and the enclosed press release is being distributed with the pictures throughout the state. We also sent a copy of the photo to Theresa Anthony, which should be quite a thrill for her.

Thank you for your consideration and attention.

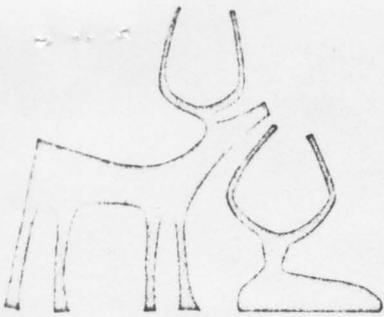
Sincerely,

  
Roy H. Helms  
Executive Director

Enclosure

RHH: rwc





# Alaska State Council on the Arts

360 "K" Street, Suite 240 • Anchorage, Alaska 99501 • (907) 272-5342 or 279-3824

## NEWS RELEASE

From: Margaret J. Firmin  
Visual Arts Director  
June 25, 1975

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ARTS COUNCIL PRESENTS BASKET TO MRS. FORD

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has presented Mrs. Gerald Ford with an Alaskan Eskimo grass basket. The basket was presented as a token of appreciation for Mrs. Ford's continued support of and interest in indigenous American crafts.

The basket, made by Theresa Anthony of Nightmute, Alaska, is an example of traditional Eskimo grass basketry. The embroidered design in dyed grasses depicts a man in a kayak on a seal hunt.

The gift to Mrs. Ford was displayed at the Governor's Awards dinner which climaxed the three-day State Hearing on the Arts held in Anchorage during March. The Hearing, which was sponsored by the Alaska State Council on the Arts, was attended by over 200 arts professionals and volunteers from throughout the state. Connie Boochever of Juneau, Alaska, Chairman of the Alaska Council on the Arts requested Nancy Hanks, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts to present the basket to Mrs. Ford in Washinton. Ms. Hanks presented the basket to Mrs. Ford at the White House on June 10, 1975.

\*\*\*\*\*

FLORENCE LOWE

9/5

File

Sheila dear,

This represents  
virtually every paper  
in Alaska.

L+K

Florence  
Lowe

JUL 3 1975

*Byhalles*



Mrs. Gerald Ford [left] receiving Eskimo basket from Nancy Hanks [right], chairman for the National Endowment for the Arts, at the White House, June 10, 1975.

## *Council presents basket to Mrs. Ford*

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has presented Mrs. Gerald Ford with an Alaskan

embroidered design in dyed grasses depicts a man in a bawken a seal hunt

art professionals and volunteers from throughout the state. Connie Boochever of Juneau

Shirley Weidenfeld -

ALASKA CLIPPING  
SERVICE

Anchorage Daily  
Times  
Anchorage, Ak.

JUN 30 1975



25-

**FIRST LADY SUPPORTS NATIVE ARTS**

For her continued interest and support of indigenous American Arts. The basket, made by Theresa of the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

Alaska Clipping  
Service

TUNDRA TIMES  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
Weekly Circ. 2,098

JUL 9 1975



MRS. GERALD FORD (left) receiving Eskimo basket from Nancy Hanks (right), Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, at the White House, June 10, 1975.

23-

## Council Presents Basket to Mrs. Ford

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has presented Mrs. Gerald Ford with an Alaskan Eskimo grass basket. The basket was

design in dyed grass depicts a man in a kayak on a seal hunt.

The gift to Mrs. Ford was displayed at the Governor's

volunteers from throughout the state.

Connie Boochever of Juneau, Alaska, Chairman of the Alaska

ALASKA CLIPPING  
SERVICE

Fairbanks  
News Miner  
Fairbanks, Alaska

JUL 10 1975



**Betty Ford gets Alaskan basket**

# Arts council gives <sup>23-</sup> basket to Mrs. Ford

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has presented Mrs. Gerald Ford with an Alaskan Eskimo basket. The basket was

the three-day State Hearing on the Arts held in Anchorage during March. The hearing, which was sponsored by the



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All-Alaska  
Weekly  
Fairbanks, Ak

AUG 1 1975

## Alaska Arts Council Presents 23 Basket To Mrs. Ford

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has presented Mrs. Gerald Ford with an Alaskan Eskimo grass basket. The basket was presented as a token of the three-day State Hearing on the Arts held in Anchorage during March.

The hearing, which was sponsored by the Alaska State

