



Alaska Earth Science Teacher of the Year for 2007

Steve Tyree

It is with great pleasure that the Alaska Geological Society recognizes Steve Tyree as the Alaska Earth Science Teacher of the Year for the 2006/2007 school year. Steve will receive \$500 for classroom equipment or personal science training in conjunction with this award. The Alaska Geological Society forwarded Steve's qualifications to the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Pacific Section, which includes California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii, and he was chosen for Pacific Section Earth Science Teacher of the Year, which includes an additional \$500 award.

Steve Tyree is a 7th grade Integrated Science teacher and department chair for middle school science education at Kotzebue Middle/High School in Kotzebue, Alaska. Steve Tyree has been a teacher in the Northwest Arctic Borough School District for more than 30 years and is a dynamic, charismatic, and devoted educator and mentor. He is highly regarded in the school, the community, and the state for his professionalism and deep individual concern for every student both in school and outside of school. He is especially noted for his ability to bring the most challenged students to their highest potential and achievement. Steve is an exceptional teacher because of his particular talents in individualizing his instruction to connect with students at all ability levels, involving parents and elders in the community in the educational process, developing scientific inquiry and achievement in young students, and inspiring his students to understand and participate in the care of their environment. In Steve's classroom all students find success and confidence. All students leave his classroom excited about science.

The students in Steve's class learn about the mineral resources in their region of Alaska, including North Slope oil, Red Dog zinc, Kobuk jade, and placer gold. They learn about mineral exploration, development, and environmental conservation from miners and engineers from the Red Dog mine, and from gold miners. They learn about coastal processes with respect to protection of their homes, community, and fuel supply from the Coast Guard. They investigate their environment on field trips and bring samples of rocks, soil, peat, plants, and animals back to the class laboratory for detailed study. They hear about gradual changes in their environment, including permafrost, habitat, and animal population dynamics, over the span of several generations from Native elders. They find new research about arctic topics on the internet. They debate the roles of resource development and utilization with respect to environmental conservation and preservation. They discuss the blessings, consequences, and responsibilities of living in a place rich in mineral and biological resources. They learn to see their heritage in resources from a broad perspective of earth processes, from plate tectonics to the sources of mineral deposits, to climate change and its influence on coastal erosion and caribou herd migration routes. There is no doubt that Steve Tyree is a thoughtful and innovative educator who utilizes unique opportunities and resources to teach students earth and life sciences in the context of their cultural heritage.

Susan Karl
Chair, Earth Science Teacher of the Year Committee
Alaska Geological Society