

Raygilee Ujarasuk

Question: Please state your name.

Raygilee: Raygilee Ujarasuk.

Q: Where do you live?

Raygilee: I am from Igloolik and live in an Elder's unit

Q: Where were you born?

Raygilee: There is a place that is part of Igloolik called Iqaluit, a place where they go fishing, at that place.

Q: Can you please state the year you were born and the month?

Raygilee: I was born in is November, in the winter. Using a number for my birthdate, perhaps it's not accurate.

Q: Do you speak only Inuktitut and understand it or do you understand English as well?

Raygilee: I don't understand a word of English.

Q: I would like to know where were you between 1970 and 1980?

Raygilee: As I said earlier, I was born here in Iqaluit near Igloolik. I was adopted from here. (Numbers) of years, like 1970, I don't make use of them when I talk about where I was. They don't mean anything to me.

Q: Have you ever gone to school for any studies?

Raygilee: Back then, back then I grew up, there were hardly any pencils or materials and I don't know any mathematics, even as old as I am. It was only when I was sent to a hospital that I finally saw students go to school.

Q: When there were discussions about the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, do you recall when you first heard about it?

Raygilee: Even the fact that it started doesn't make sense to me, too.

Q: Do you remember when there were talks about it?

Raygilee: Yes, when I was getting close to being elderly was only when I realized the land claims negotiations. I started to understand it.

Q: What did you think of it when there were discussions about it?

Raygilee: We were informed about it in a positive way, stating that we will have more freedom once we get a Nunavut territory. That's what we were told and I agreed with everyone else. We would have more freedom with Nunavut. That's what I believed.

Q: Has what Inuit asked for when Nunavut became official become a reality?

Raygilee: I think some of it is being used, but it's not entirely used.

Q: If you had a chance to talk about the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, what would you talk about?

Raygilee: I'm not sure if I'll be able to speak about it, since I am so old now and continue to lose my memory, I don't make much sense anymore. I am even starting to not recognize my grandchildren anymore and can't remember their names, too. That is how I am.

Q: Ujarasuk, what is the most important part of Inuit traditional knowledge in terms of Inuit values?

Raygilee: For us back then, when we were true Inuit, we were advised to be kind to one another, to be willing to help, to love another. Those were the most important values to me.

Q: What do you want the future generations to remember?

Raygilee: What I believe is one of the most important parts is to continue to do the right thing. I would appreciate it if it's continued, but our youth are learning English nowadays and have more knowledge than us Elders. What I see is they start to live a life following what they believe and what is good for them. We were always told to listen to our Elders. I would still want that to continue.

Q: Do you have any last comments to make?

Raygilee: Yes. Here in my community, if youth are at a loss of what to do, I want them to come and ask me questions so I can share what little I know. I wouldn't mind it if they come to me for advice, but I am not sure if I can attend distant meetings anymore.

Q: How old are you now, 92?

Raygilee: Well, last year I was about 100-years-old. Last winter everyone believed I was 100-years-old. Then a commissioner came to our community and my age was recorded as 91.

Q: I believe I am alive according to how long I was supposed to live. There are youth and children who haven't grown up and they die, even very young people die, I believe they die when their time has come. Life has been set that way and I believe it's followed.