



The Fairbanks Tall Timber Series honors those who have served the Fairbanks community well. Join veteran newsman Robert Hannon either in person or via Zoom as he interviews these stalwart members of our community.

Mondays at 7PM in the BP Design Theater (401 Engineering Building)

For more information about watching via livestream, visit uaf.edu/summer/events. All presentations will be recorded and posted to the web following the live presentation.



6/13
The Rev. Dr. Anna Frank

Anna was born and raised in Old Minto, one of six siblings. At age 15, she left the village for Fairbanks with her husband, Richard Frank. They had a happy marriage until his death 57 years later. After raising their four children, she worked to create the first health education department for the Tanana Chiefs Conference in 1975. Recognizing her listening skills and gentle, common sense approach with people, TCC trained her in counseling, and so began a lifetime journey. She grew up in the Episcopal Church and became ordained as a deacon. Years later, she was asked to consider being ordained as a priest. Her counseling training had served her well and in 1983 she became the first Native American female Episcopal priest. In 2019, the Rev. Anna Frank received an honorary doctorate of law degree from UAF.



6/20
Jim Sampson

Jim was born in the Panama Canal Zone and moved to Alaska a year later, as the eldest of eight children. He earned an associate degree in police administration from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and began his working life with Laborers' Local 942, eventually being named Alaska Commissioner of Labor by Gov. Steve Cowper. Grace Schaible convinced him to run for Borough Mayor and agreed to be his campaign chair twice. Gov. Tony Knowles appointed him to the Alaska Permanent Fund Board. In 2003, he took over the presidency of the AFL-CIO for five years, representing 50,000 union members statewide. After a short retirement, he began raising money for the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center and served as director until 2016.



6/27
Mary Shields

As a college student at the University of Wisconsin, Mary came to Alaska to work with the Campfire Girls organization and fell in love with the state. After college, she returned to Alaska and lived in a wilderness cabin. Caring for sled dogs was part of her remote lifestyle, and she made history when she signed up to race in the Iditarod International Sled Dog Race in 1974. She became the first woman to finish the grueling race, proving gender did not determine the outcome. Ten years later, she ran the inaugural Yukon Quest race between Fairbanks and Whitehorse (in total she ran the Yukon Quest three times, and finished all successfully.) In 1991, with the breakup of the USSR, she participated in the "Hope Race" in the Far East. Mary's greatest joy, as an author and speaker and role model for women, has been sharing her love of Alaska and her dogs, her adventures, and her Goldstream Valley home with countless visitors.



7/11
Bishop Otis McCormick

Born in North Carolina, Bishop McCormick came to Alaska in 1957 with the military and decided to stay. Over the years, he has come to be highly regarded throughout the state of Alaska and the local communities of Fairbanks and North Pole. He is recognized as a leader with strong community service ties, serving with distinction as the founder of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Fairbanks (IMAF), as a past president of the J.P. Jones Community Development Center, on the board of directors of the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, as President of Fairbanks Kiwanis, and as one of the founding board members of Love in the Name of Christ (Love, Inc.)



7/18

Matt Atkinson

Matt, a Fairbanks native, was always an ardent hockey enthusiast, playing for two USHL teams, the Rochester Mustangs and the Dubuque Fighting Saints. In 1986, Matt and two Fairbanks

college friends developed a business plan for their summer employment – small group tours by van to the Arctic Circle. Northern Alaska Tour Company was born and expanded to include northern camps for polar bear viewing. This summer-only business expanded to year-round when winter trips were added with aurora viewing. They partnered with Sukakpak Inc. to include remote camps in Coldfoot, Deadhorse, and along the Yukon River. In 2012, the business expanded with the purchase of Warbelow’s Air Ventures for Denali flightseeing and more. Today, 35 years later, the award-winning business is thriving as it expands and continues to make significant contributions to the Fairbanks economy.



7/25

Shirley Gordon

In early 1943, Shirley Lewis boarded a steamer headed for Seward, Alaska to begin a secretarial job with the Army Corp of Engineers. Onboard, she met Bill Gordon. He was also headed to Seward with his newly acquired Bachelor of

Divinity degree to serve the Episcopal Church there. By July, they were married and off to Pt. Hope (where she got off the plane in high heels) to minister to the people of the Arctic Coast, who spoke little English and who, in turn, helped them survive and thrive. In 1948, Bill was ordained as bishop of the Episcopal Church of Alaska, and they moved to Fairbanks. Shirley spent the next 25 years in Fairbanks as the wife of the young “Flying Bishop”. She was a gracious hostess, always with an open-door policy for overnight guests and all mealtimes, while raising their four children. Bishop Gordon retired in 1974, and they moved to Michigan. Following the death of her husband in 1994, Shirley returned to Fairbanks, where she continues to be a community treasure.



8/1

June Rogers

Born and raised in Fairbanks, June was the owner of a mechanical contracting company for 15 years. Her passion, however, has always been in the arts, which benefited from her business

experience. She coordinated Fairbanks operations for the Alaska Repertory Theatre. At the same time, she worked for the Fairbanks Arts Association as a volunteer and board member starting in 1981, then as Executive Director for twenty years from 1996-2016. During the early years, she appeared in several Fairbanks Light Opera Theatre productions, singing, dancing, and costuming. She and her husband, Bill Rogers, started the Sandcastle Band in the early 80’s and have contributed their talents to events in Fairbanks and beyond for 40 years. June currently serves on the Fairbanks City Council.



8/8

Mary Nordale

Mary comes from a family with long ties to Fairbanks history. Her grandfather, Anton Nordale, built the Nordale Hotel; her father served in the Alaska Legislature; and her mother, Katherine,

was clerk of the court in Fairbanks. Additionally, family friend Senator Bob Bartlett influenced Mary’s life of service and independence. After graduating from college, Mary went to Washington, D.C. as one of the secretaries in the office of the Senator Bartlett. She realized she wanted more and went to George Washington University law school at night when women were the minority. After graduation, she returned to Fairbanks as an assistant US attorney. As politics changed, she worked as State District Attorney, for the Small Business Administration after the 1967 flood in Fairbanks, as Alaska’s Commissioner of Revenue, and in private practice, specializing in business and mining law.