



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

1901 Bragaw St., Suite 300
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
Main: 907.274.4692 / 907.276.7474
TTY/TDD: 711 for Alaska Relay

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) Honors Two Alaskans for Bridging Communities, Advancing Civil Rights, and Defending of Equal Access in Alaska

Anchorage, AK—The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights is proud to announce that the 2025 IAOHRA conference is being held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel, bringing together human rights leaders, policymakers, and advocates from across the United States and around the world.

This prestigious gathering will explore the evolving landscape of civil and human rights, highlight innovative strategies to advance equity, and honor the legacy of those who have paved the way for progress in Alaska and beyond.

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights Chairman Dorene M. Lorenz advises, “From the ballot box to civil rights, Alaska has long been America’s guiding star - on the cusp of our nation’s 250th, we gather to honor that legacy and shape the future of freedom together.”

On Wednesday, October 8, 6:30-8 PM in the Anchorage Hilton Alaska Ballroom, two Alaskans will be honored for their service:

William Craig of Sitka

For more than six years, William (Bill) Craig, a Tlingit from Sitka, has served on the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, guiding the body as chair and stewarding its mission to ensure equality in the Last Frontier. But his human rights work reaches far beyond that appointment.

A tireless advocate for the blind and visually impaired, Craig holds leadership in the National Federation of the Blind, where he directs legislative strategy and organizes for accessible voting, employment, and independence.

He has been a voice on disability inclusion long before it became a mainstream issue, serving on the Alaska Independent Blind (American Council of the Blind) for over a decade.

What makes Craig’s story stand out is that his activism is rooted in real experience: he’s worked as a police officer, a deckhand, a chemist’s tester, a hotel clerk - all roles that reflect Alaska’s economic fabric.

Bill lobbied Congressman Don Young to obtain funding for Alaska’s first accessible voting machines following the Help America Vote Act as he understands that rights don’t exist in the abstract: they breathe in daily life, in workplaces, in ballot boxes, in public spaces.

William Craig will be honored with the Human Rights Champion Award, not for a single act, but for a steadfast

life of bridging systems and people, advocating for the unseen, and helping to make Alaska a place where all citizens are heard, included, and protected.

Dr. Cal Williams of Anchorage

From the segregated streets of Monroe, Louisiana, to the snowy neighborhoods of Anchorage, Dr. Cal Williams has spent his life breaking barriers and building bridges. A civil rights activist, community leader, and keeper of Alaska's African American history, Williams embodies the quiet power of persistence.

He marched in the South with voter registration drives, then carried that torch north in 1965: leading Anchorage's NAACP, fighting for fair housing in Fairview, and standing alongside Alaska Native leaders during the land claims movement. Over decades, he's become a trusted voice in living rooms, city halls, and church choirs alike.

Williams has been recognized with an honorary doctorate from the University of Alaska Anchorage, named "Alaskan of the Week" by the U.S. Senate, and revered as a mentor to generations. But his true legacy is simpler: he made it his mission to ensure every person felt seen, heard, and valued.

IAOHRA celebrates Dr. Cal Williams with the President's Award, honoring a man whose life reminds us that change isn't a moment. It's a lifetime.

For more information, see <https://www.iaohra.org/2025-conference-information>



