

Richard Atuk was born in Wales, Alaska to Walter Atuk and Virginia Tungwenuk Atuk in 1944. All his grandparents were born on or near the Seward Peninsula. The family left Wales in 1948, overwintered at Sinrock, Alaska and arrived in Nome in 1940. Richard spoke Kingikmiutun Inupiaq until the age of 7 when he started grade school.

He was able to receive training and upbringing to be an Inupiaq hunter and learn values of traditional Inupiaq ways of being. As a teenager and young adult, he served 5 seasons as a crew member of one of the last 8-man Inupiaq spring hunting umiaq (skin boat).

After High School, he went on to receive a bachelor's degree in geological engineering from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1968 and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Alaska in 1985. He served 2 years in the US Army Combat Engineers leaving Viet Nam as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant.

After working as a petroleum geologist for 2-1/2 years, Richard determined to stay in Alaska, so he worked for the Bering Straits Native Corporation on land selection then with Sitnasuak Native Corporation on general management. Other land and management work included resource and land management with the State of Alaska and Kenai Peninsula Borough. Richard also served on the Advisory Committee to the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska.

Richard has been part of the groups reclaiming and performing Wales traditional songs and dances since 1991 and served as president of the Kingikmiut Singers and Dancers of Anchorage. Recently Richard is leading an effort to document and save the Kingikmiutun Inupiat dialect which is closely related to Diomedes, Shishmaref, Teller, Brevig Mission, and King Island dialects. In 2023, Richard and his wife Jane wrote and published a children's book: [Nunayaagvingmi Itut Uvlumini \(A Day at Camp\)](#) written in the Wales dialect. Richard is working on a Northwest Seward Peninsula Inupiaq Language database and book to document the regional dialect and serve as a resource for teachers and language learners. He believes that language is key to understanding and preserving important values and traditional ways of being that are critical to survival of culture.