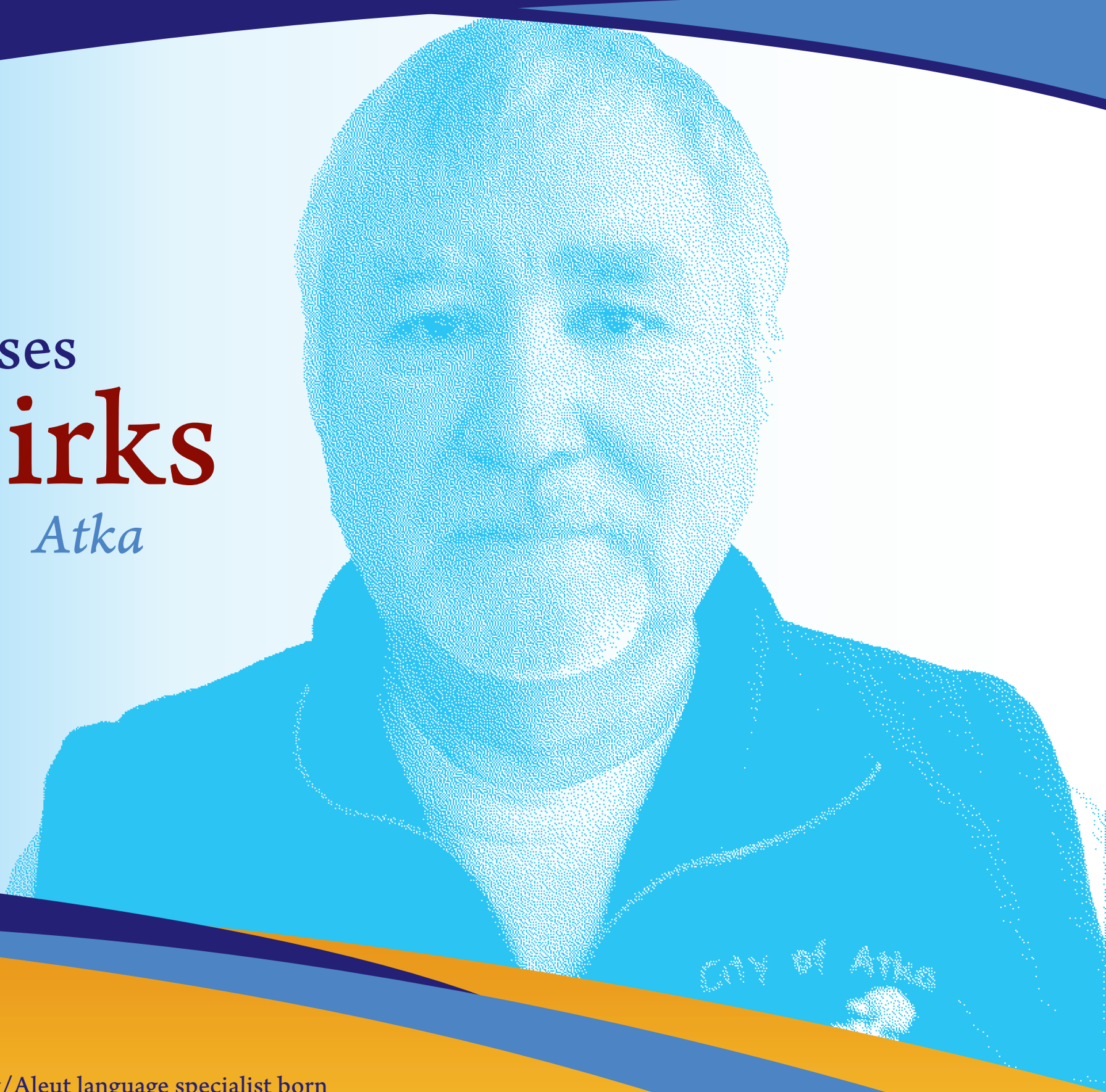


# Moses Dirks

*Atka*



Moses is an Unangax/Aleut language specialist born in Atka, Alaska. Over the years, Moses has overseen a multitude of projects involving his language. He has taught Unangax/Aleut culture and history, directed a summer culture camp, and has most recently taught within the English Language Learners program in the Anchorage School District.

He credits his language as the reason he went into the field of education. "I wouldn't have chosen education if it didn't flow through the language. If it wasn't for the language, then I probably would have become a hunter or fisherman like the rest of my siblings and relatives."

His true passion is for teaching the Unangax/Aleut language and developing ways for it to be taught. Moses has devoted most of his life to developing new language curricula for use in Alaska's schools.

Moses strongly believes that it is up to Native elders and communities to pass on culture and tradition. He says, "I think the best way to do it is to live in a community where they have a culture and language that are strong there and work through the elders. They are our teachers and are the ones that should pass on the culture and the language part. But a lot of them are dying off now and then, together with them, the languages and the cultures die out. But as far as retaining the culture and language, it has to go through the elders--a respected elder."

*"I think the best way... is to live in a community where they have a culture and language that are strong there and work through the elders."*

Mr. Dirks believes that despite adversity students should not be afraid to pursue their dreams. In his words, "If you want to become a teacher. Just do it." Through his experience, Moses wants students to know that it is much easier to pursue higher education directly after high school than it is later in life.

Whether a student chooses to become a para-professional, Head Start teacher, curriculum developer, educator, or an administrator, Moses encourages students to do what they can to teach and pass on what they know to future generations.



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