

# HONORING

## X'UNEI LANCE TWITCHELL

The members of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature recognize and honor the significant achievements and contributions of X'unei Lance Twitchell to our communities, state and the world.

X'unei was born in Skagway to Timothy Twitchell and Debra Dennis Carltikoff. He is of Lingit, Haida, Yup'ik, and Sami heritage. He belongs to the Lukaax.ádi clan, is a child of the Kaagwaantaan and a grandchild of the Dakl'aweidí, and a member of the Tseihl laanaas clan. His grandparents are Dorthy Dennis, Si Dennis, Anne Twitchell and Timothy Twitchell. He currently resides in Juneau with his wife, Miriah, and their three children.

X'unei is an outstanding Professor of Alaska Native Languages at the University of Alaska Southeast, where he works tirelessly to bring the Tlingit language into everyday life through education, media, performance, and community engagement. He shares the Tlingit Word of the Week on public media and teaches Tlingit in a range of settings, including Universities, Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School, the Skagway Traditional Council, and Carcross-Tagish First Nation. He has performed in Tlingit with Perseverance Theatre and other communities statewide. He served in multiple educational roles at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, including as a Teaching Assistant, teacher in Upward Bound, and an Assistant Professor of English.

Most recently X'unei won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Preschool Animated Series for the popular PBS series *Molly of Denali*. The episode "Not a Mascot" premiered March 27, 2024, as a part of the series' fourth season and won the best writing award among five nominees.

X'unei's professional achievements include serving the Tribal President and Administrator for the Skagway Traditional Council, acted as a delegate to Tlingit and Haida, Alaska Federation of Natives, and board member of Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) and chair for the State of Alaska's Council of Alaska Native Languages.

X'unei has a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Minor in American Indian Studies from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. A Master of Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and received a PhD in Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization from the Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani (College of Hawaiian Language) at the University of Hawai'i Hilo. X'unei continues to document, transcribe, and translate the Tlingit language.

In 2013 X'unei was named to the Top 40 Under 40 list by the *Alaska Journal of Commerce*. He received the Governor's 2024 Arts and Humanities Award. X'unei remains involved in numerous projects, including the *Juneau Empire's* Alaska Native Languages & Studies column, the *Huffington Post's* Alaska Native Languages and Studies entries, Northwest Coast Native design projects, and Alaska Native Modern Art projects. He currently works on films, plays, screenplays, novels, and a poetry book.

The members of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature commend X'unei Lance Twitchell for his work to revitalize and preserve the Tlingit language and for sharing his creative energy with Alaska and the world.

  
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Date: May 7, 2025