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Diane Kaplan
Rasmuson Foundation

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Elaine's Installation

By Diane Kaplan - President, Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska

Several mornings ago I awoke with a start
I said to myself, simply, "oy"
In just a few days I'm addressing a crowd
In University Park, Illinois

I come from a place - the 49th state
The land of the bright midnight sun
With snowy topped mountains and big polar bears
Where salmon and halibut run

Let me tell you a little of why Elaine's special
Please indulge me a moment, at least
Her beginnings were humble, I thought you should know
From the city called Philly back East

The place that makes cheesesteaks, the place that makes scrapple
And home to the Liberty Bell
The place of Ben Franklin, the home of the Phillies
A place that I know very well

There she learned all her loving and loved all her learning
She was wide-eyed and bright as a star
She knew education would be her vocation
And everyone knew she'd go far

After a fashion, she developed a passion
For researching, writing and teaching
It took her to Penn, to Brown and to Queens
She kept on with her learning and reaching

She polished her writing, but Mort was inviting
There soon came a girl and a boy
Her children--they're here today--Alan and Gill
The family that brings her such joy

I'm not sure if you knew, that it's at ASU
She senses there's something she's needing
She wants more control, that would be her new role
She discovers her talent for leading

She loves every student, she cheers every one
She learns each department, each course
She immerses herself in the campus's life
She becomes a phenomenal force

A few years ago - the Great Land was blessed
She landed with Mort on a plane
A woman whose heart was as big as Alaska
Our new UA Chancellor, Elaine

She landed so charmingly into our midst
She soared up to bald eagle heights
She charted a path so beautifully bright
It mirrored our famed northern lights

She touched all our lives, the young and the old
Lived among us without any fuss
It didn't take me--very long--not at all
To know that she was one of us

She raised the school's profile, captured our city
She put out a call to the town
"Come to the campus, we want you to know us
Just come here and wander around"

She and Mort stayed, what a difference they made
They really sensed Anchorage was home
They loved all Alaska from Barrow to Fairbanks
To Dillingham, Juneau and Nome

But you came a calling, and soon we heard bawling
All over the 49th state
"Maimon is leaving," Alaskans were grieving
"She's going to Governors State"

We can't get much pleasure, that you stole our treasure
But Alaskans are generous souls
When one of our best is fulfilling a quest
And meeting her personal goals

She was meant to be President, meant to be here
She was destined to be one of you
So I have a duty, as a good Alaskan
To give Illinois what it's due

To Alaskans it's better to give than receive
And that is what we'll therefore do
We give you our treasure, our own Dr. Maimon
To lead you, to lead GSU