

Michael G. Wiley



May 6, 1941-Dec. 15, 2012

Clam Gulch resident Mr. Michael Gilbert Wiley, 71, died Friday, Dec. 7, 2012, at his home in Clam Gulch.

A celebration of his life will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012, at the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building, 40610 Kalifornsky Beach Road in Kenai.

Mr. Wiley was born May 6, 1941, in Hartford, Conn. He graduated from Rockville High School in 1959. After graduating from high school he furthered his education by attending the University of Connecticut in 1963.

In 1966 he moved to Alaska, living in various places around Alaska to include Skagway, Clam Gulch, Fairbanks, Moose Pass, Seward and several bush communities. His first full-time employment was in a one-room school in Sherburne, Vt. He worked as an educator and administrator in many

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Alaska communities including Skagway, the Kenai Peninsula Borough and many bush communities around the state. He was employed as a laborer in Local Union No. 341 where he worked on the Alaska Pipeline.

Mike volunteered and was affiliated with several community groups, including Kasilof Regional Historical Association, Central Peninsula Garden Club and the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association.

He also served in elective office for Homer Electric Association, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, and the Kenai Peninsula school board. He was a gardener and provided produce for the local Food Bank in Kenai. Michael was a small business owner and a long-time commercial fisherman in various communities across Alaska.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Bertha Prior Wiley; three sons Bryce Denali, Jefferson Logan, George Rae; and a foster daughter, Victoria.

He is survived by his wife, Vicky Peters Wiley, and his three daughters, all of Clam Gulch, Heather and her husband, Jeff Turkington; Heidi and her husband, Wayne; Holly and her significant other, Bryan Lazer. He also leaves 10 grandchildren: Joshua Stinnett, Bryce Wiley, Isaac Nagasako, Shirley Wiley, and Makayla, Lindsey, Mika, Lokeni, Manu and Lagi Wong. He is survived by brothers Gus of Clam Gulch, Glenn of Oklahoma, Patricia of Alabama, and Susan of New Hampshire.

"He was generous with his time and was an extraordinarily kind person to all he met. He will be missed," his family said.

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Wiley worker — Clam Gulch man contributed much to community

By Joseph Robertia



Photo by Joseph Robertia, Redoubt Reporter. Mike Wiley, left, helps install a guardrail fence to protect beach grass and sand dunes at the mouth of the Kasilof River last summer. Wiley, who died Dec. 7, was active in many community service projects.

Redoubt Reporter

Clam Gulch is a small community, which makes the loss of any neighbor noticeable. But with the passing, on Dec. 7, of such a longtime resident and active community member as Mike Wiley, the loss isn't just perceptible, it's palpable.

Wiley, 71, formerly of Vermont, came to Alaska in 1966 with his wife, Bertha. The two settled in Skagway, where Wiley taught fifth grade for two years. Two years later he was offered a teaching position at Tustumena Elementary School, in Kasilof, but before the family could move together tragedy struck and his wife, and their 1- and 2-year-old sons, were killed when their car went off the road and into the freezing Chilkat River.

Wiley came up and settled in the former homestead of Clam Gulch residents Bill and Ruth Reeder, located on a little lake at Mile 116 of the Sterling Highway. Not long after, Wiley married his next-door neighbor, Linda Hatten, and they had three daughters during the marriage, which lasted until 1980.

After three years at Tustumena Elementary, and eventually achieving the position of principal, Wiley began teaching in even smaller communities — Nanwalek, Tyonek, Port Heiden and numerous other places.

Wiley began commercial fishing in 1970, set netting at Tuxedni Bay with Don Thrapp, who was a homesteader on Crooked Creek Road. The next year, Wiley fished near Corea Creek with Everett Bice, who, in 1977, formed a partnership with Brent and Judy Johnson. The Johnsons eventually inherited the site in 1990. Wiley bought a site himself in Clam Gulch in 1975.

“Mike was one of those guys who always fished to the end of the season each year,” Brent Johnson said.

Johnson knew Wiley from more than just picking fish in summer.

Wiley was active in efforts to better the community. He served on the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s



Photo courtesy of Gary Titus. Mike Wiley employs a hammer and chisel to fashion a step-and-lock notch that will fit up into the similarly notched sill log in the background on the historic Watchman’s Cabin in Kasilof.

Association, Kenai Peninsula School District Board of Education, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly and the Central Peninsula Gardening Club, annually donating produce he grew to the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank.

Wiley believed others should serve with the same gusto if they had the knowledge and skills, according to Johnson.

“Mike is responsible for me being on the borough assembly,” he said. “He encouraged me to run a number of times. I was happy enough to let Paul Fischer do the job, but Mike nagged me to run until I said OK. Luckily, when I went to file that year I showed up at the Borough Building at 1 p.m. The deadline was noon, so that saved me for two more years. Other people encouraged me to run, but Mike was constant with that encouragement.”

Wiley and Johnson both worked as members of the Kasilof Regional Historical Association, and together they were among the group that installed a guardrail over the

past two summers to protect the dunes at the mouth of the Kasilof River. Wiley also was a staple volunteer for cabin restoration work at the historical association's museum, and he even cut and donated trees from his own property to be used to restore the historic log structures.

"I had the pleasure to work with Mike restoring historic cabins at the Kasilof Regional Historic Museum for over 10 years," said Gary Titus, cabin historian for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. "Mike brought enthusiasm and energy to the projects. When the temperature hovered at zero, the wind blew, and the snow was deep, Mike peeled and hewed logs with a smile on his face. I enjoyed Mike's company and will miss him."

Wiley also served on the board of directors of Homer Electric Association since 2010, when he was appointed to fill a vacant seat in District 3, where he was valued as an ardent activist of an open, public process.

"He had a fire in his belly. He was a fierce advocate for the downtrodden and championing for civil rights, open meetings and renewable energy," said HEA Board President Debbie Debnam.

"He was elected by HEA members a year later in 2011, so he was doing something right," she said.

Wiley overcame many challenges while serving with HEA, not the least of which was learning how to keep up with technology, remembered Debnam.

"When we went paperless and all went to iPads, it was tough for him to learn, but he figured it out and was proud of himself for doing so," she said.

Wiley was just as persistent with his support of one of his pet projects, the Grant Lake hydroelectric project proposed in the Moose Pass area. The day before Wiley died he heard a small group was making the six-mile hike to the proposed site, and despite his age, he wanted to be counted in for the excursion.

"He heard they were going and said he was, too. It would be a good test for his knees, he joked. That's the kind of guy he was," Debnam said.



Mike Wiley

Director Goal(s): Fill the energy gap that will occur with the expiration of our wholesale energy contract in 2014 and the continued decline of Cook Inlet natural gas. I would like to fill this gap with alternative, sustainable energy such as geo-thermal, wind, solar, hydro and tidal power. A prerequisite for meeting our future energy challenges is closer cooperation between all

six (6) energy utilities on the Railbelt, including possible unification.

Work Experience: Owner/Operator of family set net site in Clam Gulch (current); Project Engineer; Field Engineer; Teacher; Principal; Local 341 and 942 Laborer

Board Experience: Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly; Kenai Peninsula School Board; Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association; Moose Pass Volunteer Fire Company; Seward Historical Preservation Commission; and Kasilof Regional Historical Association

HEA member since: 1970

Michael G. Wiley (Mike): I, Michael G. Wiley (Mike), have been a member of Homer Electric Association, Inc. since 1970.

My board experience includes one term (1991-94) on the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly and two terms on the Kenai Peninsula Borough School Board (1987-1990; 1991-1994). At present, I serve on the HEA Board, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Board of Equalization, and the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Board. Other experience includes the Seward Fish and Game Advisory Board, Kasilof Regional Historical Association, the Seward Historical Preservation Commission, and the Moose Pass Fire Company.

My work experience includes 13 years as an educator, 20 years in construction and 30 years commercial fishing. If you add that up and include 16 years of my education and 6 years of pre-school you will find that I am 94! But no! My fishing experience has run concurrently with other work. I am really only 69. Presently, my family and I operate a set net site in Clam Gulch which we have owned since 1977. Significant jobs of interest include teaching at Tustumena Elementary (1968-71) and at Nanwalek Elementary(1971-73), Trans-Alaska Pipeline Project, Bradley Lake Hydro Project, and Trail Lake Hatchery Project.

My main goal if elected to the HEA Board will be to work toward providing affordable, sustainable, clean energy sources for future power generation. Nature gives us free energy including falling water, strong tides, sunlight, wind and even heat from inside the earth. Our challenge is to capture and transmit that energy into affordable power to heat and energize our homes and businesses. I ask your help in taking an important step toward achieving this goal. A step that will save approximately \$30 million for you, the member-owners of HEA. It's easy and will save you money on your next electric bill. CONSERVE! By conserving now we may not need to install a second gas turbine generator in Soldotna (cost: approximately \$30 million). I'm sure that our HEA Co-op will help you conserve energy. The State of Alaska and the U.S. Department of Agriculture also have programs to help save energy.