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REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON HOUSE DISTRICT 30

Sponsor Statement

HB 130

Jay Hammond Day

Jay Sterner Hammond had an adventurous life and career as a United States Marine Corps Fighter Pilot, a Bush-Pilot, Homesteader, Predator Control agent, Fisherman, State Legislator, Borough Mayor, Borough Manager, and as a two-term Alaska Governor during what could well be described as the era that formed modern Alaska.

From his conception of a "Bristol Bay Incorporated" fund as a way to share Bristol Bay fisheries revenue with local residents, to his leadership in creating the Alaska Permanent Fund and Permanent Fund Dividend, Jay Hammond had at the heart of his politics the idea that Alaskans should embrace the ownership of their lands that they should hold conservation of their common resources in the highest regard, and that they should take the long view, looking generations ahead in their decision-making.

Jay Hammond was the bridge between two different versions of Alaska. He came north in search of adventure and found it as a bush pilot and wildlife agent in Territorial Alaska. As a resident of the rural Bristol Bay region, he understood the need to increase Alaskans' benefit from their fish and wildlife resources. As Governor during the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the first flowing of oil revenues into state coffers, and the settlement of the Alaska National Lands Interest Conservation Act, he was at the heart of the discussions on how to use, preserve, and grow our new State.

Jay Hammond was a complex statesman and, despite his claim of reluctance, was a good politician. “The best leaders ... almost without exception and at every level, are master users of stories and symbols,” states author Thomas Peters. Through his ideas, bearded image, quixotic speeches, and poetry, Governor Hammond appealed to the many Alaskans who voted for him, as well as many who did not. Jay Hammond stands as an iconic figure of both pre and post-pipeline Alaska.

Although he stated in interviews that he found naming things after people distasteful, due to the great importance of his role in shaping Alaska, HB 130 would establish his date of birth, July 21,st as Jay Hammond Day in his memory and honor.