



[Sen. Lisa Murkowski](#)

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Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the life of one of Alaska's most dedicated public servants. Representative Richard Neal Foster served as a member of the Alaska House of Representatives for nearly 21 years. Since his election in 1988 he represented the residents of Nome and 28 villages with great love and dedication. Alaska will remember him this Friday at a memorial service in Anchorage.

A lifelong Alaskan, Representative Foster was born and raised in Nome. He received a business administration degree from the University of Alaska. He managed Foster Aviation, a family-run air service started by his father in 1946. He was a civic leader in the community of Nome serving on the boards of the Bering Straits Native Corporation, the Sitnasuak Native Corporation, Nome Eskimo Community, and the Northwest Campus of the University of Alaska.

Representative Foster will be remembered for a lifetime of public service. After serving two tours in Vietnam as a captain in military intelligence he was awarded the Bronze Star. He received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army through the University of Alaska, Army ROTC program. As a man with passion for Alaska, he later served with the Alaska Army National Guard in Nome.

During his tenure in the Alaska State legislature, he served as majority whip from 1993 to 2007. Showing his commitment to address the challenges of rural Alaska, he was a member of the Bush Caucus as well as the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force Committee. And, in 2009, he was honored as a University of Alaska Distinguished Alumni because of his dedication to public service.

As one of the longest serving members in the Alaska legislature, it saddens me to acknowledge that Alaska has lost one of our truly great leaders. I had the honor of serving in the legislature with Representative Foster. He was a man with an infectious laugh and he had a great love for the Seward Peninsula and the State of Alaska. Never letting divisive politics come between friendships, he was known for his humility and friendliness to both Republicans and Democrats. His "Friday at Fosters" events, where he hosted legislators, staff, administration officials, friends, and visitors for a Friday evening jam sessions for over 17 years, will be sorely missed.

Foster loved the outdoors of the Seward Peninsula, a region with a rich mining history. He spent his summers at Hannum Creek, working on his family's mining claims. One time, he and his sister Iris and son Neal walked 80 miles of the historic mining trail from Quartz Creek to Hannum Creek to experience the journey of "Old Timers." In addition, Foster was known for his love of military history including the Civil War and World War II and was a collector of military weapons.

He is survived by his wife Cathryn of Eatonville, WA; seven sons, Neal Foster of Nome, AK; James Foster of Anchorage, AK; Nathan Foster of Ellendale, ND; 1st Lt. Jason Weber, LCpl Richard Foster, Ramsey Foster, and Chandler Foster, all of Eatonville, WA; and two daughters, Maria Stevens of Tacoma, WA, Tiffany Sanchez of Miami, OK; and sister Margaret "Iris" Magnell of Laguna Hills, CA.

Foster's public service to the State of Alaska will continue to positively impact the lives of Alaskans for decades to come.