

*** NEAL RICHARD FOSTER ***

The Twenty-sixth Alaska State Legislature joins Alaskans across the state in honoring the life of Neal “Richard” Foster, a man dedicated to family, friends and public service.

Richard Foster was born in Nome on August 9, 1946. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Alaska in 1968. While attending the university, Richard received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army ROTC program. Richard served two tours of duty in Vietnam, attaining the rank of Captain and receiving a Bronze Star. Richard later served as a member of the Alaska Army National Guard. In 2005, he received the Patrick Henry Award from the National Guard Association of the United States, recognizing outstanding and exceptional service to the Armed Forces of the United States and the National Guard.

After Vietnam, Richard took over the family air taxi operation in Nome, Foster Aviation. He served on numerous boards, including the Bering Straits Native Corporation, Sitnasuak Native Corporation, and Nome Eskimo Community. He was elected to the Nome City School Board in 1981, the Nome Common Council in 1984, and then the Alaska House of Representatives in 1988. In his nearly 21 year tenure in the House, Richard served as a member of the Bush Caucus and spent several years as the Majority Whip and a member of the House Finance Committee.

Richard was not only a tireless advocate for his community; he was also a warm, considerate person with a generous nature, infectious laugh and great love of life and people. He had a flawless memory for everyone he met. He would take photographs of visitors to his office, sending a copy as a postcard memento of their trip, often decorated with a humorous caption. Another copy of the photograph would be added to growing collages on his office walls, which served as a trip down memory lane for returning visitors. Richard always remembered birthdays with cards, gifts and, for fellow representatives, an infamous birthday roast on the House Floor.

Richard was loved and respected by people on all sides of the political spectrum. His talent for bringing people together was manifest in a special event held in his office for more than seventeen years, “Fridays at Fosters,” where Richard welcomed everyone for a night of music and camaraderie. Legislators, staff, state employees, lobbyists and visitors to the Capitol left their tension and politics behind for a few hours, enjoying each other’s company.

We, the members of the Twenty-sixth Alaska State Legislature, along with the members of legislatures before us, offer our sincere condolences to Richard’s loved ones. We are thankful for the time that he was able to spend with us. Richard – you will be missed.

MIKE CHENAULT
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

GARY STEVENS
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Date: January 19, 2010

REP. NEAL FOSTER
PRIME SPONSOR

Cosponsors: Representatives Hawker, Chenault, Austerman, Buch, Cissna, Crawford, Dahlstrom, Doogan, Edgmon, Fairclough, Gara, Gardner, Gatto, Gruenberg, Guttenberg, Harris, Herron, Holmes, Johansen, Johnson, Joule, Kawasaki, Keller, Kelly, Kerttula, Lynn, Millett, Muñoz, Neuman, Olson, Petersen, Ramras, Salmon, Seaton, Stoltze, Thomas, Tuck, P. Wilson, T. Wilson; Senators Bunde, Olson, Stevens, Coghill, Davis, Dyson, Egan, Ellis, French, Hoffman, Huggins, Kookesh, McGuire, Menard, Meyer, Paskvan, Stedman, Thomas, Wagoner, Wielechowski