

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kay Andrews, City of Aleknagik Administrator
FROM: Jane Gottschalk, Council Member, City of Aleknagik
SUBJ: History of Raymond Conquest, Elder of Aleknagik
DATE: March 23, 2023

Hi Kay,

Here is a brief history of Raymond Conquest, our elder of Aleknagik, passed away on 04/24/2017; he would have been 98 years old.

Raymond Conquest was originally from Bethel Area; he was born in a little village called "Apqa" which became an abandoned town. His mother passed away when Raymond was a young child, he was raised by an elderly couple. Raymond later ended up at the Catholic Orphanage at Holy Cross, AK; he ran away from the Orphanage at the age of 11 years old. When he was 13-14 years old, he caught a steam ship (ferry) from Bethel to Dillingham. Raymond was a hard worker. He worked various jobs when he was young to support himself; he said he was making \$10-\$20.00 per month, and lived in a little one room shack throughout the year with his friends. Later on he started working as a heavy equipment operator for the State of Alaska DOT building a State highway from Dillingham to Aleknagik which is now called Lake Aleknagik Road, or better known as the "Gateway to Wood Tikchik State Park". Later on he worked as a Caretaker at Nerka Lodge which is better known as "Second Lake" and had a dog team he used in the winter to travel, hunt and trap. He met his wife Esther during this time and she later moved to Caretake with him. He got his Commercial Fishing License and purchased his first fishing vessel, the "Ricky T", soon after he purchased the fishing vessel, "Gypsy". Raymond and Esther always fished until the very end of the season like in August. After they were done fishing between Nushagak and Kwichak, he would transfer to Togiak and fish until the season ended. One time one of our nieces said she was going to send a message to them over KDLG Radio and say "Quit tryna fish, come home and pick berries". Everyone missed them when they were gone. After fishing season, they would go up the lakes to put up spawned out reds. And then camping to moose hunt during the season. In the spring, Raymond snared squirrels and this is what his wife, Esther used to make parkas and dolls with; she was well known in the Bristol Bay Region for her skills and crafts and won many first and second place ribbons.

Raymond was very instrumental, and played a very big part in getting our Aleknagik Woodriver Bridge which was completed in October 2015. I strongly feel the bridge be named Raymond Conquest Bridge. Raymond deserves to be recognized as he and his wife, Esther transported hundreds of people back and forth from Aleknagik to Dillingham. If there was an emergency, it was always Esther and Raymond taking people to the hospital any time of the day or night. And, if there was a death, Raymond and Esther were always there to comfort people and buy groceries for them for weeks. They were a big support to the community. And, Raymond's comments will never be forgotten, he said "I will fight for that bridge until I die". During the City of Aleknagik 2015 Bridge Ceremony, the City of Aleknagik had him conclude the ceremony by letting Raymond be the first one to officially and legally cross the bridge with his old Blue Chevy Truck. Because of his

determination and his faith, Aleknagik sleeps better now because we can safely cross that bridge anytime with our vehicles.

In conclusion, I would like to add a verse that is so fitting for Raymond: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith": II Timothy 4:7.

Jane Gottschalk

Council Member, City of Aleknagik