



Alaska State Legislature

1976

Source:

HCR 134

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 134

Paying tribute to the memory of Howard Rock.

BE IT RESOLVED

BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS Howard Rock, one of this state's and the nation's most distinguished Native Americans, has died; and

WHEREAS Howard Rock was born in Point Hope, Alaska; was raised in the proud tradition of his Eskimo forefathers, Alaska's great whalers; gained his Western education at schools in White Mountain, Alaska, and the University of Washington; became skilled in displaying his talents in the art form of both his traditional heritage and that of the Caucasian Americans and their European forebears; began a career as a commercial artist which was interrupted by military service in World War II in both North Africa and Italy; returned to Point Hope to paint the scenes of his childhood, vivid paintings depicting traditional Eskimo life and the animals which share the harsh land; and established himself with a respected reputation as an Alaskan artist before his 50th birthday; and

WHEREAS, in his later years, at an age when few men would venture a new and different career, Howard Rock thought instead of his people and his land, and turned to the written word; in 1962 he founded the Tundra Times, a newspaper destined to become, under his leadership, the principal media spokesman for the Alaska Native movement, urging and inspiring many of Alaska's diverse peoples to seek a resolution of the claims of Alaska's Native population, which resulted in the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act by Congress in 1971; and

WHEREAS, under Howard Rock's leadership, the Tundra Times has been characterized by fairness and friendship for all segments of Alaska's diverse peoples and cultures; and

WHEREAS, Howard Rock, articulating the goals and aspirations of the Alaska Native people far beyond the borders of the Great Land, generated an understanding of its uniqueness and of its peoples and their problems, in a manner easily understood throughout the United States and much of the world; and

WHEREAS, Howard Rock led the Tundra Times from the struggles of birth in 1962 to a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1975, and earned for himself well-deserved recognition and many honors; and

WHEREAS, Howard Rock was also, in his own quiet way, a teacher of the men and women who worked with him, or aided his causes, or engaged him in debate; teaching through his example and concern artists, journalists, community leaders, businessmen and elected officials throughout Alaska, all of whom owe him a lifelong debt of gratitude; and

WHEREAS, Howard Rock, a good man as well as a great man, was a close and trusted friend to many Alaskans;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that in paying tribute to the memory of a man who has met his last newspaper deadline and has laid down his brush and palette for the last time, its members know that no resolution could adequately acknowledge the contributions Howard Rock made to his native state and all its people, but the Legislature acknowledges a great debt and, now, a great void; in mourning his passing, we can think of no more meaningful tribute to Howard than to characterize him as: leader and spokesman; painter of note, journalist by choice and artist as both; a good man and a good friend - a true Alaskan.

COPIES of this Resolution shall be sent to his sister Helen Seveck of Fairbanks, to his brother Eebrulik Rock of Anchorage, to his nieces Mae Jacobson of Kotzebue and Mary Dirks of Fairbanks, to his nephew Sam Nash of Point Hope, to his niece Judy Nash of Point Hope, and to the Tundra Times.