



Alaska State Legislature

1976

Source:

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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Honoring the memory of a distinguished Alaskan, the late
B. D. Stewart.

BE IT RESOLVED

BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

A distinguished Alaskan, B. D. Stewart, 1878-1976, has died.

B. D. Stewart was born in Missoula, Montana in 1878 to a pioneer missionary family. He received his mining engineering degree in 1902 from the University of Montana. He subsequently worked with the U. S. Geological Survey and as a mining engineer in the Pacific Northwest. He came to Alaska as a consulting engineer for the Alaska-Juneau Gold Mining Company in Juneau and established his reputation as an engineer for his work on the design and the construction of the main tunnel of the A-J mine -- an engineering feat of recognized complexity at that time. Thereafter he worked as a consulting engineer in the territory.

In 1919 the post of Territorial Mine Inspector was created and he served in that position and as ex officio Labor Commissioner from 1919 until 1935, when the Legislature created the Department of Mines. He was the first commissioner, continuing his more than 30 years of service promoting mining safety, furthering geological survey work in cooperation with the federal agencies, and establishing the first prospector aid program to bring financial and technical assistance to miners. A recognized leader in the mining industry, B. D. Stewart retired from territorial service in 1949 having served under Governors Riggs, Bone, Parks, Troy and Gruening.

In addition to his official positions in the territory he served as superintendent of the Sulzer copper mine on Prince of Wales Island during World War I, worked for the establishment of

the Pet 4 Naval Petroleum Reserve, and the development and use of Alaskan coal resources by the military bases during World War II. B. D. Stewart was an activist in community and territorial affairs.

He was an early promoter of the concept of public planning and the creation of a territorial Department of Labor. While mayor of Juneau in 1916 the first major school structure was built in the community, and he was even then promoting the construction of a Juneau-Douglas bridge. A lifelong enthusiast for libraries, he was in the forefront of the community efforts for public libraries in Juneau and Sitka. B. D. and Mrs. Stewart made their home in Sitka beginning in 1953 and he continued his enthusiasm for public service there during his retirement years. He was elected from Sitka as a delegate to the 1955-56 Alaska Constitutional Convention where his knowledge of natural resource matters was extensively used. In 1966, at the age of 88, he is reported to have acknowledged that he was too old to continue shoveling snow so he retired to a less rigorous climate.

B. D. Stewart represented the finest traditions of public service in Alaska along with a pride in his profession and a zest for living. He joined with others in mostly unsung efforts to build the territory and move it towards statehood and the future.

The Legislature joins the State of Alaska in honoring the memory of B. D. Stewart, a distinguished Alaskan.

The condolences of the Legislature are respectfully extended to Mrs. B. D. Stewart, Sr. and the sons and daughters: B. D. Stewart, Jr. and John E., both of Seattle, Washington; Jeannette of Portland, Oregon; Mary Swithinbank of Cambridge, England; and Judge Thomas B. Stewart of Juneau.