



HERBERT ROY SMELCER

Former Juneau resident Herbert Roy Smelcer, 59, died of leukemia on Jan. 12, 2004, in Seattle.

He was born May 15, 1944, in Palmer to Charles and Mary Smelcer. After completing high school, he first joined the Army National Guard and then the Army, serving a tour in Germany. He was a committed activist and supporter of Alaska Native rights and among those many dedicated Native leaders who fought for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. He signed the 8a congressional amendment with President Ford. In 1997, he received an associate's degree in business from Prince William Sound Community College. Over the course of 25 years, he served as president of Ahtna Native Corporation, as Land Manager for Ahtna's 1.2 million acres, as president of one of its subsidiaries, and as interim superintendent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Interior Office. He was a resident of Tazlina at the time of his death.

His family wrote, "Herbert was kind, loving, generous and forgiving. A model of what a man should be. He was well-known across the state for his kindness, generosity and fun-loving nature. A role model for other Native leaders, Herb always placed the needs of his people before his own."

His mother, Mary Smelcer Wood, recently preceded him in death.

He is survived by his children, Matthew Smelcer, and his wife, Brandy of Anchorage, Vincent Smelcer of Anchorage; his brothers and sisters; Joyce Huennekens of San Antonio, Texas, Charles and Carol Smelcer of Juneau, Clarence and Martha Smelcer of Fairbanks, and Karen Johns and John Craig of Wasilla; his nephews and nieces, Darren Huennekens, Lisa Olson, Lana Weers, Laura and Lloyd Sweet, Linda and Don Liles, John and Pamela Smelcer, Clarence Smelcer, Jr., Donna and Danny Stepp, Michael Johns, Cassandra and Rae Walsh; many cousins; and his dog, Timber.

A visitation service will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, followed by a memorial service at 6 p.m. There will be a visitation at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23, at Kluti-Kaah Community Hall in Copper Center. A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, in Copper Center, followed by a traditional Potlatch.