

# THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE



SPONSORS APPROVAL:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Bert Stedman.

## In Memoriam

### \* SENATOR RICHARD ELIASON \*

The members of the Twenty-seventh Alaska State Legislature join with the entire state of Alaska to honor the life and service of former state Senator Richard "Dick" Eliason, who passed away on April 3, 2011, at the age of 85. Eliason will be remembered for his leadership, his dedication to the state of Alaska, and his warm, friendly personality.

Eliason was born in Seattle, Washington, on October 14, 1925, to George and Elsie Eliason. As a small child, he moved to Alaska with his family, and grew up in Port Alexander and Sitka. In 1950, he married Betty May Gemmell and together they had five children: Greta, George, Ida, Richard, Jr. and Stanley. Betty passed away in 1981. In 1983, Dick married Patricia McConnell.

Eliason served in the U.S. Navy during WWII, was a commercial fisherman for nearly 70 years, and also worked for many years as a pipefitter.

Eliason had a long history of distinguished public service. At the local level, he served as an assemblyman and mayor of his home town of Sitka. At the state level, he served as a member of the Alaska House of Representatives from 1968-1970 and 1972-1980, and as a member of the Alaska State Senate from 1980-1992. His senate district included Sitka and the smaller coastal communities from one end of the Southeast Alaska Panhandle to the other. During his years in the Legislature, Eliason served terms as senate president, chair of the Senate Rules Committee, chair of the Legislative Council, chair of the Senate Special Committee on Fisheries, and chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Department of Fish and Game budget. He also served on the Senate Finance Committee and the House and Senate Resources Committees.

During his two decades of service in the Legislature, Eliason advocated tirelessly on behalf of careful management Alaska's fishery resources. He developed a statewide reputation as an effective champion of Alaska's fishery resources and commercial fishing. Perhaps his most well-known achievement in office was gaining passage of legislation to protect Alaska's wild salmon stocks by prohibiting finfish farming in Alaska, a law passed in 1990 that is still in effect. He was also instrumental in creating a statutory priority for sustained yield of wild salmon stocks in Alaska, a guiding principle in the successful management of Alaska's abundant sustainable salmon fisheries today.

In recognition of his exceptional contributions to the health of wild salmon resources, Eliason was honored in 2006 by being the first Alaskan and first commercial fisherman to be a nominee for the "Wild Salmon Hall of Fame," established by the Pacific Northwest Salmon Center.

The Twenty-seventh Alaska Legislature joins the family and friends of Dick Eliason to honor the life and service of this great Alaskan and to mourn his passing.

MIKE CHENAULT  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

GARY STEVENS  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SEN. BERT STEDMAN  
PRIME SPONSOR

Date

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