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Oil politics

Man standing next to the trans-Alaska pipeline.

There's an old political cliché that most folks associate with the Watergate scandal: "Follow the money."

In Alaska, the statement should be amended to, "Follow the oil."

When the oil began to flow through the recently completed trans-Alaska pipeline on June 20, 1977, that's exactly what Alaskans did.

Oil was the new crowned king and has pretty much remained the dominant element in Alaska's political and business life ever since.

Over the last 50 years oil has driven Alaskan politics more than any other industry in the state's history. Through taxes and fees levied by the state, it has contributed billions to the Alaskan economy and billions to the Alaska State Treasury.

There also is the Permanent Fund (more on this later), a product of, and a tribute to, the genius of Governor Jay Hammond, who spearheaded an effort that placed on the Alaska ballot a requirement for a certain amount of the oil revenue to be sequestered away into a savings fund. From the interest off that fund there would be an annual distribution to legal residents of Alaska based on the number of years they had lived there. The principal was to remain forever sacrosanct. It was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of Alaska and over the years has placed billions into the pockets of Alaskans.

One has to wonder just where the state would be today if the liquid gold had not been discovered.

When ARCO hit the jackpot by drilling a producing well, it set off the kind of frenzy that hadn't been seen in Alaska since the early gold rush days. People in the city of Fairbanks, in particular, smelled the roses of seduction and started making grandiose plans to be the lead jumping off point for supplying those constructing the pipeline and those building the oil industry complex at Prudhoe Bay.

Over 1,200 companies registered to do business in Alaska or bid on the state's first lease sale, on September 10, 1969, which

brought into the state coffers almost a billion dollars. Alaskan legislators began discussing other ways to tax and/or access this revenue stream with additional severance taxes topping the list.

The oil industry flooded Juneau with lobbyists and lawyers, all charged to minimize the bite out of their corporate earnings that the legislature seemed to be planning. The industry tolerates some taxes but when in their opinion things start to look too confiscatory, they draw the line. Much of the impetus for more and higher taxation stemmed from wild guesses regarding the reserve size.

Estimates of the size of the reserve varied widely but eventually the number 9.6 billion barrels seemed to become the accepted figure.

The major oil companies initially made many mistakes, but they did get one thing correct: They were going nowhere without a comprehensive resolution to the various native land claims which at that time were still being ignored. Without a resolution they knew there would always be an unacceptable cloud on their title.

Almost three years after the discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil field, the major oil companies helped drive an apparently successful settlement, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) with Alaska's natives and Eskimos that obtained most of the Natives' major goals: more than 40 million acres of land primarily selected from lands adjacent to their villages; over $900 million in direct payments; the formation of 13 Native-run regional corporations and a royalty on future mineral revenues that gave them a stake in the state's economic future.

Despite appearances, the bill did not settle everything. Mary Clay Berry in her book (*The Alaska Pipeline: The Politics of Oil and Native Land Claims*) quotes then-Idaho Republican Senator Len B. Jordan stating at an informal Senate hearing on proposed amendments to ANCSA only 90 days old, "That isn't much of a bill we wrote." Montana colleague, Democratic Senator Lee Metcalf, reportedly whispered back, "That was a lawsuit we wrote."

Compounding the native claims process was the fact that Congress, in the process of making Alaska the 49th state in late 1958, had settled on a large grant of land to the state to assist Alaska in achieving its economic independence. The state was granted 103

million acres of federal lands – an unprecedented grant to any new state in the history of the nation.

While many Alaskans felt the state ought to be able to be first in line, Alaska's natives felt their selections should be first. While this issue was being debated the Department of the Interior, under Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, instituted in 1967 a land freeze that stopped all forms of federal withdrawals so as to preserve the status quo. The move was decidedly unpopular with most Alaskans.

The Statehood Admission Act also granted the state an unprecedented share of mineral lease proceeds generated off of federal lands. Most western states received 37.5 percent, the federal government received 10 percent and the remaining 52.5 percent would go to a federal irrigation and land reclamation fund. Alaska, however, was to receive 90 per cent.

Indeed, if there was one interest group in Alaska other than oil that seemed to fare well through out the entire process, it was the Alaska mining industry. Well organized and well led, it was able to protect, and in fact enhance, its presence and its rights. Their lobbyists in both Juneau and D.C. were tough, effective advocates.

The fight was on.

It was in this period that the fight over Alaska entered my life.

On January 1, 1971, I began work in Washington, D.C., for a small independent news bureau owned and operated by A. Robert Smith. Smith was the long-time D.C. correspondent for a string of Oregon newspapers including the *Oregonian*, the *Eugene Register-Guard*, the *Medford Mail Tribune*, the *Salem Statesman* and Bud Forrester's papers in Pendleton and Astoria. From time to time he also, on a "spot news" basis, was retained by *The Lewiston Morning Tribune*. Smith is the author of several fine books including the definitive biography of Wayne Morse (*Tiger in the Senate*), the iconoclastic United States senator from Oregon noted for switching parties and, along with Alaska Senator Ernest Gruening, one of the only two Senate votes against President

Lyndon Johnson's request for passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

Smith recruited me away from the *Spokane Chronicle* in December of 1970 to join his news bureau and take the lead responsibility for covering what went on in D.C. for the *Anchorage Daily News*, the *Ketchikan Daily News* and the *Sitka Sentinel*.

I jumped at the chance to go to Washington, D.C., at the age of 23 to be a reporter on the scene, and was especially fascinated by what was happening in Alaska at the time.

Working for Bob and Kay Fanning, who then owned the Anchorage morning newspaper, and for Lew Williams who owned the papers in Ketchikan and Sitka, was also pleasant because they recognized how much of Alaska's future was being determined in the halls of Congress. Almost all my copy was banner headlines in those papers.

The *Anchorage Daily News*, the morning newspaper, ran a distant second to the *Anchorage Times*, the afternoon newspaper, in circulation. Its owner, Bob Atwood, was considered to be one of the most influential people in the state. He was extremely involved in Republican politics and enjoyed unparalleled access to the governor's office and the congressional offices. Having chaired the Alaska Statehood Commission, he considered himself to literally be the "father of Alaska."

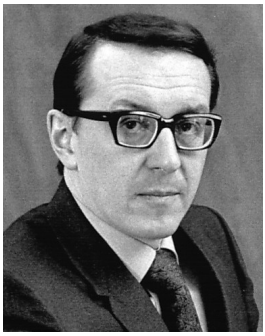
Atwood had retained the Griffiin/Larabbee News Bureau to cover D.C. for his paper a couple of years before I arrived. Up to that point Mary Clay Berry, who had been assigned to the beat, had no real competition. We enjoyed a friendly rivalry.

Because of the importance of resolving the native land claims issue the political environment I walked into in January of 1971 was charged and electric, and the congressional delegation involved in it was one of the most colorful in the nation.

I first met 38-year-old Nick Begich, who had won the seat in the November 1970, election. The congressman-at-large was an ambitious school guidance counselor, teacher and for eight years (1962-1970) a state senator in the Alaska Legislature. He won the Congressional seat by defeating the winner of the Republican

primary, future U.S. Senator and Alaska governor Frank Murkowski, in the 1970 election.

Begich was a family man who with his wife, Pegge, had six children. The oldest, Mark, later became a mayor of Anchorage before being elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008. The son was then narrowly defeated for re-election in 2014 by the Republican candidate, Dan Sullivan, despite having earned high marks for his job performance. His handicap was he was a Democrat.



Nick Begich

The elder Begich, the congressman, was born in Minnesota in 1932. Both his parents had immigrated to America from Croatia. He appeared to be on his way to an academic or teaching career when he and his young family moved to Alaska in the late 1950s. From teaching he turned to being a guidance counselor, and at the time of his election to the state senate in 1962 was serving as the superintendent of the Fort Richardson schools. The "political bug" bit Begich hard and few were surprised when he went for a seat in the state senate, and won. He surprised some observers again when, eight years later, he won Alaska's sole congressional seat.

Begich came across as a man on the move even in a world like D.C. where most everyone seems to be on the make. Even to a greenhorn reporter like myself, it did appear he first analyzed everything he voted on in terms of whether it would help or hinder his plans to challenge in the 1974 Democratic Senate primary the incumbent, Senator Mike Gravel. Not surprisingly,

Gravel did not trust Begich and there was little contact between the offices.

Begich, while in the Alaska legislature, had a reputation for being a hothead, temperamental and disrespectful to his seniors. Someone (probably Ted Stevens) took him aside and explained that kind of behavior might go unpunished in Juneau, but it wouldn't fly in D.C. Begich did a complete reversal, showing great deference to his seniors, especially the thin-skinned chair of the House Interior committee, Representative Wayne Aspinall from Colorado. Begich was almost too obsequious.

Begich and his legislative aide, Guy Martin, carefully mapped out where they thought every member of Congress was on their issues, and whether Begich had courted them and/or knew them. Those Begich did not know he would take time to sit close to on the House floor and make their acquaintance.

Every few weeks, Martin would organize an information "dump" of some sort and would blanket all the other members' offices with information about some aspect of Alaska and its economy. Begich did all of this without ever expressing any personal animosity towards those that might disagree.

He even won grudging compliments from his various adversaries.

Besides Begich, the key players in the House side of the debate on the Alaskan lands issue included Representative Morris Udall, D-Arizona and Representative John Seiberling, D-Ohio. Other House members playing important roles were Representative Sid Yates, D-Illinois; Representative John Saylor, D-Pennsylvania; Representative Norm Dicks, D-Washington; Representative Lloyd Meeds, D-Washington; and, the future House speaker, Tom Foley, D-Washington.

Begich, however, will most be remembered as the congressman who disappeared in a plane with Majority Leader Hale Boggs from Louisiana. Boggs was campaigning with Begich and making appearances at several fundraisers for Begich. On October 16, 1972, flying in a Cessna 310 between Juneau and Anchorage, their plane disappeared without a trace. To this day it remains a mystery.

Begich's disappearance occurred just three weeks before the election. This was too short a time period to produce a certificate declaring him dead and the seat vacant. Alaska law required he remain on the ballot. Thus, State Senator Don Young, the Republican nominee from Fort Yukon, was defeated in November by a deceased incumbent, losing by a 44% to 56% margin. Ironically, this first defeat was the only congressional race Young ever lost; as of this writing he is the longest serving Republican member of the House, having been in Congress for 42 years so far.

Young went on to win the special election in March of 1973, defeating Democrat Emil Notti, 51% to 49%. Notti was one of the leaders of the Alaska Federation of Natives and its first president. His near election was the closest any Native candidate was to come to being elected to a major office in Alaska until Byron Mallott won the office of Lt. Governor in 2014.

Don Young

While Young has held Alaska's at-large seat ever since, periodically he has had close races. His closest call came in a tight primary race in 2008 against Lt. Governor Sean Parnell, who came within 305 votes of defeating Young. Parnell went on to inherit the governor's office when Sarah Palin resigned in July of 2009. He then won a full term in 2010 but his bid to win a second full term in 2014 was thwarted when independent Bill Walker, a popular former mayor of Valdez, and Byron Mallott, the Democratic candidate for governor, formed an independent ticket with Mallott taking the second spot. They succeeded in narrowly

beating Parnell and no doubt their independent ticket was aided by the support of former Governor Palin. She eschewed her former number two because in her view and that of many Alaskans, Parnell had cozied up too close to the oil and gas industry by supporting additional tax relief for them.

Young, on the other hand, has always credited his early success at holding the seat to his strong support for the trans-Alaska pipeline, about which Begich was initially ambivalent.

Young is a unique character in and of himself. He sometimes has struck people as bufoonish, but he's also a genuine Alaskan original – by occupation a trapper, a riverboat captain, a teacher – and he's smart like a fox. Few would have dreamed he would become the longest serving Republican of the House, which he became with the start of the 2015 Congressional session.

As he grew in seniority, like Ted Stevens, he became more and more skilled at the appropriations game.

His name became synonymous with earmarks, single issue items attached to must pass bills with no relation to the context of the bill It reached the point where he successfully had an earmark of $110 million literally for a much-discussed bridge to nowhere. Supposedly built to someday connect with a road from an island airport to the nearby community, it stands as a monument to power and seniority in the House.

He also knew how to delay legislation by offering amendment after amendment to bills such as the Alaska Native Claims legislation and later to the Alaska National Interest lands legislation.

There's a roguish charm about him, though, that makes it hard to dislike him. He has a great sense of humor and clearly enjoys the life of a congressman.

Young and Andrus would josh around with each other, call each other names, the way Andrus would also josh around with Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson.

Andrus told one interviewer a few years after the d-2 debate that Young loved to call him names. He once told Andrus that he'd love to get him up to Fairbanks and "By God, Cece, there won't be enough left of you for dog meat!" To which Andrus replied, "I'll be

in Fairbanks and by God, we'll see!" Of course when Andrus stayed in Fairbanks during the d-2 media tour, he was treated cordially and with respect. No one threatened him or yelled at him.

Alaska's junior senator in 1971, Democrat Mike Gravel (gruh-vel), was a completely different story.

Born in Massachusetts, he entered the Army after high school. Upon receiving his honorable discharge, he attended and graduated with a degree in General Studies from Columbia. He headed for Alaska with the clear intention of running for public office. His narrative was that he first drove cabs in Anchorage before getting into the real estate business.

He enjoyed enough success to be able to take the time to run for a seat in 1963 in the Alaska House and win. Two years later he stunned the state by winning the speaker's seat amid charges that he had lied to several folks and the incumbent speaker charged that Gravel had double-crossed him. This reputation would dog him throughout his public career.

In 1966, Mike Gravel sensed the vulnerability of incumbent Senator Ernest Gruening. Emphasizing his youth and energy, he spent months visiting various Native villages and the smaller communities across the state.

Following a carefully prepared campaign game plan, with just a few weeks before the 1968 primary, he unleashed the first total television saturation campaign the state had ever seen. It included a half hour biographical piece that showed over and over on all the state's TV stations as well as a deluge of ads. It worked. Gravel upset Gruening in the August primary.

A key aspect of Gravel's "bush" strategy was capitalizing on Alaska Native anger with the aging incumbent for his less than strong support for their land claims. The early time he had spent in flying to most all of the Native settlements around the state paid real dividends. With one-sixth of the population and a tendency to vote as a bloc, it was a smart move on Gravel's part.

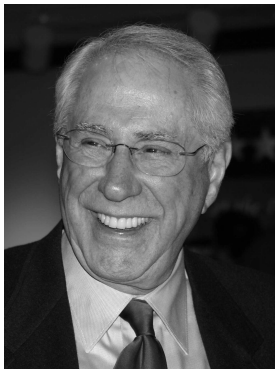
Ernest Gruening

Many Alaskans were either employed directly by the military or were economic beneficiaries of the military presence. Thus, Gruening's vote against President Lyndon Johnson's Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which gave him the "authority" to wage war against the North Vietnamese, was not a popular move.

Today, Gruening, and Oregon Senator Wayne Morse are revered by folks in the Peace Movement and descendants of Vietnam anti-war protests. At the time, though, it clearly was a major contributing factor to Gruening's defeat.

Gruening contributed, however, by not taking the Gravel challenge seriously until it was too late.

In 1966, Gravel had hired Joseph Napolitano, the first of the many masterful "political consultants" who came into vogue in the 60s and multiplied in D.C. like rabbits. They plotted the blitzkrieg media campaign that overwhelmed Gruening.



Mike Gravel

Gruening did not know what hit him nor did he take his defeat lying down. The 81-year old former territorial governor of Alaska mounted a write-in campaign as an independent, but it was too little too late. In November, Gravel won the seat with 45% to Republican banker Elmer Rasmuson's 37% and Greuning's 18%.

In one of those ironic twists of fate, Ted Stevens, who had narrowly lost the GOP primary to Rasmuson in August, became Alaska's senior senator when on December 24, 1968, Governor Walter J. Hickel appointed Stevens to replace Alaska's other original U.S. senator, Bob Bartlett.

Appointing Stevens was the smartest thing Hickel ever did for the people of Alaska. Essentially, he also went back on his word, having promised Carl Brady, one of his oldest friends and strongest supporters, the first vacancy that occurred in the delegation. Brady had also been a major fund-raiser for Hickel.

In later years, Hickel said the first person to weigh in for Stevens was none other than President-elect Richard Nixon, who Hickel bumped into at a reception at D.C.'s venerable Shoreham Hotel on December 11 just after he received word of Bartlett's death of a heart attack in Cleveland. Hickel was in D.C. at the request of the Nixon transition team because Nixon was planning on naming some of his cabinet choices the next day, including that of Hickel as Interior secretary.

Hickel quickly walked over to the President-elect to give him the news and Nixon immediately mentioned he knew Ted Stevens. According to Hickel, Nixon first asked him what he was going to do. Hickel said there would be three people on his short list: Elmer Rasmuson, the banker who had beaten Stevens in the August Republican primary; Hickel's long-time good friend, Carl Brady, and Stevens. Nixon volunteered that he'd met Ted and then point blank asked Hickel if he had the courage to appoint Stevens. Nixon in effect was telling Hickel he couldn't go wrong by naming Stevens. Hickel ultimately took the unsolicited advice, but not before having both Brady and Stevens come by his

Anchorage home for a visit in which Brady graciously let Hickel off the hook by voluntarily stepping aside.

Hickel announced his selection of Stevens on December 23, which was 10 days before Gravel was to take office. Stevens, who went on to serve longer than any other Republican ever served in the U.S. Senate, was the senior senator, and Gravel the junior.

As I did my daily walk through the offices of all three members of the delegation, Gravel was the least available and the most distant. He left it to his chief of staff, Joe Rothstein, to talk to me. Stevens and Begich, on the other hand, always insisted on seeing me every day when I came by.

Stevens was notorious for having a trigger temper and more than once he would charge out of his inner office and lay into me for not getting a story quite right or quoting him exactly. He paid very close attention to how he was portrayed in every newspaper. Unlike Gravel, he had folks in his state offices clipping announcements of baby births, weddings and graduations. A new Alaskan mother, for example, would receive a package with a book courtesy of the Library of Congress on the ins and outs of motherhood along with a congratulatory note from the senator. He mined agencies throughout government that might have surplus books or brochures on subjects he thought might be of interest to his constituents and literally inundated Alaskans. Gravel had nothing like it.

Gravel did have stars in his eyes. One could see Gravel thought destiny had greater things in store for him. Two incidents stand out from the two years I covered Alaskan affairs.

The first was Gravel's obtaining in mid-1971 from some source the so-called "Pentagon Papers," classified documents detailing the many failings of America's Vietnam War policies. Gravel spent hours reading these into the Congressional record, breaking down several times and crying. He received lots of national publicity but it is debatable how much good it did his national image or his image in Alaska.

The second incident, in August of 1972, had to be one of the more embarrassing moments for the citizens of any state in the annals of political history. It came at the Democratic National Convention at Miami Beach on the sultry, humid August night that

South Dakota's George McGovern was to accept his party's nomination for president and deliver his acceptance speech.

One of the many "seconding" the nomination speeches was an Alaskan native female who was a friend of Senator Gravel's. Instead of delivering her one minute remarks, she yielded her spot and the convention microphone to Senator Gravel who had suddenly strode onto the platform. Much to the consternation of Senator McGovern and his campaign manager, Gary Hart, Gravel stunned the convention by nominating himself to be the vice presidential running mate on the ticket. He demanded that the McGovern forces open up the nomination for vice president to the entire convention. Gravel's plea to be nominated to be McGovern's running mate fell on deaf ears, but his antics caused convention proceedings to be delayed by several hours, enough so that when McGovern rose to give his acceptance speech it was well past prime time all across America. Neither McGovern nor Hart ever forgave Gravel and for many Alaskans it was one embarrassment too many. One could mark Gravel's decline from that point on.

Earlier that year, Gravel also ostensibly had written his political manifesto, *Citizen Power*, the near traditional book that many presidential wanna-be's use as a pretext to travel the country before formally declaring their candidacy. Not surprisingly, the banal reworking of various speeches by Gravel was universally panned.

The irony is that McGovern's selections left people scratching their heads almost as much as they would have had McGovern acquiesced.

When Gravel sought re-election in 1974, two things saved him. First, as noted earlier, at a crucial point in the 1973 debate over whether to authorize the trans-Alaska pipeline, Gravel for once worked with Stevens and the newly elected Congressman-at-large, Don Young. Gravel authored an amendment that immunized the proposed pipeline from further legal challenges for any reason which led to construction (read lots of jobs) getting underway almost immediately. To his credit, Gravel carefully navigated the amendment through the Senate and when it came up

for a vote on July 17, 1973, the measure was deadlocked in a 49-49 tie vote. Vice President Spiro Agnew dramatically cast the tie-breaking vote and work on the pipeline soon started. Gravel demonstrated that he could, on rare occasions, be a workhorse, not a show horse. He could also be a team player, if he so desired.

The other break Gravel received was that the GOP nominated State Senator C.R. Lewis, a national officer of the John Birch Society, to be Gravel's opponent. As conservative and as libertarian as most Alaskans are, the state's voters just could not put a John Bircher in the Senate. While Gravel's support was waning considerably, he rolled over Lewis, 58% to 42%.

Unfortunately, he read this as a mandate to continue his mercurial ways.

The most fascinating member of the delegation, and the one I came to know best, was the temperamental – some would say feisty, ornery and volatile – Ted Stevens.

Born in Indianapolis in 1923, he was 48 years old when we first met. Little did I realize then he would go on to be the longest serving Republican senator in American history until finally defeated in 2008 at the age of 85 by Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich, the eldest son of the former congressman.

Many observers believe Stevens would have won even that race had he not been subjected to a charge from the Justice department for accepting gifts from friends and interest groups for questionable favorable votes on matters of their interest. It was later revealed, after the election, that the prosecution willfully withheld a key piece of evidence from Stevens' defense counsel.

A judge reprimanded the Justice Department for this egregious breach and the charges against Stevens were dropped. This of course happened after the election Stevens narrowly lost.

Ted Stevens

Stevens's story of his up-by-the-bootstraps upbringing by several relatives, from Indiana to California, is a remarkable tale of diligence and perseverance overcoming all odds. There are some fascinating contradictions in his life today compared to his early years. For example, he had on display in his office a surf board. Try to relate the image of a serious, somber, sober, often humorless senator with that of a 19-year-old surfer boy riding the waves off of Santa Monica. Imagine some surfing song by the Beach Boys playing in the background. Then picture the young Ted Stevens on the surf board! It's hard to imagine.

That Alaskans kept returning Stevens to the Senate should not surprise either, for as he grew in seniority his power and ability to bring home the bacon played a crucial role in helping Alaska and Alaskans develop the infrastructure necessary to build a diverse economy in the 21st century. Over the years, Stevens directed billions of federal dollars to his adopted state.

It can safely be said, and has been noted elsewhere many times, no other senator in American history has ever had so central a place in his state's public and economic life for so long a period of time. A few senators, like the long-serving Robert Byrd of West Virginia and Warren Magnuson from Washington state, might approach Steven's level, but "Uncle Ted", as he was affectionally called by Alaskans, was truly in a class by himself.

His delivering the goods began in earnest when he, along with Gravel, delivered the legislation that allowed construction to proceed on the trans-Alaska pipeline, which cost several billion

dollars to build. It stretched 900 miles, from Alaska's North Slope and Prudhoe Bay, where oil was discovered in 1968, to the ice free port of Valdez on the southern coast.

Stevens's considerable accomplishments are best left for a solid biographer to recount. As one who covered him closely for two years, though, I knew he was a hard worker. Unfortunately, he was hard on his staff – a demanding perfectionist with a tart tongue and a sharp mind; he went through several chiefs of staff during those two years.

One, George Bullock, originally from Portland (and a member of the national champion American Legion baseball that had Mickey Lolich as its star pitcher), attended Stanford. Bullock was teaching at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and doing political analysis for the local TV station when Stevens spotted him and wooed him away to D.C.

Unfortunately, I inadvertently contributed to Bullock leaving the senator's employ all too soon. Bullock allowed me to quote him on the record that Stevens might be reconsidering his heretofore hawkish stance on the Vietnam War. Stevens exploded when he read it and read Bullock the riot act. Bullock wouldn't back down since Stevens had indeed speculated aloud to his staff chief that he might be changing into a more dovish stance. They parted company, but fortunately we remained friends.

Beneath Stevens' gruff exterior there was of course a tender-hearted individual deeply devoted to his wife and his children. I'll always remember sitting on the inside steps of his home in Virginia at a Christmas party he held for his staff and a few friends. We just casually chatted about things in general. No one could doubt his deep devotion to improving the welfare of his Alaskan constituents.

Despite his chewing through chiefs-of-staff, for many years his executive secretary, Celia Niemi, stood and stayed loyally by his side.

Stevens had worked in the Department of the Interior for several years before returning to Alaska to be the U.S. Attorney for Alaska. At the end of the Eisenhower Administration he was the solicitor for the Interior Department working closely with then Interior Secretary

Fred Seaton. Thus, he knew much about the workings of the most important department in the government for Alaska.

Stevens also had a way of cultivating his senior colleagues including those across the aisle. He slyly ingratiated himself to West Virginia's long-time senator and Majority Leader Robert Byrd, often giving the Democrat a needed vote on a critical issue.

The upshot was that by the time Cecil Andrus became Interior Secretary in January of 1977, Byrd, too busy with his Majority Leader duties, let Stevens "chair" the Interior Appropriations subcommittee. That's correct: though it was a Democratic-run Senate and a Democratic White House, Andrus and his department answered to a Republican chairman.

Fortunately for the Interior department during Andrus' tenure, on the House side the chair was a superb Democratic congressman from Illinois, Sid Yates. He and his chief of staff, Mary Bain, did a fine job of protecting Andrus during the four years we had to answer to Stevens with regard to the department's budget on the Senate side.

Two of Alaska's early governors played key roles in the ultimate passage of the d-2 lands legislation, also: Former Valdez mayor William A. "Bill" Egan, Alaska's first governor and its fourth governor, Bristol Bay fisherman, bush pilot and guide Jay Hammond.

Egan served from the beginning of statehood on January 3, 1959 to 1966 and again from 1970 to 1974. He was succeeded by Hammond, who served from 1974 to 1982. The two men are easily the most popular governors ever to serve Alaskans.

Egan was instrumental in helping to get the trans-Alaska pipeline bill passed and signed into law in 1973 by President Richard Nixon. Hammond was a critical behind the scenes negotiator with Andrus on the final boundaries of the ANILCA bill.

A former Stevens' staffer, Jack Quisenberry, who ran the senator's Juneau office, told two brief stories revealing Egan's popularity.

Bill Egan

When Egan returned to Juneau to begin his third term there was a bit of a parade from the Juneau Airport into the Capital City. Quisenberry was inside a store as Egan's entourage drove by. One elderly woman, after watching the governor, rushed back into the store and with tears in her eyes, exclaimed to all within hearing, "Bill Egan is back! Bill Egan has returned. Thank God, Bill Egan is back!"

The second story was a description of one of the best, brief 15-second television commercials ever run by any campaign. The ad opened with a Native chief, with weather worn face, sitting on a stool in the studio as a spotlight turns on him. The chief turns and looks right into the camera. He asks a brief rhetorical question then answers it:

"Bill Egan? You don't have to tell me about Bill Egan. I know Bill Egan!"

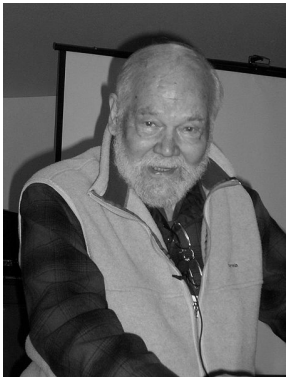
That was it, and pure dynamite as it connected with Alaska voters, many of whom did indeed know Bill Egan.

Egan almost always made a point of dropping by to brief me on his meetings while in Washington. A gentleman, he spoke softly but was always prepared. He did have a nasty chain-smoking habit, and lung cancer finally killed him at the age of 69.

Egan knew oil was going to be a big part of Alaska's future, but it was his Republican successor, Jay Hammond, who is given the lion's share of credit for pushing through the Alaska legislature the idea of diverting a portion of the taxable revenue from the state's

cut and placing it in a Permanent Investment Fund that would be invested conservatively.

Hammond insisted the proposal be placed on the general election ballot, knowing the legislature would be much less likely to tap into the fund for other purposes if the voters had publicly sanctioned that it be held sacrosanct. His real genius came through in the form not only of using (living off of) the interest on the fund and never touching the principal, but in providing every legal resident of Alaska an annual dividend check.



Jay Hammond

Distributed in early December, it fluctuates due to the price of oil, but the fund is worth billions and Alaskans can usually look forward to an annual payment between $1000 and $2000, much of which is plowed back into the local economy.

Of all the Alaskan governors involved in the debate about the future of Alaska and the Alaskan lands legislation, Andrus thought Jay Hammond understood the competing interests and did the best job of maintaining a delicate balancing act.

Andrus felt Hammond was a true conservationist, but had to be careful in how he dealt with the issue recognizing at the time almost 90 percent of Alaska voters were opposed to additional federal designations of parks, refuges and wilderness areas.

Hammond's book, *Tales of a Bush Rat Governor*, is one of the best political autobiographies written by any governor in recent times.

GOVERNORS OF ALASKA

1 William Allen Egan (D) 1959-66
2 Wally Hickel (R) 1966-69
3 Keith Miller (R) 1969-70
4 William Allen Egan (D) 1970-74
5 Jay Hammond (R) 1974-82
6 Bill Sheffield (D) 1982-86
7 Steve Cowper (D) 1986-90
8 Wally Hickel (Alaska Independence/R) 1990-94
9 Tony Knowles (D) 1994-2002
10 Frank Murkowski (R) 2002-06
11 Sarah Palin (R) 2006-09
12 Sean Parnell (R) 2009-14
13 Bill Walker (I) 2014-

Governors Egan and Hammond, as well as Senator Stevens and Congressmen Begich and Young had a special appreciation for some of the many factors that make life in Alaska so much different from the Lower 48. A huge part of their mission in representing their state was educating other members about these differences.

For example, there are very few roads and highways outside of the greater Anchorage area. The primary mode of transportation is by air, often in small bush planes – supercharged tail-dragging Cessna 180s and 185s, Cessna 310s, Beavers, Otters, Grumman Gooses, Aero Commanders, and 80-year-old Douglas DC-3s. Alaska, not surprisingly, has the highest loss of life per air miles traveled in the United States.

Thus, well-equipped airfields with radar and navigation lights are a much higher priority than are roads. Many Alaskans like it this way and they look to their members of congress to provide satellite coverage for telecommunications. Senator Stevens was a huge supporter of public television and public radio in Alaska because he knew the private sector outside of Anchorage would always feel there were not enough numbers to justify investment.

Thus, there are numerous villages throughout Alaska that are truly isolated, and the primary mode of transportation is boats in the summer and snowmobiles in the winter.

Most Alaskans, whether Natives or not, believe they have a constitutional right to hunt and fish where they please, when they please. They term it "subsistence hunting and fishing." Alaska Fish and Game does set seasons and takes, but poaching is commonplace far from authority.

In the early months Andrus was at Interior, he was almost suckered by a member of the National Park Service's Alaska team into proclaiming that there would be *no* hunting in the new national parks being contemplated in the d-2 legislation. After all, hunting was banned in national parks in the Lower 48.

Fortunately, the error was caught and excised from the text before Andrus delivered the speech. He and others then pondered the matter. Native and non-Native subsistence hunting is viewed in much of Alaska as an absolute right.

A compromise of sorts was soon fashioned which allowed for the continuation of subsistence hunting in the new national parks, but no sport hunting. Drafts of the Lands Claims Act started appearing which referenced areas adjacent to and some even within park boundaries to be called park preserves, if the hunting was particularly good in the area.

These often reflected the migratory routes of some species. In other areas, such as McGregor's Orange Hill site, the park preserve designation was adopted because of the numerous dall sheep in and around Orange Hill. Many a plane flew in with hunters who then headed for the hills to try for a trophy to take home. Of course Natives and non-Natives could still hunt in the preserves also.

One very distinctive feature regarding subsistence hunting is that it is not defined as merely a Native right; it also can apply to packers and hunters who have utilized subsistence hunting over the years to supplement their other food.

Even Alaska's constitution mentions the right to subsistence hunt and makes it clear it is not just a Native right. One can see, though, how this can lead to abuses.

Alaska also is far from being a homogeneous culture. Both the Native population and the Caucasian population have had to work at transcending differences and suspicions. Those who can walk and work successfully with both cultures are often viewed with suspicion by both.

Andrus once mentioned that he really wished most of the d-2 land could have been protected as U.S. Forest Service wilderness but that the idea wasn't going to fly in D.C. given the politics in both the nation's capital and in Alaska. Some latter-day commentators believe he is correct. They base their view on the belief that the Forest Service would have spent far less money in managing the park, staffing up and signage than the National Park service.

A friend, Alaskan reporter Craig Medred, once wrote me, "Wilderness in Alaska doesn't need to be managed (despite the millions the park service has spent writing management plans and "patrolling" the backcountry). All it needs is to be protected from roads. And Alaskans, for reasons varied and complicated, have proven themselves extremely good at that over the last 40 years. Maybe too good."

Medred went on to point out a few of the inconsistencies that mark the political scene.

He said most Alaskans would probably be happy now to join in screwing anyone out of anything connected to a mine. Alaska is a different place, some of it much better, some far worse. Tightly controlled mining is now frowned upon; out-of-control four-wheeler access ripping up the backcountry? Yee-haw! Let's go.

Some tourist on the Kenai River taking home a legally taken cooler of red salmon? Way bad.

Dead zones around villages from unregulated hunting; serious overfishing of Chinook in the name of subsistence? Well, you know they need their subsistence . . .

He concluded, "I had great hopes after the D2 debate ended that this state might be able to move forward toward some sort of sensible, sustainable, forward-looking economy. I think I might have been wrong."