

# Election Edition

A special edition newsletter from Sealaska Corporation

## Letter from the CEO

### Honor Those Who Won Our Right to Vote



Chris E. McNeil, Jr.  
President and CEO

“We as Indian people are at the threshold of accomplishing something historic this fall—turning out en masse and making our voices heard by political candidates at national and state levels. We have the power to shape the political landscape in key states. When Indian people vote, Indian issues are addressed. We must accept this challenge.”

— Tex Hall, President,  
National Congress of American Indians

November 2 is Election Day and I would like to take this occasion to urge Sealaska shareholders and descendants to vote, and also remind you of our long and continuing involvement in electoral politics.

#### Three Who Led the Way

Three of our people led the way to gain voting rights and equal rights for Alaska Natives:

- Charley Jones and Tillie Paul Tamaree, both Tlingit, were indicted for trying to vote in 1922 before Native voting rights were established.
- William Paul, Sr., a Tlingit lawyer, successfully defended Jones in court, registered Natives to vote and, in 1924, became the first Alaska Native elected to the legislature.
- Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich, also of the Tlingit Nation, led the battle to pass Alaska’s first anti-discrimination law in 1945.

#### Three Who Seek to Lead Today

Today we have three shareholders running for elective office, two here in Alaska and one in Washington State:

- Albert Kookesh, Sealaska’s board chair and co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives, is running for the Alaska Senate, District C, after having served in the House since 1996.
- William Thomas, Jr., of Klukwan is running for the Alaska State House of Representatives, District 5.
- Dino Rossi is running for governor in Washington State where he served in the State Senate from 1996 to 2003.

We should all take pride in the history of our people’s battle to gain the right to vote and honor their efforts by voting absentee or going to the polls on November 2. Your vote can make a difference.

Sincerely,



Chris E. McNeil, Jr., President and CEO

## Timeline

1912 – Alaska Native Brotherhood is founded

1914 – Alaska Native Sisterhood holds first convention

1924 – Indian Citizenship Act gives American Indians the right to vote

1924 – William Paul, Sr. is the first Alaska Native to win a seat in the Alaska Territorial Legislature

1925 – Alaska Voters' Literacy Act requires all voters to be literate

1936 – Amendments to the Indian Citizenship Act include Alaska Natives

1945 – Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich help to pass the Anti-Discrimination Act

1959 – Alaska becomes the 49th state

1965 – Federal Voting Rights Act solidifies that no person shall be denied the right to vote on account of race or color

1971 – Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) gives settlement to Natives for land taken by the federal government

2004 – Tuesday, November 2 is Election Day. Your vote can make a difference.

# Sealaska Honors Historic Native Leaders

Not all that long ago signs that read “No dogs or Indians allowed” were commonly seen in business establishments across the country. Today, Natives have equal rights thanks to these strong, influential Alaska Native leaders. Their efforts gave us the ability to vote and voice our opinions. Sealaska honors them and urges you to not let their efforts be forgotten—use your right to vote in the upcoming elections.

## Founding Fathers, Alaska Native Brotherhood



Photo courtesy of the Alaska State Library and the Alaska Native Organizations Photograph Collection. Alaska Native Brotherhood Founding Fathers.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) is a nonprofit organization established in 1912. The first charter for ANB was formed by a group of 13 dedicated Native men known today as our Founding Fathers. The Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood have a long list of accomplishments including gaining recognition of Native rights as citizens and helping win the Native right to vote.



Photo courtesy of Alaska State Library and the Alaska Territorial Governors Photograph Collection.  
From L to R: O.D. Cochran, Elizabeth Peratrovich, Governor Gruening (seated) Edward Anderson, Norman Walker and Roy Peratrovich

## William Lewis Paul, Sr.



Photo courtesy of the Alaska State Library and the Alaska Native Organizations Photograph Collection. From L to R: William Paul, Jr.; William Paul, Sr.; and Frederick Paul

In the period after World War I, when racism and segregation were common in the United States, literacy laws were used to limit voting by non-whites, including Indians. In Alaska, it was said that the literacy act was aimed at Tlingit leader William Lewis Paul, Sr., who emerged in the early 1920s as a major force in Alaska politics. Paul helped politicize the ANB and organized illiterate Southeast Native voting. He was also the first Native elected to political office. In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act gave American Indians the right to vote but excluded Alaska Natives. The efforts of ANB and activists such as Paul kept Alaska Native voting rights at the forefront of our country's civil liberties. Finally, in 1936 an amendment was passed giving Alaska Natives the right to vote.

## Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich

In 1945, Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich lobbied for an anti-discrimination bill. Elizabeth responded to arguments opposing the bill by saying, “I would not have expected that I, who am barely out of savagery, would have to remind gentlemen with five thousand years of recorded history behind them of our Bill of Rights.” Her comments moved the Senate and on February 8, 1945, Alaska passed an anti-discrimination law that provided all Alaska Natives full and equal enjoyment of public accommodations.

# Sealaska Recognizes Shareholders Running for Office

On November 2 we encourage all of you to get out and vote. Whomever you choose to vote for, we urge you to make your vote count. We have many shareholders who have made a commitment to public service by running for elective office at the municipal, state and national level across the country. We honor all of these Sealaska shareholders and especially recognize the three shareholders below who will be running for state offices on November 2.

## Albert Kookesh



Representative Albert Kookesh is the Democratic candidate for the Alaska State District C Senate seat. Albert is currently in his fifth term in the District 5 House seat and also owns and operates the Kootznahoo Inlet Lodge with his wife Sally. Born in Juneau, Albert is of the Tlingit Nation and spent his childhood in Angoon. He serves as board chair of Sealaska Corporation and First Alaskans Foundation, and is co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Albert also served as the Alaska Native Brotherhood's grand president from 1990-92 and is a

current Grand Camp member. Albert graduated from the Alaska Methodist University in 1971. He received a law degree from the University of Washington School of Law in 1976, and then moved back to Alaska where he now resides.

Albert and his wife, Sally, live in Angoon, Alaska, and have five children: Elaine, Jaeleen, Reanna, Albert, and Walter.

## Dino Rossi



Dino Rossi is the Republican candidate for Washington State Governor. Dino's mother Eve was Tlingit and Irish and his father John Rossi is a Washington native and the son of Italian immigrants.

Since 1996, Dino has served two consecutive terms as the 5th Legislative District Senator. During his tenure, he served as chairman of the Senate Ways and Means committee, spearheaded legislation to punish drunk drivers and child abusers, secured funding for Hispanic/Latino health clinics and championed funding for the developmentally disabled commu-

nity. Dino and his wife, Terry, live in the Sammamish Plateau near Issaquah, Washington. They have four children: Jake, Joseph, Jillian and Juliauna.

## William Thomas, Jr.

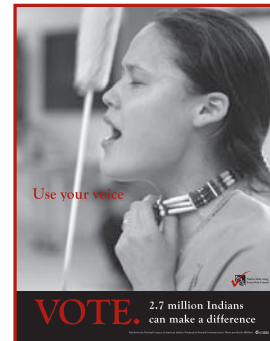


William "Bill" Thomas, Jr., is the Republican candidate for the Alaska District 5 House seat. A fisherman by trade, Bill is of the Tlingit Nation, born and raised in Haines and Klukwan. He is a Vietnam veteran and is currently a director and vice chair of Klukwan, Inc. He is also the director of the Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance, is a former director of the Alaska Federation of Natives Board and Legislative Committee and has been a lobbyist for over 10 years.

Bill and his wife, Joyce Marie, live in Haines, Alaska. They have five children: Rhett, Danny, Gabriel, Cole and Rhiannon.



**Native Vote 2004**  
**Every Vote Counts**



## "No Natives Allowed"

If your parents and grandparents hadn't exercised their right to vote, how much longer might they have read signs posting those three words? Honor your parents and grandparents, exercise your freedom and **VOTE**.

Natives received the right to vote 80 years ago but few exercise the right today. Sealaska would like to recognize the Hoonah and Klukwan communities for their outstanding voter turnout in this year's primary elections. We challenge you to join the ranks of these two Alaska communities and the 2.7 million Indians across the nation seeking to use the power of the ballot to make their voices heard on November 2, 2004.

### **Where to Vote**

Do you know where to go on Nov. 2 to cast your ballot? Here is some helpful information on polling places for west coast voters. For voting information in your state, contact the office of your Secretary of State.

### **Alaska**

Call 1-888-383-8683 or visit [www.gov.state.ak.us/lsgov/elections/polling.htm](http://www.gov.state.ak.us/lsgov/elections/polling.htm) to find your polling place. For further voting information in Alaska, call your regional elections office.

### **Oregon**

Call 1-866-ORE-VOTES or the Oregon Secretary of State at 503-986-1518 for voting information.

### **Washington**

In Washington, elections are administered at the county level. To find your polling place outside of King County, contact your county auditor. Auditor names and phone numbers can be found at [www.sec.state.wa.gov/elections](http://www.sec.state.wa.gov/elections). To find your polling place in King County, call 206-296-1565 or visit [www.metrokc.gov/elections/pollingplace/birthday.aspx](http://www.metrokc.gov/elections/pollingplace/birthday.aspx). Contact the elections office at 1-800-448-4881 for further information.

### **California**

Contact your local elections office or call 1-800-345-VOTE on November 1 and 2 for assistance.

**Remember, even if you are not a currently registered voter, you can STILL vote for President and Vice-President by same-day registration at your polling place on November 2 in Alaska. Your vote is your voice. BE HEARD!**

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