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**Gruening Building dedication, University of Alaska. Fairbanks May 14, 1972**

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The commencement is announced, the Director of Territories and Island Possessions, Dr. Ernest Gruening. It is the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Gruening's first visit to the campus.

To start the program Reverend William Pritchard, who has come from Juneau to watch the graduation of his daughter, his son and his daughter-in-law, says a prayer.

Next, a new speaker introduces Governor Egan. Governor Egan thanks President Wood, Governor Gruening, Mrs. Bartlett, Regents and the rest of the audience. He says that not only graduation day but time to dedicate this new building. He speaks of how the building will help the University of Alaska, what purposes the building will serve, and the special features of the building. He says it is fitting that this magnificent building should bear the name of Ernest Gruening, though Gruening's virtues, he says, are a self-made monument. Gruening was a champion of the principle that people must have unrestricted access to knowledge and learning. Gruening's first visit to Alaska was in May of 1936 when he was Director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions. He had been invited to the University by its president, Charles Bunnell to give the commencement address to the 19 students of the graduating class of 1936. Gruening, a great observer and problem solver, recommended that direct air mail be introduced between Alaska and the other states, and seeing how important air travel is to the growth of Alaska, recognized the need for airport development, he supported a highway to connect Alaska to the States of the Union and pointed out the immense potential of tourism as a leading industry. Gruening and the then Delegate to Congress from Alaska, Anthony J. Diamond joined forces to in pressing for commercial air service from the lower 48 to Alaska. That air service came into being in the summer of 1940. In 1938 President Roosevelt felt that Antarctic research was important enough to warrant a government expedition and appointed Gruening to be the chairman of the executive committee that organized the government sponsored expedition. A 100 mile long glacier on the Antarctica's Palmer Peninsula is named after Gruening. Gruening was appointed governor of the Territory of Alaska in 1939 by President Roosevelt. He championed the cause of Alaska hire for the construction of military installations and attacked discrimination in employment of Alaskans by the use of absentee labor. He and Diamond worked hard in bringing about the construction of military installations at various locations in Alaska. He sought and secured Federal action to protect the bald eagle in Alaska. He pressed for legislation to create an Alaska development board, a housing authority, a retirement act for teachers, for raising the minimum old age assistance allowance, and other progressive legislative needs. He urged passage of an anti-discrimination act and legislation banning billboards from Alaska's highways. When the 1947 territorial legislature failed to provide funds to run the University of Alaska, Gruening personally helped solicit finds from various enterprises to keep the university running.

Gruening was an early crusader against the discrimination of Alaska's native people and encouraged them to become members of the legislature. He appointed Natives to Territorial boards where they had never before had representation. He and Delegate Bob Bartlett worked hard for the establishment of the DEW line in Alaska. Governor Egan says he is proud to have worked with Gruening, Ralph Rivers and the late Bob Bartlett toward Alaskan statehood. As a U.S. Senator, Gruening worked toward civil rights legislation, anti-poverty programs, urban renewal and low-cost housing legislation, Medicare, ratification of the nuclear test ban treaty, truth in packaging and truth in lending bills. Gruening thought that education was the foremost responsibility of a society. Gruening recognized and spoke on the problems of the population explosion. Gruening was a critic of American policy in Southeast Asia. Governor Egan says that Gruening's unshakable conviction has earned him a reputation as a respected statesman. Governor Egan comments that Gruening is known for his integrity and his ability to voice a dissenting opinion. Governor Egan reads quotes from politicians, including Mike Monroney, Paul Douglas, Adlai Stevenson, William O. Douglas and John F. Kennedy about Gruening. Governor Egan speaks of Gruening's wife, Dorothy. Governor Egan hopes that those who meditate in the new Gruening building will often think of Ernest Gruening.

Governor Egan's speech ends. William O'Neill announces that Governor and Mrs. Egan must leave as they are already late for another engagement and thanks Governor Egan on behalf of the Board of Regents. William O'Neill reminisces about how he was selected for appointment to the Board of Regents by Gruening. He notes that Gruening's support and energy have helped the University of Alaska immensely and thanks him for his guidance.

The inscription on the bronze plaque in honor of Gruening is read and Ernest Gruening is introduced. Gruening says he is overwhelmed by the generosity of the tributes paid him by Bill Egan and Bill O'Neill. Gruening says that what is more significant and exhilarating is that in giving the social science a new home and special emphasis, one more step is taken in the progress of the university. He speaks of the university's humble beginnings as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines and says that one cannot help but be happy at its status today. He says that the university was kept alive, almost solely, through the devotion and unflagging determination of Charlie Bunnell, who gave up his career as a jurist to devote himself to what he considered a higher task. Gruening recalls how, in May 1936, he was initiated to the splendor of the far north. He recalls conversations with Charles Bunnell in Bunnell's home. He recalls, in detail, Bunnell's struggles with bureaucracy and many years of not being able to receive enough funding for the university. Gruening says there is one more topic he would like to speak about. He says that when he gave the commencement address, 36 years ago, he spoke on the necessity of everyone working unceasingly to make democracy work. He says, "The democratic process, that great legacy of our founding fathers, that uniquely enlightened group of men, who emerged in the last quarter of the eighteenth century to start a new and radical experiment on this side of the Atlantic, unprecedented in the old world from which their immediate progenitors had come. Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, freedom from search and seizure. This great legacy does not run on automatically. Each generation..." Here the tape cuts out. The rest of the speech may be found on 00-00-98.