

86-102

Rusty Heurlin Memorial

March 14, 1986

Fairbanks, Alaska

Invocation

Our Father is sung by Suzanne Summerville accompanied by Raminta Lampsatis-Kollars on piano.

Unidentified person said most people here have a favorite anecdote about Rusty, but four people will be called forward to share their remembrances.

Hugh Fate said Rusty took great pride in his family and he included many in his family. Hugh said Rusty had a tremendous sense of humor and was proud of his Scandinavian heritage. Rusty would say don't mope, laugh. Hugh said Rusty was a creative genius and his first love was art. Rusty told his students to never copy but be an original. Rusty loved Alaska and the people in Alaska. Rusty was also a poet. Hugh read a poem written by Rusty in 1916. Hugh said he had a great friendship with Rusty.

Edna Wilder Cryan said she and her husband, Alex, will always remember Rusty as a friend. He enriched many lives through his artwork and his encouragement. Edna said she will miss the happy times they had together.

Mike Dalton said she is working in the legislature this year and the State House and Senate passed a resolution about Rusty. Mike reads the resolution. Rusty had moved to Alaska in 1916 and had a studio in Valdez which had been constructed by Sidney Laurence. Rusty was born on July 5, 1895 in Sweden of American parents and moved to the United States when he was a year old. He grew up in Massachusetts. He served during WWI and WWII. He served in the Alaska Territorial Guard which took him to the Bering and Beaufort Sea Coast. He returned to these areas to paint his Eskimo friends. He was in the process of organizing a school of art in Ester where he lived. Mike said she met Rusty in 1949. She talked about work in the Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4. Mike said Rusty later lived in Barrow and he did his share of community work. Rusty painted Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Brower and other people and places in Barrow. She described Barrow in 1944. Rusty became friends with Tennessee Ernie Ford who was living in Barrow and was the baker for the Seabees. Rusty had a studio built on top of the headquarters.

Ruben Gaines said Rusty in his later career tended to repeat himself. Ruben met Rusty soon after he moved to Fairbanks. He talked about some of Rusty's works.

Unidentified person reads a telegram from Walter Hickel.

Scripture reading and sermon by Rev. E. Gene Medaris. He reads Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd).

Suzanne Summerville sings How great Thou art accompanied by Raminta Lampsatis-Kollars on piano.

Oliver Backlund, President of Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo no. 4, said they come today to pay tribute to Rusty Heurlin. He has come to the end of the trail and his last journey is over. The historian, Bob Davis, reads a short biography of Rusty Heurlin. Rusty came to Alaska in 1916. He was a miner in south-central Alaska and then joined the Navy. He also worked on the gold dredges near Ester for the FE Company. During the 1950s he taught the first art courses at the University of Alaska and then returned to full-time painting. He received an honorary doctorate from the university in 1971. He continued painting until a few weeks before his death. Survivors include two nephews and a cousin. Oliver Backlund speaks again. The chaplain, Harvey Haggard, said the trail ends not here and death is an episode of life. He says a prayer.

Unidentified person gives the benediction.

The Alaska flag song is sung by Suzanne Summerville accompanied by Raminta Lampsatis-Kollars on piano.

Oliver Backlund closes the memorial program.