

# Laura Beltz Crockett dies in Hawaii

By Tom Richards

for the Tundra Times

A memorial Catholic mass will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 24, at the Holy Family Cathedral in Anchorage for Laura M. Crockett, who died March 14 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Services will also be held in Kotzebue at a later date. A reception will immediately follow the Anchorage service.

Long a prominent figure in Alaska Native, American Indian, and Alaska civic affairs, she was born Laura May Beltz at Candle, Ak on Oct. 1, 1940. She was one-half Inupiat Eskimo and half German, the same ancestry as both of her parents, and was a shareholder of both the NANA Regional Corp. and

the Kitkiktagruk Inupiat Corp.

Death occurred as a result of kidney failure. She was a resident of Kihei on the Hawaiian Island of Maui, and maintained homes in Anchorage and at Harding Lake, near Fairbanks, where she often travelled for extended visits. At her request, her remains were cremated in Hawaii last week.

The daughter of Fredrica "Rica" Beltz and the late Bert Beltz, Sr., she attended grade school in Kotzebue and was a graduate of Mt. Edgecumbe Boarding School at Sitka.

Prior to enactment of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, she served as secretary for the Alaska Federation of Natives and as an officer of the Cook



Laura Beltz Crockett

Inlet Native Association. As ef-  
(Continued on Page Sixteen)

# Laura Beltz Crockett dies in Hawaii

(Continued from Page One)

forts toward a Native claims settlement intensified, she assumed a prominent policy role in that movement.

She was appointed a member of the Native Claims Task Force by Governor Walter Hickel in 1967 and was subsequently named a member of the National Council on Indian Opportunity by President Richard Nixon, where she was a strong advocate for Native and Indian claims and rights.

For many years, she served as an officer and director of the Tundra Times newspaper, where she became a close personal friend and confidant of Times' Editor Howard Rock. She was an organizer and several-term Chairperson of the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics and the Institute of Alaska Native Arts, both currently prominent Alaska Native institutions.

She also served as a member of the Board of Regents for the Institute of American Indian

Arts at Sante Fe, New Mexico, and as a member of the Interior Department's Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

She had also been a past president of the Musk-Ox Producer's Co-Operative, a statewide textile and animal husbandry enterprise, and was a member of the Alaska Remote Housing Committee which implemented the "Bartlett" bill for rural Alaska housing. For several years, she was an active member of the Alaska Plan Policy Board, through which she advocated for Native and minority hire on the Alyeska Pipeline project.

While a resident of Fairbanks, she was elected a member of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly. She was extensively involved in various capacities with the Republican Party in Alaska. In 1973, she was appointed to fill the unexpired Alaska State Senate seat of U.S. Congressman Don Young, however did not receive party endorsement for confirma-

tion. She was appointed by President Gerald Ford to the American Revolution Bicentennial Council, which planned the 1976 200th birthday celebration of the U.S.

She accepted appointments to numerous state boards and commissions and civic organizations. Among others, these included: Alaska Reapportionment Advisory Board, State Tourism Advisory Board, State Commission for Employment of the Handicapped, State Native Foods Advisory Council, State Task Force on Hard of Hearing, U of A - Fairbanks student Orientation Services Committee and University Native Arts and Crafts Council, Alaska Crippled Children's Association Board, Arctic Association for Retarded Children's Board, Breast Cancer Detection Center for Alaska Board, and was an active member of the League of Women Voters.

In addition to her civic and public services, she will also be remembered for her frequent

promotional activities on behalf of Alaska and Alaska Native people. Her first memorable public appearance was on the cover of Holiday Magazine. She appeared on numerous national television programs, including the Donald O'Connor Show, Jackie Joseph Show, Ed Sullivan Show, Lowell Thomas "High Adventure" Series, and was a guest three times on the Johnny Carson Show.

The most memorable promotional activities in Alaska include a whaling expedition to Point Hope with former New York Senator James Buckley, rubbing noses (Eskimo kiss) with Vice President Spiro Agnew, and perennial duties as co-organizer of the annual Tundra Times Banquet with Mary Jane Fate of Fairbanks.

An elegant and gracious woman, Tundra Times Editor Rock frequently described her as "pert" in headlines. Southeast Alaska Native leader Roger Lang said Alaska Natives gained 10 million acres each time she

rubbed noses in the land claims effort.

She was married twice, first to prominent Alaskan businessman Neil Bergt for more than 17 years. Her four children resulted from that marriage. Her second marriage was to Maui attorney William Crockett, and was concluded after about two years.

She is survived by her mother, Fredrica Beltz of Kotzebue; a sister, Arlene Stevens of Fairbanks; two brothers, Ronald Beltz of Fairbanks, and Bert Beltz Jr.; two daughters, Debra Bergt of Rancho Santa Fe, Ca. and Karen Bergt, formerly a teacher in Oregon now attending graduate school in California; and two sons, Michael Bergt who lives in Anchorage and is employed by Quadrant Development, and Brian Bergt who is a student at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks; and by Dr. Henry Tempas, her friend and companion of the past four years. She was preceded in death by a brother, Louie Beltz