

Asking for help to gain rights

Dear Tundra Times:

The Natives' slogan is United We Stand. I wonder. I am a Native Aleut of St. George Island, Alaska. I was born here January 25, 1926, mother of 10 children.

An injustice and discrimina-

tion has been done against my fourth child, son Terenty Alan Merculief, from his own people. Terenty resides in Sitka with wife (from Angoon), three sons and daughter. He was denied his rightful share of the Distribution of Judgment Funds,

Claims Dockets 352-269-A that were awarded to the Pribilof/Aleut communities of St. Paul and St. George.

After he was refused, I and my son were told we could appeal. What was the use? I appealed to the B.I.A. My son did and he also sent copies to senators, governor, Washington D.C. and was refused.

A man came here 1981 and told the people here at a gathering that if born here at the Islands the children were automatically eligible and if they were married from outside, their children, but not their spouses.

When the Aleuts sued and received the money why didn't the tribal leaders distribute to the Aleuts who were left? (So many died since this got in effect.)

My son Terenty was in the United States Army stationed in Germany 1971 when my corporation enrolled the people. I gave his Army address but he was never sent any enrollment papers so his wife had him enrolled to her corporation (because we had no mail services here). He has tried to enroll in my corporation but was refused, his home.

Asking for help has caused so much animosity here. I have asked and appealed to the four members who refused and was told he (my son) could sue to get money. Lawyers cost money. When Mt. Edgecumbe closed Terenty was out of a job.

Why sue? When he suffered as we did those years growing up and he has every right to receive his share.

The majority of the people here and I — don't know even who made the rules saying you have to be born here before 1946 and reside here 1971 to receive the money. It's wrong. All born on St. George Island have the rights.

This is an appeal, I and my son can't get no help at all.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Mary Jane Merculief