

# Pauline Harvey leads a life of miracles

By SARAH MOTT

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Pauline Harvey is a small woman with gray hair and a beautiful brown face creased by 74 years in Alaska's wind and water.

A moving force in the Noorvik and Kotzebue area for more than 50 years, she's taken turns as pastor, midwife, village council member, school board member, mother of 11 children, mother's sewing club president, hunter, trapper, skinner, interpreter for English-speaking visitors, Bible instructor and substitute teacher.

And, according to her son, she knows the best hunting and fishing spots in the state.

"I could look back and say I was a busy woman," Harvey reflects quietly. "But it never dawned on me until now."

"I'm not that lively anymore - I'm retired," she says.

But the glint in her eye, and the laugh that accompanies the comment, assures anyone in the room that retired doesn't necessarily mean slowing down.

Last summer, she picked eight 55-gallon drums of berries with her grandson and caught "quite a bit of fish - too many to count, anyway."

She still preaches sermons

occasionally and continues to add her two bits at community meetings.

At the ripe old age of 71, she and a friend killed a moose they came across while berry picking. It was the biggest they'd ever seen, says Harvey, and all they had was a 30-30 rifle. Harvey stood on the bank and acted like a bullfighter, waving her parka to keep the animal's attention. Her friend, Minnie, shot all the bullets in her gun and finally dropped the beast. Two days later, Minnie's grinning husband picked up the two women, their drums of salmon berries and enough meat for the entire winter. Not bad for a retiree.

Harvey and her husband Bert, became pastors in the Friend's Services church in 1933 after studying three years at a Bible school in Kotzebue. No one makes much money in the ministry, but back then, there weren't even stipends for the pastor and his wife.

"You know, until this, I never thought of my work as volunteer work," she says, laughing softly. "It was my life. We just did it."

Harvey recently was awarded one of 20 First Lady Volunteers in Alaska. She was nominated by the Northwest Arctic Educa-

tion Association.

She'd been in Anchorage a day and a half to receive the award when she decided to return to Noorvik early - it's muskrat hunting season.

"I like my old life. I feel happy that way," she says. And with a wave of her hand, she dismisses the city of Anchorage, saying, "I like this, but I don't want to live like this."

Judy Johnson, a native of Kotzebue accompanying Harvey, remembers hearing of her from years ago as a special person.

"There's really no other way to describe it," she says. "You always knew that if you were in need, you could go to Bert and Pauline."

"She's a person of conviction," says Noorvik resident Wilda Sampson. "She dares to stand up for things."

The mother of 11 children - five of whom died as youngsters - Harvey can't even begin to count the number of children she delivered as a midwife during the last 45 years.

"It's amazing when I look back on it," she admits. "I would be too scared now. They use hospitals and everything. We tried to do our best. We didn't ever really have a bad time."

She never lost a child she delivered, but stopped delivering



PAULINE HARVEY

them when clinics came to the villages in the mid-60's.

It's hard for her to remember 74 years of life, she says with a laugh. It all runs together.

"I guess it was a hard life - that's what they say," Harvey allows. "But it wasn't hard then. It was just the way you did things."

Harvey and her husband served a number of communities - including Shungnak, Deering and Selawik - before returning to Noorvik, Bert's home, because of his health.

When Bert was too disabled to continue serving as pastor, Pauline and Mildred Sampson took over. They ministered for 10 years, retiring three years ago.

Every summer, the family would move from whatever village they were stationed in, to Kotzebue for a summer of fishing. Each fall, they headed down the river and back to the village.

One year, Harvey recalls, it turned cold early and the wind

began to blow. It rained and iced, slushed and snowed. They waited and waited for the wind to stop, but one morning decided to start out, thinking it might be their last chance.

They could see the slush forming into ice on the lake as they got in the boat with another pastor and his wife.

While the wind blew, the lake couldn't freeze, but if the wind died down, it looked like Kotzebue for the winter.

The way Harvey tells it, things would have gone better if the women had been in charge. After a few criss-crosses of the lake, the other pastor's wife urged her to go outside and tell the men to hurry up or they'd be frozen onto the lake.

The wind died down and sure enough, the lake started freezing. Harvey and the pastor began poling the ice, splintering it before it could ram the boat. But the ice grew thicker and their arms grew tired.

Suddenly, their poles started a crack in the solid mass. The crack split and widened as Harvey and her friends watched.

"It cracked clear over to the mouth and started opening to make a path," she says. "It was just like following a slough."

"That was a miracle," says the woman who spent her life serving the God she believes in.