

# Morrison named Ass't Port Director

Mayor Tony Knowles recently named Eric Morrison, a Tlingit from Sitka, as Assistant Port Director for the Municipality of Anchorage. Morrison, who started working in April, will be responsible for the expansion and development of the largest and most active port in Alaska.

Moving to Anchorage a year ago, Morrison said he misses the big family he left behind in Sitka but has been really surprised by all the great people in Anchorage—something he didn't expect in a big city. But certain aspects of Sitka still linger.

"I miss not being able to go out; the wildlife is so much further away," he said. He is looking forward to a bear hunt he is going on with a group of friends. "I'm not hunting," he said, "but going along just to get out into the elements again."

Born and raised in Sitka, Morrison's life has taken many different turns that made him determined to succeed and reinstate his pride as a Native. He left Sitka when he was a teenager after both his parents died.

"I never finished high school, then I went to trade school in California and got my GED," he said. When he wanted to go to college, he returned to night school to earn a High School graduate certificate because he felt they were better credentials. He got accepted at UCLA where he later dropped out because he became overwhelmed with all the extracurricular activities he assumed besides classes. One experience made him determined to go back to school and further his education.

"I was one of the original occupants of Alcatraz in 1968," Morrison said. Everyone had a different idea why they were there protesting, and he had his.

I was out there advocating for Indian rights, because the idea

was that the only thing Indians were good for was for manual labor, such as auto-mechanics. My idea was to show them Indians could use their brains."

He went back to school to earn his Political Science degree from the University of Washington and a Doctorate of Law at the University of New Mexico.

Morrison attributes a lot of his success to his grandfather, Charlie Joseph, in Sitka.

"He is one of the last traditional chiefs," Morrison said his 91-year old grandfather. "He is the root of everything I am." His grandfather encouraged Morrison to remember his Native culture in the '60s when he felt there was no advantage to being Native.

While in Sitka, he was involved with the Noowtlein dancers, a Tlingit group coming to Anchorage to perform later this month during Spirit Days, a celebration put on by CINA. Morrison said he plans to dance with them.

"My grandfather taught the dance group all the songs and dances they will sing," he said.

Currently Morrison is president of the Tlingit-Haida Chapter in Anchorage. "Our organization is working hard with the city for Native hire," he said. The response has been positive and the city is pushing to recruit Natives. His new job for the city involves plans to make the Port of Anchorage more attractive to the public.

"I want to see the port more accessible to the public, increase their knowledge and activities of the port," Morrison said. "I can visualize it tripling its size in the next ten years."

One of Morrison's plans is to take Shipcreek's mangled image of steel, mud and jumble and give her a facelift that will attract tourism and business. Plans in-

clude a small boat harbor, business center, hotel, restaurants, parks, office buildings, marine development and tour boat dock.

Right now this piece of promised frontage lies quiet and dormant, sunk in mud. Morrison said he hopes to get the project started this year.

A more immediate plan is a \$2.8 million expansion of the dock's industrial park by nine acres later this summer to handle new increase in shipment, Morrison said. Through his window he pointed to the present park that had stored houses going to Shismaref, a village on the Seward Peninsula.

Other plans include building a



restaurant above the Port of Anchorage's warehouse to allow the people to watch the port activities. Upcoming attractions include the cruise ship "Sagafjord" that will arrive May 23 and return

every two weeks until September. The first freight ship direct from Europe, "The Harmony" is coming the first part of June. The July 4th weekend will see three naval ships and one submarine.