

DEDICATED TEACHER RETIRES



YEARS OF SERVICE—Fred Ipalook, center, is retiring after teaching Eskimo children for 40 years, 35 years of that at Barrow. Most of 2,000 population of Barrow turned out at the school gym to pay tribute to the retiring teacher. His wife, Ruth Ipalook, left, is proudly standing beside her husband. Wallace Craig, right, superintendent of the Fairbanks District of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is congratulating Fred and his wife.

Fred Ipalook Leaves After 40 Long Years Of Educating Eskimos

A dedicated Eskimo gentleman, Fred Ipalook of Barrow, retired last week on October 30 marking a service of teaching Eskimo children for 40 long years.

Fred was rewarded a tribute that evening that could be classed as the greatest the Eskimos could give.

"Almost the entire community of 2,000 in Barrow turned out to pay tribute to one of their outstanding citizens and long-time servant of humanity. Fred K. Ipalook," said Peter Three Stars, Tribal Operations Officer for the Fairbanks District of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Ipalook retiring ceremonies took place in the large BIA day school gymnasium. Three Stars estimated that there were around 1,500 in attendance.

Eben Hopson who addressed the audience on behalf of Fred Ipalook asked those Eskimo people who were taught at one time or another by the retiring teacher to stand up. About half of the audience stood up.

Fred Ipalook went to school

for the first time when he was 6 years old.

"It becomes more delightful," said Eben Hopson, "and encouraging to the younger generation today, and perhaps surprising to many of us, when we learn that the first teacher Mr. Ipalook had was indeed one of our former beloved fathers who also pursued his set goal through the ministry of God's word through our church as an elder, lay worker, an ordained minister and finally who gained the rare title of Doctor of Divinity, Dr. Roy Ahmaogak."

Ipalook graduated from 8th grade in 1926. In 1929, he was called to the Village of Wain-

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wright, 90 miles west of Barrow, to take up teaching and taking the place of Ben F. Evans, a teacher who had died.

"Before departing for Wainwright however," Hopson revealed, "and not wanting to leave a lovely lady girl friend behind, he hurriedly made arrangements to marry his sweetheart who has been his better half ever since, the former Miss Ruth Kudra-look."

The Ipalooks had nine children four of who died, Hopson said, "and he stops to take a pencil and figure out to find out to find that he now has 19 grandchildren."

Having taught in Wainwright until 1934, Fred came back to Barrow to teach and he followed his calling in his home village until he retired last week.

Through the long years, Ipalook served under many school principals one of whom is the present Bureau of Indian Affairs Area Director for Alaska, Charles Richmond.

Hopson also pointed out, "... and then that tall and mean principal we frequently referred to as the cranky old man Sterling Croel."

"We might also state here," Hopson added, "that while Mr. Ipalook was not made principal, he undoubtedly served as acting principal many more times than any other teacher in the whole BIA system of education."

Hopson pointed out that Ipalook still enjoys walrus, caribou hunting and fishing and that he is quite an outdoors man when he gets the opportunity.

"Whaling was one of the most determined efforts Fred put out as far as hunting is concerned," Hopson said. "After years of effort and many dollars spent, he finally caught a whale and you should have seen the celebration he put on."

Fred Ipalook is probably the only man in the BIA teacher system who has ever caught a bowhead whale.

Hopson recalled the time when Fred Ipalook conducted manual training for the boys in the afternoons. He said the model sled by his brother Eddie Hopson made out of baleen strips was the best.

"He was quick to say, however, that the model sled that I made was so rough and sturdy

that it could have stood many pounds of pressure. Quite a compliment, I might say," said Hopson.

Through the many years, Ipalook has been active in civic affairs in his home village.

He has been the active member of the board of directors of the Barrow cooperative. He has served as its president off and on since 1937 and "he has been president since 1950 and quided the store through its growing pains and frustrations."

Ipalook has been associated with the Presbyterian Church for many years and has served as trustee, a pianist and presently as an elder.

"For a person whose future was spelled out in the beginning, he realizes that he could not have survived successfully without the divine guidance that he has received all these years."

During his school teaching career, Fred Ipalook worked hard to break down the language barrier between the teachers and the pupils.

Hopson said that Ipalook noticed just two years ago that the beginners were able to speak the English language enough to communicate with the teachers; that the children were coming to school more able to understand the teachers which has been his goal.

"Mr. Ipalook feels that we are nearing the half way mark when we might see our children leave here and go to any other institution and take part in the normal education as we might see it elsewhere," Hopson stated.

"The realization of the goals set out and accomplished through many years of service in this field is much of Fred's delight, and seeing the young people take part in city governments and becoming native leaders."

Visibly impressed by the tribute his people gave him, Fred was pleasantly surprised and "perked up" when the Barrow Utilities Inc. presented him with a present he apparently liked—a snow vehicle along with \$600 in cash.

Among the presents was a huge baleen of a whale engraved with Eskimo hunting and other activity scenes. There were many other presents.

The retiring teacher took advantage of a new policy in the

BIA school system which gave him 5 per cent more annuity if he retired by October 31.

Besides Eben Hopson and the audience, the following people took part in the ceremonies:

Master of ceremonies, Larry Matson; invocation, Pastor Redfearn; Junior Choir and Geneva Fellowship who sang Will I Be Missed When I Am Gone, To Sir With Love and God Will Take Care of You; Lions Club, Jack Carpenter; National Guard, Nelson Ahvakana; VFW, Al Shontz; Jaycees, Jacob Adams; BUI Plant Management, Joe Upicksoun; City Council, Wyman Panigeo;

BIA, David Fauske, Larry Matson, W.O. Craig, superintendent BIA Fairbanks District, J. Leonard Norwood, assistant commissioner, BIA, Wash., Peter Three Stars.

Glenn Hackney, Governor's Office, Fairbanks, and Dr. W. Wolfe, Dean, Univeristy of Alaska.

In concluding his address, Eben Hopson declared:

"Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Ipalook says that there is actually no such thing as complete retirement in this field. The teaching of children is an endless thing.

"From that statement we can assume that while he may retire from the active roll of a teacher, he is going to be with us for a long time and help us mold the lives of our children.

"We need people like Fred

in this changing world. Mr. Ipalook, we salute you and your lovely wife, Ruth Ipalook, for having such faith in the very people that you live with, and may God continue to guide you and your family through your quiet life in retirement."

Fred Ipalook is one of the very first subscribers to the Tundra Times.



SIoux DANCE?—Peter P. Three Stars, a Sioux Indian from South Dakota, right background, seems to be doing a few Sioux dance steps at the conclusion of the ceremonies honoring Fred Ipalook, center, who retired after 40 years of teaching. Mrs. Ruth Ipalook is at left.