



SHY HEROINE, Eila (Mrs. John) Kinegak of Bethel shows her fellow employees at the Alaska Area Health Service Hospital the Governor's Medal which was presented by Governor Walter J. Hickel earlier this fall at an informal ceremony in the hospital dining room. Taking an appreciative look at left is Dr. Richard Light, Medical Director of the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital and the Bethel Service Unit. The dimin-

utive Eskimo woman recieved the medal, and more recently a \$500 check from the PHS Area, for her daring rescue of a five-year-old boy from the Kuskokwim River last summer. The medal has been given only a few times and is awarded only when unusual bravery is exhibited. It is believed that Mrs. Kinegak may be the first Alaska Native to receive this medal.

(See story on Page 8) —Photo by JOHN TOOMER

Heroines—

Natives Win Awards

Two women employees of the U.S. Public Health Service have been given special recognition from the Alaska Area Native Health Service for acts of bravery. Each woman rescued a person from drowning.

Mrs. Offenesia Yako of Kana-kanak received a certificate of commendation for going to the rescue of 17-year-old Mike Andrews when he fell fully clothed from a raft in a lake.

The diminutive Mrs. Yako maneuvered her 13-foot wooden skiff with only one oar from the shore to the drowning boy. Using procedures remembered from a water safety film she once saw, Mrs. Yako pulled the heavy boy over the side of the skiff and was prepared to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if he did not resume breathing.

A check for \$500 has been awarded by the Alaska Area Native Health Service to Ella (Mrs. John) Kinegak of Bethel for her daring rescue of five-year-old Timothy Evon from the swift cold waters of the Kusko-kwim River.

Mrs. Kinegak, also a tiny person, plunged into the storm-roiled river to try to reach the child who had fallen in and was being borne rapidly downstream by the current.

Failing here, the intrepid Eskimo jumped in a boat being launched by 12-year-old Ricky Strauss and directed the boy's rowing to a spot where she could again attempt to pluck the child from death in the river.

Mrs. Kinegak had to jump into the water a second time to reach the now lifeless child and then put him into the boat. There she applied artificial respiration until breathing resumed.

Governor Walter J. Hickel presented Mrs. Kinegak with the rarely-given Governor's Medal at an informal breakfast ceremony when he was in Bethel earlier this fall. Mrs. Yako and Mrs. Kinegak are profoundly modest of their heroic actions.

Both women are long-time PHS employees and each works in the laundry of the PHS Hospital in her community.