



Maj. Gen. John Schaeffer looks on as Gov. Steve Cowper awards a medal to Staff Sgt. Leo Andrew in Bethel.

photo by Barbara Crane

Friends gather in Kotzebue for Sen. Frank Ferguson Day

by Barbara Crane
for the Tundra Times

Friends, relatives, colleagues and constituents gathered in Kotzebue Oct. 17 to honor former Sen. Frank Ferguson and his wife Sophie.

A proclamation in honor of Frank Ferguson Day was read by Gov. Steve Cowper. "Frank Ferguson was the best and most effective legislator this state has ever had," Cowper said.

Lt. Gov. Steve McAlpine reviewed many of the projects Ferguson had been involved in and recalled that, "Whenever people asked Frank how the state could afford a project in rural Alaska, Frank's answer was, 'How can we afford not to?'"

Sen. Willie Hensley, who replaced Ferguson in the Legislature, and former Sen. John Sackett reviewed some of the highlights of Ferguson's 16 years in the Legislature, calling him a most influential and productive member who worked constantly for the good of his people. Ferguson had been re-elected to his Senate seat in 1986, but had to resign because of health problems resulting from strokes

'Frank Ferguson was the best and most effective legislator. . .'

he suffered.

Representatives from many local and regional groups remembered how Ferguson had helped them over the years. More than once, the memories and emotions of the day brought tears to the speaker, the Fergusons and the audience.

Along with dozens of plaques and commendations, the Fergusons received several fur parks, a rifle, several paintings, fur hats and tickets to the Super Bowl. Maniilaq announced their donation of \$25,000 to fund a scholarship in Ferguson's name. And NANA Regional Corp. donated a jade and wooden desk.

The Northern Lights Dancers of Kotzebue performed during the ceremony. The Atkasuk Dancers and several elders from Barrow were also able to participate via a live satellite hookup.