

The Mark of a Courageous Man

The late Nice Gray passed on November 3 in Anchorage. Before his death from terminal leukemia, Mr. Gray had been widely recognized as one of the strong leaders of the native people of Alaska.

His glibness in speech and his persuasive powers had helped his people to organize. Just a week before his death, Mr. Gray had seen the fruit of his labors when the native leaders agreed to form the current Alaska Federation of Native Associations.

Very shortly before he died Mr. Gray painfully wrote the following letter to William Paul, Sr., who had been his friend:

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Dear William:

Just a few lines, since one of my ailment's side effects is a semi-paralysis of my hands which are prone to cramp up when I write. Blamed nuisance.

Thank you for your kind sentiments. From you a pat on the back is equivalent to a laurel wreath. Truly. But you remember Him when He said, "Well done--thou good and faithful servant."

I don't think in any of my feeble efforts for our people was I motivated by an desire for personal recognition nor fame. And as you twice pointed out, I am poor in dollars and cents but then unlooked for, unsought intangibles make me feel rich indeed. I begin to feel that I have helped to an awakening of all our people to organize, unify, then solidify all in the cause of justice, not in the spirit of revenge or retribution. What is justified for a minority is just for all.

May peace and serenity be your lot from here on out.

Sincerely,
Nick Gray