

# The funny thing is, they couldn't say Kwigillingok

by Dennis Jimmie  
for the Tundra Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Being one of 10 interns for Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, was a great privilege and honor for me. It was a pleasure to spend four weeks here in our capital, from May 28 to June 25.

We came to Washington to learn and have fun. The learning part of the trip has been working six days a week, eight hours a day. We have helped Murkowski's staff in the mail room, with computers, in the press department and filing letters and newspapers.

We have been kept busy and entertained by all of the staff members throughout each day.

Our days were like any other person's. We would start out fresh, go to work and then lose interest as the day passed on. By the end of the day we were tired and ready to go back to the dorm and change into casual clothes.

Being dressed up all day long bothered us, especially if we felt uncomfortable. Sometimes I felt silly wearing my suit. But some days were better and we would feel great the whole day. Those were the days I really enjoyed and wished they came along everyday.

During our stay, each intern had a special day of "shadowing" the senator. Mine came June 14, a Wednesday. I was with the senator when he went to a foreign relations meeting concerning the Iran-Contra scandal.

I had the chance to go with him into the elevator which is for senators only. Along the way to the meeting, he explained what would happen in this hearing.

Murkowski was willing to spend his precious time to make my day more memorable. On the day I followed him around the interns got to shoot a video program where we spoke with the senator and asked him questions. After that, we were photographed as a group and individually with the senator.

We also were able to go on tours of places like the White House, the FBI building, the Pentagon and the State Department. This was fantastic for me because I don't get to see things like that in the Kuskokwim area, where I am from.

I enjoyed the White House the most. There were so many beautiful rooms with statues, paintings and rugs which were very expensive. These rooms are used by the president and his family every day.

The funniest part of the program was a special weekend trip to the beach where I made friends with the other interns, the intern coordinators, the staff and with the senator. We went to Ocean City Beach, Md. It was the first time I had been to a beach. It was very hot and bright while we were there.

It was also the first time I had been on a rollercoaster, which I would like to do again. It was just fantastic to be spending a weekend away, not thinking of work.

This program taught me that the work in the senator's office is very important. While we have been here the interns have helped the staff tremendously with all of the work that needed to be done.

It has been a whole new world to me to spend four weeks in an urban life after being used to living in a rural area. Having to clean my dorm room was a big responsibility because I had to do it on my own. It was like living on my own in a very different environment.

The highlight of the whole trip for me was working at the President's

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Dinner. We volunteered our time and in payment we were given a free dinner and the chance to stay and see President Bush speak.

My job that night was to make sure that a tragedy didn't strike on the escalators. It was a big job because there were hundreds of people going up and down the escalators. Every once in a while I had to stop people from going on the escalators until they were clear.

The funny thing is that all the people thought I was just some nice person, not an escalator monitor. It was a great job, seeing all these "big time" people. The dinner cost \$1,500 a head, so the diners were treated with care.

A funny thing that I observed while I was here was the hard time that everyone had pronouncing the name of my hometown, Kwigillingok. If someone didn't get the pronunciation correctly I would try saying it in Yupik which only further complicated the whole matter.

As time went by I made it simpler by just saying Kwig.

*Dennis Jimmie of Kwigillingok, who graduated from high school this year, just completed a summer internship with Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska.*