

Eddie Hoffman, 70, traditional chief, dies Dec. 11 in Anchorage

by Steve Pilkington
for the *Tundra Times*

Alaska Native leader Eddie Hoffman, traditional chief and one of the founders of the Association of Village Council Presidents, died Dec. 11 in Anchorage's Providence Hospital. He was 70.

Hoffman, born in Napaimute April 9, 1917, played a prominent role in shaping Alaska both before and after it became a state. He was an outspoken advocate of the village subsistence lifestyle and of local control in his region.

"He was very outspoken, straightforward, and he didn't back down for anyone," said Sue Gamache, shareholder affairs director for Calista

Corp.

In 1938 Hoffman moved to Bethel, where his family traces back to the late 1800s. "My grandfather was the first white man in Bethel," Hoffman told the *Tundra Times* in 1985. "Trader Lind they called him. He came in 1882."

Hoffman fought against alcohol abuse throughout his region. He recently worked with residents in Bethel to prevent visitors from bringing alcohol into the area. He believed the best way to fight the problem was for the villages to band together to fight alcohol abuse.

Hoffman's list of credits reflects his

(Continued on Page Four)



Eddie Hoffman was born in Napaimute April 9, 1917. photo by Sue Gamache

• Hoffman was one of the founders of AVCP

(Continued from Page One)

energy and ability as an Alaska Native leader. He was mayor of Bethel, president of Bethel Native Corp., director of Calista Corp., and he ran his own fuel business out of Bethel for more than 30 years. He also served on the Bethel City Council for 23 years.

Hoffman was known by members of AVCP as "Chief of Everything," a title which came from representing some 57 villages located on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Since its founding, AVCP has become a major political force serving the Delta

villages.

Hoffman was once described in a newspaper article as a man who was "rich in heritage, outspoken but coy, a man whose life has been his region."

He underwent heart surgery in 1985. He died as a result of complications of his recent surgery to reduce internal bleeding.

Services for Hoffman were held last week in Bethel.

He is survived by his wife, Bessie, of Bethel; his three daughters, Annette Geerds, Sally Charles, both of Bethel, and Margaret Hoffman of

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Washington; five sons, Edward "Sonny" Jr., Richard, Robert and Gregory, all of Bethel, and Stanley of McGrath; four sisters, Agnes Charles and Kathryn Lee, both of Aniak, Elsie

Miller of Anchorage, and Lucy Griffin of Oregon; one brother, George Sr. of Aniak; 31 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.