

Rep. Nick Begich Eulogized--

Gifted Young Man Who Achieved More in 20 Years

By MARGIE BAUMAN

ANCHORAGE — U.S. Rep. Nick Begich, D-Alaska, was eulogized Sunday as a "restless, gifted young man" who achieved more in 20 years than some do in twice that time.

"Nick Begich was something special — a young man in a hurry whose time ran out too soon," said his friend and colleague U.S. Rep. John A. Blatnik, D-Minn., "He left us with much of his promise still unrealized."

Blatnik was one of several prominent national and state political dignitaries who took part in the memorial tribute to Begich at East Anchorage High School. Alaska's lone member of the U.S. House of Representatives disappeared Oct. 16 en route from Anchorage to Juneau with U.S. House Majority Leader Hale Boggs, D-La., and two others. The plane was



NICK BEGICH

never found.

Begich's wife, Pegge, and their children and Mrs. Hale Boggs were among the hundreds of persons in the high

school auditorium as Begich was cited for his work for Alaska, especially the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and for his devotion to his family.

Mrs. William Egan, wife of the governor, Rita Gravel, wife of U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska and U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens also attended.

Messages of tribute were also carried from Washington, D.C. for Rep. Thomas "Tip" O'Neal, Majority Leader of Congress and Speaker of the House Carl Albert. Former Congressman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado delivered his personally.

"He gave so much in such a short time for all of us," Aspinall said. "He gained his place very quickly among his colleagues."

"My life was enriched by his association with the Committee (on Interior and Insular

(Continued on page 6).

Nick Begich Eulogized..

(Continued from page 1)

Affairs). He was indeed a young man of great ability and great love," Aspinall said.

Begich accomplished a great deal for Alaska, said Albert. "And I could always count on him to be on the floor for a vote, even if he had to fly all night to get back. But his greatest achievement was the land claims act . . . which he almost singlehandedly pushed through Congress."

"Whenever a man dies, we mourn . . . but when a leader dies, we say special things," said Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Native Foundation, in a moving eulogy which was his tribute to Begich.

"There is something about this great land of ours that attracts men," Notti said.

"Perhaps it is the opportunity . . . perhaps it is the challenge of life in a society that is still in the making . . . perhaps it is the people . . .

"Whatever the reasons many

come . . . but very few of us stay. Nick Begich was one who stayed. He was one of us . . . an Alaskan . . . and he is with us still."

Recounting the life of Begich as an Alaskan, Notti said that it was fitting that his first commitment to Alaska was as a teacher, because his concern for improving education in the state. He noted Begich's rise in politics and that "there was something about him; here was a man who was willing to work for people's first concerns."

The life of Nick Begich was "a life lived," Notti said. "A short life, indeed . . . but a man's life and a leader's life at that."

Others taking part in the memorial tribute were Alaska Rep. Gene Guess, Margaret Pohjola of the Begich staff, and Joe Josephson, co-chairman of the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission.