

Nick Begich Wins Alaskan Of the Year

By MARGIE BAUMAN

ANCHORAGE — The late U.S. Rep. Nick Begich, D-Alaska was honored posthumously Friday night as the 1973 Alaskan of the Year.

"I know that this award has always gone to a living Alaskan," said Pegge Begich, as she accepted the award. "And I know you feel, as I do, that Nick is a living Alaskan. I'm very moved and I want to thank you all," she said.

Earlier in the evening, special tributes to Begich were delivered by Joe Josephson, state co-chairman for the joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska for himself and for Gov. William A. Egan.

Egan cited the Alaskan congressman for his many "legislative talents and leadership abilities," his work on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and his "marvelous ability to bring opposing groups together."

"He strived to make sure all national legislation was sensitive to the needs of Alaska" . . . and his talents and programs "will benefit Alaskans for generations to come," Egan said.

"We as Alaskans in a new state can never talk too much . . . about the great Alaskans" who came before, Josephson added, adding his praise of Begich. "A great and very dearly missed friend of everyone in this room," he said.

Several hundred people packed into the Anchorage - Westward Hotel for the awards dinner, including four other nominees for the Alaskan of the year.

They included editor Howard Rock of the Tundra Times; U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska; Dr. William R. Wood of the University of Alaska and labor lobbyist Henry Hedberg.

U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, introduced nominee Rock, citing the writer and artist for his role in the Alaska Native movement, especially creating a voice for the native people through the Tundra Times.

"The Tundra Times has been spokesman for the disenfranchised 20 per cent of the Alaskan community," Gravel said "and it is the most unprejudice newspaper in the state."

Rock was further cited in the awards dinner program:

"Not only has he spoken for native causes, he has, through the columns of his newspaper, thrown the spotlight on the accomplishments of Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts.

"He has done much to bring about harmony among all the cultures of Alaska and donated many hours of service on community projects and committees," the introduction said.

Stevens was cited for his work in Congress on behalf of the State of Alaska; Wood for his leadership in education in Alaska and Hedberg for "20 years serving the working men and women of the State of Alaska as an effective spokesman for the Alaska Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO and laborers Local 341."

Sponsors at the dinner included Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., represented by executive vice president John Shively, and the Calista Corp., represented by president Fred Notti, and his wife, Joan.