

Preparing for future

The death this week of Karl Armstrong, a founder of Koniag Inc., the regional corporation for the Kodiak Island Natives, brings more sharply into focus the need for projects such as the Alaska Native Leadership Project.

Armstrong was one of the original fighters for Native rights and was known for his fierce outspokenness. He spoke his mind on any subject and, although his opinion didn't always sit well with those with whom he dealt, he generally held the respect of people far and wide.

Armstrong was among those men and women forged in the wars for Native civil rights, tempered by the fight for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and honed by the struggle to make a financial success of that granted which was "granted" by ANCSA.

Those who were involved by that process have come out tougher and more "savvy" than many of their generation because they learned by doing.

The battles faced by the new group of Alaska Native leaders are not so decisive, the lines are not so clear as those drawn by ANCSA.

Tomorrow's leaders may find the experiences that make them strong, decisive, and fair are not as frequent or of the "firing-line" nature of those faced by their predecessors.

The leaders of tomorrow will have to hone their leadership skills not in Senate hearings but in the often-dry and tedious affairs of office reports and day-to-day making.

The Alaska Native leadership Project gives the people who are starting out some of the tools to use those attributes that make them leaders.

It has often been said that leaders are born, not made. We offer that success is primarily work and with a little inspiration thrown in.

ANLP offers the training to complete the work. We bid them well.