

Kito honored as T&H Citizen of the Year

Richard Kito of Petersburg was elected Tlingit and Haida Citizen of the Year, an annual achievements award given by the delegates to the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, representing 16,000 members.

The announcement of Kito's selection was made last month.

Kito has a history of public service, dating from the 1940s. When he was a youth he was persuaded to attend a meeting of the Petersburg camp of the Alaska Native Brotherhood. He later became president of the Petersburg camp and ran for other offices.

In 1967 he became involved in the Tlingit and Haida claims suit, which preceded the statewide Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

He was elected delegate to the Central Council in 1967 and has held the office of delegate in the 20 intervening years.

The delegates elected him to the council's Executive Committee, and he served a total of nine years in that capacity.

Kito, 56, is one of the first Alaska Native businessmen. He established, owns and operates Kito's Kave, a Petersburg cocktail lounge.

Kito was also successful in municipal activities, having been elected for a total of seven years to the Petersburg City Council and serving as Petersburg's mayor for four years.

He was a delegate to the Alaska Federation of Natives convention in 1971 during which the Native com-

munity agreed to the proposed land claims settlement. He later was elected to the regional profit corporation board, the Sealaska Corp., and served three two-year terms.

Other organizations in which Kito held office are the Petersburg Indian Association, which he helped reorganize; the Petersburg Salvation Army advisory board and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, having served as department commander for the state of Alaska from 1968 to 1969.

Kito said he was honored by the award.

"I really have done very little, and what little I am now doing for people will continue," he said. "Each small accomplishment is really the best kind



of reward."

Given honorable mention were Margaret Tillman of Seattle, a delegate of the 1960s and 1970s; John Borbridge Jr., former president and general manager of Central Council; long-time delegate Patrick Paul of Sitka; Tommy Jackson Sr. of Kake; and Alicia Roberts of Klawock.