

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
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Statement of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
on the Passing of
Jacob Anagi Adams, Sr.

The whaling captains of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) mourn the loss of Jacob Anagi Adams, Sr. A visionary, a leader, principal founder of the AEWC and our fellow whaling captain, Jake was a friend, mentor, and revered elder to every member of our whaling community.

Throughout their lives, Jake and his wonderful wife, Lucille, lived the values of our subsistence whaling culture, given to us by our elders and the elders who came before them. With Lucille at his side, Jake devoted his life to the protection of our rights to our bowhead harvest and to the continuation of our whaling traditions. In 1977, when the International Whaling Commission banned our whaling, Jake stepped up to become the first Chairman of the AEWC. As our Chairman, he then agreed to become the named plaintiff in a lawsuit brought against the Secretary of Commerce to force the United States Government to object to the whaling ban. While Jake did not win in court, his courage in taking that action led to the creation of the AEWC's Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agreement, originally negotiated under Jake's supervision, gave us the right to locally manage our whale harvest, and today the AEWC continues our management under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement and Management Plan.

After stepping down as our Chairman, Jake remained an influential member of the AEWC and Barrow Whaling Captains' Association and continued to work tirelessly to ensure support for our subsistence traditions in the U.S. Congress. And while he took on leadership and responsibility across many areas critical to our community, he never lost focus on our whaling and never ceased guiding the AEWC onto the path of leadership it now holds. With his mentorship, the AEWC has brought recognition, from around the world, to the vital importance of our harvest and our unique traditions, and we have grown into an internationally recognized gold standard in wildlife management.

As the AEWG prepared for our quota renewal in 2018, Jake challenged us to increase our level of quota to 100 strikes per year. To support our efforts, he reached out to our Alaska Congressional Delegation, directing them to bring the resources of their offices to bear on our behalf. Jake's vision and influence were instrumental in our successful work at the 2018 meeting of the IWC where we did raise the bowhead whale subsistence quota to 100 strikes per year.

As a Whaling Captain and Whaling Captain's Wife, Jake and Lucille not only modelled the values of our sharing traditions, they broke the trail we now travel as we carry those traditions into our ever-changing future. The example they set with their lives is a bright and unfailing light guiding us as we face the challenge of bringing our traditional values into new worlds.

Jake, we will miss you. We thank God for giving us the opportunity to walk with you and to learn from you. Lucille, we thank you for so generously sharing Jake with us and for carrying the heavy burden of leadership with him, and we provide our condolences.

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