



## Robert James Ekstrom Jr.

June 6, 1950 - February 11, 2025

Robert James Ekstrom Jr. was born June 6, 1950, in Anchorage, Alaska, to Robert J. Ekstrom Sr. and Grace L. Ekstrom. He went home to be with the Lord on February 11, 2025, at age 74.

Robert married Shirley Bessie Stephan in Anchorage shortly after graduating from Chemawa Indian School in Salem, OR. They had two sons, Bobby Ekstrom and Jimmy Ekstrom.

His second marriage was to Lillian Matsuno. During the early years he attended college and fished commercially at Granite Point (20 miles from Tyonek) and Ugashik in addition to his career at the North Slope. When he retired from the North Slope, he spent several years working and teaching operational skills in an oil refinery in Russia on the Island of Sakhalin.

Robert was gifted with interests, talents, and skills. Commercial fishing, building trade skills like electrical, plumbing, carpentering, and others seemed easy for him when in reality it was his diligence paying off. He was a great cook. One specialty he bragged about was his clam chowder served with his secret recipe for homemade biscuits.

A distinguished stone, ivory and whalebone carver, Robert displayed and sold his artwork in

Alaska, the U.S. and internationally. Robert was a storyteller. Each piece of art was accompanied by his trademark, an entertaining short story with a subtle, inspirational message.

Robert loved to go moose hunting with his closest friend, Fred Matsuno. He used his moose calling skills to call in old bulls with a big rack. When the Alaska Heritage Center invited him to share his skill, he was thrilled to accommodate. He captivated the audience with his natural charm and magnetism while teaching them to mimic his technique. Inevitably, it was so much fun and hilarious, the attendees would end up almost rolling on the floor in laughter.

Robert will be remembered as a kind and loving man. He is survived by his third wife Donna Winter, brother Pete Ekstrom, sisters, Roberta Hallam, Georgia Dieringer, Barbara Donatelli, Susan Jackovich, Kathy Murphy Childs, Theresa Coplin, nephews, nieces, and other relatives from Tyonek and Ugashik. Robert was preceded in death by his father, mother, stepmother, Shirley Rae Ekstrom, brother Danny Murphy, and his sons Bobby and Jimmy Ekstrom.