

PRESS RELEASE

Karuk Tribe

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Indian Country Loses Respected Elder, Committed Leader

Karuk Council Member Alvis “Bud” Johnson Leaves Behind Long Legacy of Accomplishments

HAPPY CAMP, CA - It is with great sorrow that the Karuk Tribe announces the passing of Alvis “Bud” Johnson.

Mr. Johnson was first elected Chairman by the people of the Karuk Tribe in May of 1989. During his 16 years of continuous service as Chairman, his vision of organizational capacity building and dedication to service delivery generated unprecedented growth and pushed the Karuk Tribe to become a national leader for Tribal sovereignty. Chairman Johnson sat on the NAHASDA Negotiated Rule Making Committee, the California Rural Indian Health Board and was nominated to be a member of the National Self-Governance Health Advisory Committee appointed to serve as an advisor to the Director of Indian Health Services.

“Bud Johnson led the Karuk Tribe as we formed a modern government and grew to become the second largest Tribe in California,” noted Chairman Russell “Buster” Attebery. “It will take a team effort to fill the void in leadership he leaves behind.”

Following his years as Tribal Chairman, he continually served in governing positions with the Karuk Tribe Housing Authority, Karuk Community Development Corporation, and as a member-at-large for the Karuk Tribe Council, until his passing on Friday, October 4, 2019. In all he served over 30 years on the Karuk Council.

“He is the longest serving council member in our history,” noted Councilman Charron “Sonny” Davis. “He set a great example of service for the rest of us to follow.”

Mr. Johnson was a fluent speaker of the Karuk language and he actively participated in traditional Karuk ceremonies. Prior to relocating to Siskiyou County, Chairman Johnson retired from a career as an ironworker and underwater welder in the Bay Area. He was a Vietnam War veteran, serving in the United States Army.

His legacy will live on not only in the local infrastructure, construction of public facilities, community water systems, low-income housing units, health clinics, head start centers, senior nutrition sites, environmental stewardship programs and Karuk language restoration activities; but will persevere into the future as a strong foundation for the future of the Karuk Tribe as well as Tribal sovereignty and the rights of indigenous people all across the country.

“You never replace a person like Bud Johnson, but we will honor his memory by continuing to work hard to benefit future generations of Karuk People,” said Natural Resources Director Leaf Hillman.

All Karuk Tribe offices will be closed in honor of his passing on Friday, October 11th. Funeral services will be held on this day with a private graveside service accessible only by boat for family and close-friends beginning at 11:00 am at the Johnson family cemetery. A public funeral service will be held at 3:00 pm at the Karuk Tribe Administrative Complex, 64236 Second Avenue, Happy Camp, CA, with a gathering and pot luck meal to follow.

“We will forever be grateful for the dedicated service and inclusive leadership that he provided. While he will be greatly missed, his laughter will continue to ring on in our hearts. *Suva nik* Thank you,” concluded Chairman Attebery.

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