

ONC Scholarship Program Honors the Memory of John Panamarioff Sr.

By Shawn Wolkoff

John Panamarioff Sr., was born in Ouzinkie, Alaska on August 18, 1927; the same year Ouzinkie opened its Post Office. His parents were Waka Panamarioff and Katie Gregorieff. John grew up in a Ouzinkie of cattle trails, gardens, kerosene lamps, and a one-room schoolhouse. He spent his teenage years watching men, just a few years older than himself, join the fight in World War II. By the time he was old enough to register for the Selective Service the war had ended, but it didn't stop him from answering the call to serve and he joined the Army Air Corps and served from 1946 to 1949.



After returning from service, John married Verna Anderson on March 3, 1950 and they had nine children; Wanda, Linda, David, Clifford, Betty Jo, Vicki, Cheryl (Dee Dee), John Jr., and Joan. His children said he was a loving father with a kind/playful heart, and because of his heart, he had the children of Ouzinkie knocking on the Panamarioff's door to ask if Johnny could come out to play.

To provide for his family, John worked as a fisherman and captain of the *Bonnie*, a vessel he took over after the passing of his brother, Abram. During the formation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), he was one of the original incorporating ONC board members when ONC was established on July 23, 1973. He also served as lands manager where he helped pick the lands that ONC still owns today. The timber industry played a vital role in ONC's success for over 25 years, and land selection provided financial stability and enabled ONC to develop its resources.

John served five terms and 15 years on the board ending with his passing on May 15, 1988. The legacy he left with his children and with the people of Ouzinkie was honored in 1993 when the board voted to name the scholarship program after him, creating the John Panamarioff Sr. Scholarship Program. Over the decades, the program has helped many shareholders and descendants reach their academic goals and become the leaders of today and those we will see in generations to come.