

Dedication of Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, May 3, 1970

“A builder and definitively a major inspiration for development.”

“A mover, a doer.”

“He’s one Alaska who is both highly respected and appreciated here on campus.”

Elmer Edwin Rasmuson, life-long Alaskan, banker, member of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska for 19 years and President or twelve, is indeed all of these. But probably the most recurring description others give of him is his unshakeable drive to inform himself about the significant issues of the time. “He knows what he is talking about,” it is commonly said of him. “He finds out.”

Perhaps this in itself provides the most appropriate reason for naming this great new University learning facility the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library. More than any other unit of the University, the Library includes an all-encompassing scope of information to be tapped by questing minds. No other part of the campus is so reflective of Elmer Rasmuson.

But Elmer Rasmuson is also widely known for continually the best interests of the entire University at heart, for his keen regard for the advancement and improvement of faculty and students, as well as his fine rapport with State legislators on behalf of the University. Most of all, he is known for his decisive thinking in regard to the University both as a member of the Board of Regents and as a concerned Alaskan.

The University of Alaska owes much to Elmer Rasmuson. His vision decades ago that the small, struggling college would someday become one of the noted universities in the country is verified today by the burgeoning building program, the growing enrollment the expanding academic departments, the broadening research and public service programs and the recognition outside Alaska accorded its faculty, its students and its scholarly achievements. As a University Regent he guided these achievements. As a concerned Alaskan he put his vision to work.

Elmer Rasmuson is an Alaskan. Born in Yakutat on February 15, 1909, he has always believed in a future of bright destiny for the Great Land. Always he has shown a strong determination to be a vital part of that future. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard University in 1930 and five years later was awarded a Masters of Arts Degree. He continued his studies toward a doctor’s degree in history, then for ten years worked as an accountant in New York City.

In 1943 he returned to Anchorage as President of the National Bank of Alaska and remained in that position until 1966 when he became Chairman of the Board.

Throughout the years he has been deeply concerned with the education of young people and community improvement. His many achievements underscore his convictions: Secretary/Treasurer of the Rasmuson Foundation; member of the Anchorage City Council (1945); chairman of the Anchorage City Planning Commission (1950-53); secretary of the Loussac Foundation; Mayor of Anchorage (1964-1967); Phi Beta Kappa; certified public accountant registered in New York, Texas and Alaska; President of the Alaska Bankers Association; President of the Anchorage Rotary Club; President of the Alaska Council of the Boy Scouts of America; member of the Pioneers of Alaska.

Indeed, Elmer Rasmuson's range of involvement underscores his broad interests that continue to the present and increase year by year. It is an involvement that present and increase year by year. It is an involvement that places a high priority on libraries. The unique Heritage Library in Anchorage with its priceless Alaskan artifacts flourishes under his guidance. Gifts from the Rasmuson Foundation to improve libraries in the bush areas of Alaska are expressly stipulated by Elmer Rasmuson. Personal gifts to the University Library for the enrichment of the general curriculum are donated by Elmer Rasmuson. Libraries and Rasmuson – the two are inseparable.

No other name then is so fitting and so merited for the newest, largest, information-packed building on the University of Alaska campus, the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library