

Obituary

Juneau Empire (AK) - Sunday, October 29, 2000

Amos J. 'Joe' Alter

Amos Joseph Alter, a longtime Juneau resident, civil servant and civic activist, died Oct. 26 at Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle.

Alter was born Aug. 4, 1916, on Rosebud Farm in Jasper County, Ind., to Hally and Lillie Alter. His childhood and youth were spent in Indiana and New Mexico.

He graduated in 1938 from Purdue University with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. He specialized in public health and environmental issues in his graduate studies, earning a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan in 1948 and his professional degree in civil engineering from Purdue in 1949.

Alter married Catherine Lena Lehe on Feb. 22, 1940. They arrived in Juneau in 1944 and continued to live in the community except for a short residence in Ketchikan and about a seven-year period when Joe worked at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

He worked for more than 35 years in Alaska as a civil engineer focusing on problems of water supply, waste disposal, environmental conservation and pollution control in an Arctic environment. He worked for the US Public Health service, the Territory of Alaska, the State of Alaska and as a private consultant. His professional involvement included charter memberships and past presidencies in the Alaska Public Health Association, the Alaska Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Nationally, he served on the National Academy of Science's Cold Regions Engineering Subcommittee from 1950 to 1965 and as a national director of the American Society Of Civil Engineers from 1972 to 1975. He authored numerous articles and monographs for professional journals and conferences, and received awards in recognition of his contributions and service. He was especially pleased to have had a role in helping to virtually eliminate tuberculosis as a daily threat to the lives of the State's citizens.

Alter was an active member of the United Methodist Church. After arriving in Juneau, he was also actively involved as a leader in various interdenominational church groups at both the state and local level. Joe was an active member of the Juneau Downtown Rotary Club, serving as its president and the District Governor for District 503, which at the time included Alaska, Yukon Territory, Seattle and King County. He participated in the Pioneers of Alaska and the Alaska Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons. He served on the Pioneer Homes Advisory Board for 14 years and the Alaska Commission on Aging for seven years. Locally, he

helped form the group that was responsible for the construction and subsequent management of Fireweed Place, a residence for independently living senior citizens.

He is survived by his wife; sister, Betty Henry of Rensselaer, Ind.; sons and daughters-in-law, Jim and Jean Ann Alter of Juneau, and Jerry and Alice Alter of Dayton, Ohio; daughters and sons-in-law JoAnne and Larry Hayden of Anchorage, and Barbara and Tony Fuller of Cabool, Mo.; nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.