

Alaska  
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### A True Public Servant

Former Governor Jay Hammond described him as someone who could always be counted on, both personally and professionally. Nephew Dave Rhode said his uncle was an easygoing man who loved nothing more than catching king salmon when the duties of the day were finished.

Such was the life of Leo Rhode, former Homer mayor, state legislator and pioneer, who left his mark on the southern Kenai Peninsula and the state during his 60-plus years in Alaska. Rhode, 94, died Nov. 17.

Born in North Dakota but raised in Kansas, he spent a few years in the merchant marine before heading to Alaska with his brother, Cecil during the Great Depression. Cecil later became a well-known nature photographer.

A decade after graduating from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Leo and his wife, Florence, moved to Homer in 1951, where they built a house on what is now Kachemak Drive. He soon began a long involvement with the Homer Electric Association, a young cooperative that was beginning to deliver electricity to a growing population on the lower peninsula. He worked there for 17 years, mostly as office manager, and later served on the HEA board of directors.

He served on Homer's first city council after the city was incorporated in 1964 and served another stint in the late '60s before a term as mayor from 1978-82. During that time, he oversaw completion of the new harbor and other construction projects needed after the devastating Good Friday earthquake of 1964.

"I can't ever remember anybody ever being mad at him," former mayor Harry Gregoire told the *Homer News*. "Which is pretty unusual for a mayor."