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Senate Names Near Island Bridge for Zharoff

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska Senate passed legislation on Tuesday that would name a bridge on Kodiak Island after Sen. Fred Zharoff.

Zharoff grew up in Kodiak, where he was a commercial fisherman, laborer and longshoreman. He also served in the Alaska Army National Guard. Zharoff graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1971 with a degree in education, and taught on Kodiak Island for 18 years.

In 1979, Zharoff was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives, and served for six years before being elected to the Senate, where he ended his political career in 1996. Over the years the boundaries of his district changed significantly, at times reaching out to the tip of the Aleutians and to rural Southeast Alaska.

During his tenure in the Legislature, Zharoff was instrumental in bringing projects to Kodiak such as the Near Island Bridge. The completion of the bridge allowed the full utilization of St. Herman Harbor and the development of the Fishery Industrial Technology Center and Kodiak Fisheries Research Center.

On February 6, 2001 Sen. Fred Zharoff lost his battle with cancer. He was 57.

“Fred worked very hard for the people in his district, and the people of Alaska,” said Sen. Alan Austerman (R-Kodiak). “It seems fitting that the bridge he helped build would be named after him as a reminder of his dedication to public service.”

Senate Bill 79, sponsored by Austerman, would rename the Near Island Bridge the Fred Zharoff Memorial Bridge.

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An excerpt from Sen. Austerman’s floor speech is available on the Majority Actuality Line, 800-478-6540