

Sponsor Statement for SB 119

William R. Wood Fairbanks International Airport

Senate Bill 119 will name the Fairbanks International Airport in honor of a true visionary and leader for Alaska, Dr. William Ransom Wood.

Dr. Bill Wood arrived in Fairbanks, Alaska in 1960 with his wife Dorothy Jane, son Mark and daughter Karen, to serve as the fourth president of our University of Alaska. After thirteen years of leading the University and shaping it into a world-class institution, he retired from university service and, with his family, decided to remain in Fairbanks.

Though he retired from the University, he never stopped serving his community. Dr. Wood was committed to making the place where he lived a better place than when he found it. He fulfilled that belief everyday of his 94 years. Even on his final days, he was offering words of wisdom and urging national, state, and local leaders to begin or to finish community projects.

Over the years, Dr. Wood was a leader to many, including being the Mayor of Fairbanks, Chair of Fairbanks Area Community Hospital Foundation, founder of Festival Fairbanks, founder of Fairbanks Industrial Development Corporation, and 1985 Alaskan of the Year. He was very active in Rotary International, serving as his club's President, District 5010 Governor, and receiving Rotary's highest honor - the Service Above Self Award.

Dr. Wood's message was that we, as Fairbanksans, live in a special place in this world. With the naming of the Fairbanks International Airport after Dr. Wood, fellow Alaskans, and our visitors, will be reminded not only of his contributions to our past, but his vision of our future.

I respectfully request your support of this legislation.