

Igiugig News & Notes

Igiugig Tribal Village Council

March 2008

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In Loving Memory



Daniel Robert Salmon

8.4.58—2.27.08

Daniel Robert Salmon, 49, landed in Heaven February 27, 2008. He was born August 4, 1958, in Penfield, NY to Robert and Margery Salmon. He moved to Alaska in August 1982 to attend the University of Alaska, Fairbanks where he earned a bachelor's degree in Biology. He discovered Igiugig when he was stationed on the Kvichak while working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Dan Salmon was the Igiugig Village Council tribal administrator from 1985 to 2008, Igiugig Native Corporation trespass officer, owner of a Bristol Bay Drift Boat Permit, the Igiugig Boarding House, and Igiugig Transport. He also performed airport maintenance for the State of Alaska. He served as a Lake and Peninsula Borough assemblyman, the local school advisory committee, an alternate on the Iliamna Lake Fish and Game Advisory Committee, and was the Operations Manager for Iliamna Lake Contractors. In 2004, he received a Denali Commission award for his exceptional commitment to wise resource allocation and for founding a sustainable community. Although he worked hard, Dan always spent quality time with his family, grandsons, and friends. He loved the outdoors as well as flying, trapping, poker, fishing, boating, monitoring the stock market, and gun collecting.

Dan Salmon, beloved son, father, husband, Ap'a, friend and leader, left this world doing what he loved most—flying. Dan lived a fulfilling life and often remarked, "I've done everything I've ever wanted to do." He raised a proud family of five and built a strong, sustainable community invested in education and the future. A generous leader in every sense of the word, Dan tirelessly served the people of Bristol Bay—whether on a search and rescue mission, serving on various local committees or lending advice when called upon. He was devoted to the education of Igiugig's youth and energetically involved himself in all school activities. As a close friend put it, "He was a big man, a tall man. Big enough for all Alaska, and tall enough to see the future... All of us who knew him are diminished by his absence." Although Dan has departed us, his vision for the future will be continued by the many who believe in his dream.

He leaves behind his wife of 22 years, Julia Olympic-Salmon, children, Christina, son-in-law Jack Wassillie, AlexAnna, Tanya Jo, Jonathan and Jeremy Salmon. Grandchildren, Aiden and Keilan Wassillie. Mother Margery Salmon, brother Bobby Salmon and sister and brother-in-law Mary Jo S. and Matthew Korona. Nieces, Stephanie and Katharine Korona, and Leah Salmon. Nephews, Kevin Olympic and Leif Talarik Richards. He was preceded in death by his father Robert Salmon.

Thank you so much for all of your help during this unfortunate time. For many of us, devastation is an understatement; with each day that passes it sinks deeper and deeper that perhaps this is not a dream...this is LIFE. I never imagined facing this day for a long, long time. Hearing your loving memories of my dad, your words of comfort, and your helping hands allow us to find peace and a determination to continue on. Your thoughtfulness will not be forgotten.

I want to share with you a letter I wrote to my dad on my way home from school. It is called:

At the End of the Day

Dear Dad,

I am sitting at the airport terminal writing to you. The sun is shining on me and I can feel your warmth. I am on my way home to see you Dad. I miss you so much everything is reminding me of you. I am thinking about a story that you love to tell. It took place at the Kokhanok Carnival Coffee Can Race. I lost to all the older, faster kids and had a breakdown on the ice. You like to imitate how I held my arms out wailing, "Come Daddy!" You tried to coax me in, but I was too stubborn and waited for you to come and rescue me. You told me we could go to the store and buy all the candy I wanted. You'd do anything to put a smile on our faces. This is not the first nor the last time you've had to rescue me, pick me up when I've fallen, dried my tears when I've cried. You are always there to make everything better again. I'd give anything to tell you that I love you one more time. But you already know that.

I, however, do not know the love a parent has for their child. You always said that someday I would understand what you were talking about. I believe you set the standard for fatherhood. You established a special relationship with each of your five kiddos. Every morning you'd wake up with us for school. You traveled miles so that we could have our favorite fresh foods. You had an amazing way of letting us feel like your most prized possessions. You tried to teach us right from wrong and all of the golden rules. But like most kids, we often took you for granted or deliberately disobeyed you—testing the bounds of your discipline. In these situations, your hot temper often got the best of you, and you may have said awfully hurtful words,

But at the end of the day Dad, you always said sorry and your hug showed you meant it.

You work so hard—too hard. Your days are never over until you've helped everyone else. Some days I selfishly wish you could spend more time with us. I may complain Dad,

But at the end of the day, I am happy to unlace your damn work boots.



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Igiugig is not where you were born, Dad, but you made it your home—whether or not you were welcomed by all.

And at the end of the day this village belonged to you and you to the village. When you reach Heaven's Gate you will be met by your neighbors. I can see old Murphy Nickoli, shaking his head for no words could capture his amazement, "Your Dad," he'd tell me. John D. and Agafia Nelson, Uncle Gary and Auntie Anecia. They will be so happy to see you.

And I will be listening for your voice dad. Everywhere you went your voice echoed and reverberated throughout the village. "Quit hollering!" I'd tell you. You'd say it's just how you talk. Yes, your voice carried Dad. It carried your brilliant thoughts, actions, and visions. It carried your stress, love, and worry. It carried your confidence, competence, and devotion. Most of all Dad, your voice carried *us*. Mom, Christi, Tanya, Jon, Jer, Shasta, the village—all of us...Living without you is going to be like learning how to walk all back over again. It won't be easy. We won't get it the first try.

But at the end of the day, we will be there for each other and we will rise as one.

You are my hero, my strength, my Beloved Dad. I desperately want to hear your airplane buzz the house, minutes later see the truck pull up full of groceries to unload, and feel the quake of your footsteps as you come in to give us a kiss hello. I want you to see me graduate Dad, walk me down the aisle, listen to my kids calling out "Ap'a!" relentlessly. I want to bake you a chocolate cake for your 50th birthday, and take care of you when you get old. I will not believe that you have left this world. I am not ready to say goodbye. I keep on waiting, waiting, waiting...

But at the end of the day you don't come home and you don't even call.

And I am left, tears streaming down my face like that little girl all alone on the unforgiving ice, empty and lost. I am so young Dad. There are going to be countless more times that I will hold out my empty arms crying for you.

But at the end of the day the family that you've built, the friends that you've made, the people you've helped—they will be there for me Dad.



And at the end of the day, when I say my prayers, I am going to thank God for every second that you are my Dad. And I know that you will be with us in heart and spirit. And tomorrow Daddy, tomorrow we're going to pick up where you left off.

Love,
Your faithful daughter, AlexAnna

Until Then

"Uppa, Uppa, Uppa", whines Keilan. Lost, waiting, and wondering. The actions of your youngest grandson reflect the actions of all of us. Mom, Alex, Tanya, Jon and Jeremy. Even Shasta. Every plane that flies over we think of you. Pray this is a dream. Wait.

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Chaos, sadness and confusion surround us. We go day by day, in a fog, thinking, talking and working on auto pilot.

Dad you were our world. Our foundation. Our rock. Invincible and most definitely irreplaceable. One of a kind. Stubborn and quick thinking. Witty and fun. The best.

We sit together and worry about what big shoes we have to fill. Size 13 boots to be exact. How can we ever forget the threats of a size 13 boot up our ass, as you so graciously put it. How I wish to be threatened by that boot just one more time.

Whenever life was hard for us you were there to set us on the right path. Our compass in the dark. Although I let you down on more than one occasion you were never one to hold a grudge, for long. No matter what you always told us family is all we have and we have to take care of one another. Whether it was a lecture on treating our Mom with respect or being nice to our brothers and sisters you always let us know that they are the only brothers and sisters and Mom we have. Don't take that for granted. Now that you are gone we realize how much we needed you, for everything.

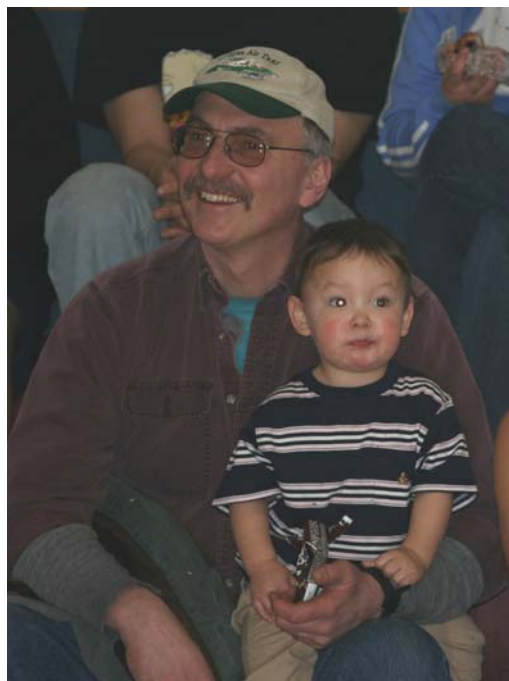
I lay in bed and think about everything I need to learn, quickly. Dad,

I love you. I can only hope to be half the parent that you were. I can only hope that all you taught me about being a parent will be enough. That I can raise smart, loving, caring and hard working children, like you have. You were the best Dad any kids could ask for. You already know this. As you already know you meant the universe to us. I am eternally grateful for you being the best Uppa ever. Aiden and Keilan were your biggest fans! With every day that passes we can only hope and pray you are well in Heaven with the rest of your family and friends. Some day we will see you again. Until that day, you

have 5 children striving to continue all you started. Until that day, we will all try our hardest to make you proud. Until that day, we work to fill the void in our lives and to continue running a prosperous community. We promise to take care of our Mother, as you would have wanted. Life will be so very challenging Dad, but you raised us strong and proud. You will forever live on in our hearts and souls.

We love you,

Christina, Jackie, Aiden, and Keilan



With the passing of our father we received hundreds of emails and comments of support it was very overwhelming. At the same time, it made us remember what a great man our dad was. A man we are truly proud to call our Dad. For my Mom, brothers and sisters this has been the most challenging time of our lives, but with support like we have received we know we can overcome our grief and continue in the path our father set for us. We can hear him now, "It is over and done with; there is nothing you can do to change it now so get up and get working. We have too much to do with little time to waste." Or something along those lines anyway! Thank you.

Comments posted on ADN from the two articles...

There was only one Dan Salmon...Michael Uehara

To Julie, Mary Olympic and the kids,

I grieve at the passing of your father and feel a hole in my heart. He was a man who lived in the beautiful village of Igiugig. Yet from that tiny vantage point, he could see the world. And those of us of the world were compelled to see Igiugig, Bristol Bay, Alaska and much more through a special set of lenses that accentuated integrity, principles, values, intelligence and uncommon commitment to a vision of the better.

Your father, your husband and your son-in-law was a unique combination of the unheralded every man and the celebrated charismatic leader.

Brash to the max, generous to a fault, never at a loss for words, a constant battler of all demons--real or imagined--who dared to even hint at inflicting pain, injustice or insult on his beloved family and community. Dan Salmon could argue with a rock. Dan Salmon could find a solution when no one else could. Dan Salmon had a scowl that shunned grown men. Dan Salmon had a smile that could fill a room.

He was a big man; a tall man. Big enough for all Alaska, tall enough to see the future. He was a man of his time. He was a man for the ages.

And all who of us who knew him are diminished by his absence.

Dan-O... "Buck" Amadon



You were and truly are a man among men. Your impact and influence on your community, region and state will not soon be forgotten. Your inspiration will remain eternal within every person who was fortunate enough to have made your acquaintance. Tranquility and serenity are now yours. Rest easy my friend.

Crater indeed...Kevin Jensen

Dan was a unique soul, he'd take whatever time necessary to help you deal with any problem you might have, from grants to reports, the time he invested in the communities around Lake Iliamna was invaluable to those he assisted. He was a leader in the native community, regardless of his race. I will miss our phone calls, and dinner meetings.

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You've changed my life for the better, Dan, sleep well.

Our condolences to the Salmon family....Dan Dunaway

Julie and family, our hearts go out to you and the whole lake area community. Glen is right, there will be a crater. Dan was a mountain of energy, drive, vision, and integrity. His commitment to family and community was absolute and inspiring. I hope you and Igiugig can carry on the many good things Dan helped initiate.

Dan, we'll miss you!...Pete Hauschka

Dan used his intellect, skill, energy, and ability to reach out to others of all faiths and backgrounds to help build up a small village and make Igiugig a model community for Alaska and our Nation. I was hired seven years ago to teach school in Igiugig and I know that Dan taught me as much about school and community building as I was able to teach his amazing children.

Stunned...Dave Doucet

I'm stunned...Dan was one of the best men I ever knew. What a loss!

He was instrumental in helping save my life years ago when I was involved in a plane wreck in the Iliamna area. He was a very giving person and great pilot...

Terrible terrible terrible...tinboat

Dan was an awesome and inspiring advocate for rural development and advancement for Alaska Natives-even if he himself wasn't.... his accomplishments speak for themselves.

Democrat and Chronicle online Guestbook for Obituaries

The Neketa Family (New Stuyahok, AK)

Although we did not know Dan, we have heard of the many positive things he has done to make the Bristol Bay region a better place to live. He will be missed.

Vernajeau Kolyaha (Pedro Bay, AK)

Living in the Lake Iliamna country, if you didn't know Dan Salmon personally, you knew of him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.



Holly Graham (Anchorage, AK)

My life is truly richer for having been acquainted with Dan Salmon. He inspired me in directions he will never know and I have been blessed by his very presence in this world. He was an amazing and accomplished man who led by example and did great things for others.

Greg Salmon (Macedon, NY)

Dan was not only my cousin and best friend. He is a great son, brother, father, and leader. His biggest concerns were for his family, friends, and country. After all what else is

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there? He was driven to succeed at what ever he set his mind to do. I don't know many that could keep up with him. Glen Alsworth said it best he didn't leave a hole he left a crater. It will take some time for all of us to get through this sad time, but he wouldn't want us to fret, he'd say lets go we have work to do, and family to take care of. We all can take something from him he was a true inspiration to all that knew him. I know someday we will hunt, fish, and tell stories again.

Joy Giuliano (Penfield, NY)

Our family is devastated by Dan's untimely passing. Dan was such a hero to my Dad, great Uncle Russ, who so appreciated his strong work ethic and great stories. We thank him for the time he always took out of his schedule for special visits back home. We'll always cherish those memories and pray for his beloved family.



Walton Crowell (Belgrade, MT)

I was fortunate enough to work for and share some great times with Dan for only a few years. For myself and many others, he expected and demanded the best from us all with a stern voice but a sincere heart. He was able to extract qualities within us we didn't even know we had. That legacy will be continued more far reaching than any of us can imagine.



Lynn Shawback

Dan was an inspiration for all village leaders and people of the Lake Iliamna region. I knew him to be generous, witty and to let his opinion be known. I will miss him.

Kelly Leseman (Anchorage, AK)

Dan you were a great man and good friend; a leader with a good heart and a man of action. You inspired all those around you to make the world a better place to be.

Marvin and Kay Hatthorn (Valley, WA)

[Dan's] positive influence and enthusiasm made Igiugig a very special Alaskan village. His spirit will be a guiding light for the future.

Bud Amadon (Buck's Dad)

I first met Dan the summer of '06, but felt I already knew him from conversations I had with my son who had come to admire him after working for him and with him in Igiugig. The Barge trip on the lake and the sight-seeing flight Dan provided for us will always be cherished

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memories. Dan's extreme kindness was felt when he later surprised me with a gift from his gun collection—identical to one that had been stolen from me years earlier. Thanks to the Salmon family for sharing Dan with me during my short visit to Igiugig.

Brett & Lucy Goode & Family (Egegik, AK)

[Dan] was a great man who contributed to the Bristol Bay area in so many ways. We will always remember his enthusiasm and zest for life to make it better for [t]hose around him and his generosity to want to help. I had invited him to Egegik in 1998 for a Council meeting and he flew down with his plane and brought a group of people. We will miss his presence.

Comments from E-mails and Sympathy Cards

Jeremy Rohrlich (Dartmouth '07)

When I got back from Alaska I swear I told more stories about [Dan] than about anyone or anything else. He was inspiring. I respected and admired him from the moment I met him. I was blown away by his kindness, work ethic, intelligence and competence. He was like magic, he made the whole world out there run. I remember just wanting him to like me. I can't imagine being so affected by the death of someone that I knew for such a short time...but it's like one of my heroes died.

Verne N. Rockcastle (Professor Emeritus, Cornell University, NY)

3/4/08: It was such a shock to hear of Dan Salmon's plane crash and untimely death. If it has affected me as it has, way down here in the lower 48, I can only approximate what it means to your community—a community that Dan had given himself to, and which had given itself to Dan. His influence was widespread, to say the least, and all those who knew him respected him and loved who he was and what he stood for. His influence, his love for Alaska and especially for Igiugig, its people, and his family, can never be forgotten by any who have experiences this amazing and talented man...Dan was the epitome of all that I found good in rural Alaska.

3/5/08: I'm still reeling over the terrible accident that took Dan's life last week. I guess my visits to Igiugig had a far deeper and more lasting effect on me than I realized. I haven't felt such a loss from anything or anyone as I have in this case. Something about Igiugig, the people there, the closeness I felt in the community, the outlook of the native people there and their warm welcome for a guy from the Lower 48, and especially the initiative and creativity of Dan Salmon—it all got to me as no other community has. And I have visited many communities in rural Europe, South America, Newfoundland, the American west, and Alaska. There was a communal spirit in Igiugig that I felt keenly...



Alexa Jardine (Horseshoe, ID)

How can a man who was larger than life and contributed so selflessly to the lives of others be taken well before his time?

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We have been fortunate enough to have had annual contact with Dan and the Village and have watched an incredible transformation over the years. Many of the changes were a part of Dan's vision and life's work, not for personal gain, but to transform the Village into a viable alternative for the children and their children as a place to live, work and raise families in the years to come. We listened to him discuss the challenges of implementing change, while fostering the native values and lifestyle that are the core of the Village and trying to strike a balance between the two.



His passion for the children and their future is evident in all of his work but particularly with the school, and the tremendous community involvement in that effort. He provided the framework that allowed the children of Igiugig to realize that ANY goals or aspirations they may have are easily within their reach. His pride in the children, their progress and their accomplishments was ever evident.

He had a strong sense of right and wrong and his uncompromising integrity set a shining example for us all. His engaging ability to recount a story will live in our memories forever along with many of those moments.

In Dan's, far too short, life he accomplished much more than most of us could ever hope to. He laid a strong foundation for the future of the Village and its members to thrive upon, which we hope will continue to flourish.

Bill Bale (Ketchikan, AK)

I first met Dan in 1984, at the Flathorn camp on the Susitna, just 20 miles upriver from the mouth...He was doing surveys then based out of the Flathorn Fishwheel camp. I remember him always volunteering to help work on whatever project we had going at the time, or doing a double shift so someone else could fly to town for a day for whatever reason. I remember his dog "Bonnie," he shared with Don Perrin, and how he'd throw her in the boat (while we were mid-channel!) and then jump in the cold water and race her to the bank! There's one saying Dan would say and I continue to use to this day is "A hundred percent fun!" That's what I remember him saying whenever he saw a plane land, take off—or just fly overhead!



John Branson (Lake Clark, AK)

I always enjoyed discussing current issues with Dan and admired his openness and quick intellect. I respected Dan because he valued education and learning a great deal.

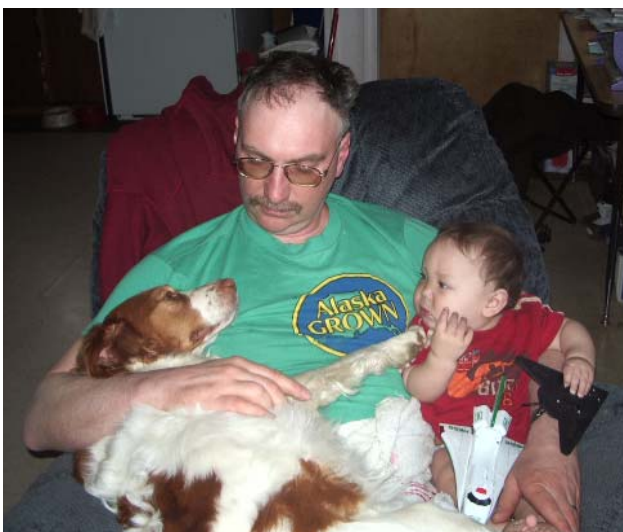
Robin Proctor (Anchor Point, AK)

For many years I have admired [Dan] as a family man, a true leader among men and his ability to move the village in such a positive way. I remember a school function where all the students participated. It was so obvious how proud he was of every single child's accomplishments. The mile wide grin and the true delight he felt in their successes was so obvious.

Memories Will Always Be With Us

Julie and family—Christina, AlexAnna, Tanya Jo, Jon, Jeremy, and Grandkids. He was a great person to know as a friend and a great father and Husband and Uppa to his wife Julie and his children, Dan was a person I will never forget, he was always there for someone who needs help and he was a good boss to work for like telling me what to do I will never forget the time he balled me out if I did something wrong and it was for a good reason and understand the things I have done wrong and tells me to think about what I did, I will miss him a lot. Not only me, he has a lot of friends. He has done a lot for the village, if it was not for him we would not have the things that the village has now. He was a very busy man never one place and you will never know where he will be at. I would like to thank the friends and relatives who are helping the Salmons this time. He will always be in our thoughts and in our hearts. May God bless you all and those that have been there for the family. I thank you with all my heart again.

Love you all,
Yako “Jackie” Nickoli



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The
**DAN SALMON MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

is being created.

Contributions can be mailed in care of:

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If you need additional information,
please contact us at igiugig@bristolbay.com

High Flight

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air. . . .*

*Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.
—John Gillespie Magee, Jr*