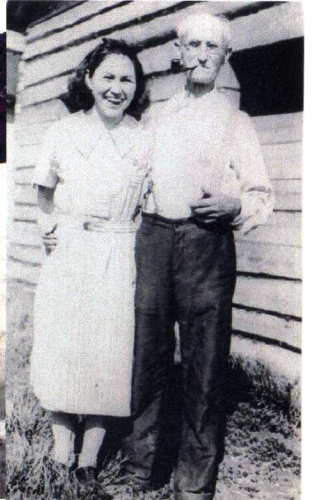


In Loving Memory of
Nora Venes Guinn



11/11/20~7/6/05



Nora Venes Guinn was born on November 11, 1920, the oldest child of Joe and Anna Venes, in Akiak, Alaska and died at her home in Bethel surrounded by her family on July 6, 2005.

Nora spent her early years in Akiak, attended the Eklutna Boarding School and attended high school in Portland, Oregon where she also baby-sat for Dr. and Mrs. George. In the summer of 1939 she returned to Bethel where she met Charlie Guinn.

Four months later they married and began an adventure of 53 years that ended with Charlie's death in 1993. Together they had 10 children, one of whom died in infancy.

Early in their marriage Nora began her career of service to the people of the Kuskokwim Yukon Delta when she and Charlie along with their infant daughter moved to Tununak as BIA teachers. Back in 1942, the duties of a school teacher for the BIA also included taking care of the sick and acting as a dentist or midwife as the occasion demanded, as well as teaching. In the four years they lived in Tununak, Nora performed all these in addition to producing two sons, both of whom Charlie helped deliver.

In 1945 the Guinns moved back to Bethel where Nora settled into the routine of wife and mother and completing her high school education. Except for 2 1/2 years in Marshall, Bethel has been her home since. Prior to statehood, Mrs. Guinn served as a United States Commissioner and in 1959 when Alaska became a state, she was appointed deputy magistrate, then district court magistrate. Mrs. Guinn was named District Court Judge, the first woman and first Native to hold that distinction in the state of Alaska in 1967 and served in that capacity until her retirement in 1976. A fluent Yup'ik speaker, during her tenure on the bench she would often conduct hearings in Yup'ik to ensure that her people understood the charges against them and the reasons for the judgments she made.



In 1971 Nora was appointed Master of the Family Division of the Alaska Supreme Court and often conducted training sessions for other judges and magistrates. She has been a member of the Alaska Judges Association and the Juvenile Judges Association and was an honorary member of the Alaska Bar Association. In May 1978, the University of Alaska, Anchorage conferred upon Nora an honorary Doctor of Law degree in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the Alaska Legal profession.

In 1979, First Lady Bella Hammond presented Nora with a First Lady Award for her voluntary services. She was selected Alaska Native Woman of the Year in 1983 and Calista's Citizen of the Year in 1984 and was a charter member of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 10041.

Mrs. Guinn has served as a member of the Bethel City Council, the Governor's Board of Alaska Legal Services Criminals Justice, the Southcentral Health Planning Commission, the Lower Kuskokwim School District Board, the Bethel Prematernal Home Board, the Kuskokwim Valley Native Corporation Board, the Eddie Hoffman Senior Center Board, the Orutsaramiut Native Council Board and the Calista Corporation Board.

Nora had a special love for children and would often take a child who was having a hard time into her own home, sometimes for several years. There was always room for another place at her table and she was never quite sure how many people she had staying in the house or would be eating meals there. She also had a deep concern for the elders in the region who have to leave the area when they are too old or sick to care for themselves and in June of 1994, Nora began raising funds for a nursing home in Bethel with \$50.00 of her own money. By 1995 the account had grown to more than four thousand dollars and today the account stands at a little over \$76,000.

Nora suffered from macular degeneration, which made her almost completely blind and spent much of her later years in the family home in Bethel. However she kept track of her large extended family and was always looked forward to visiting with them.

Judge Guinn was preceded in death by her parents, Joe and Anna Venes; her husband, Charles Guinn, Sr.; her sons, Charles Guinn Jr (Stuffer), Robert, and James Edward; her brother, Joseph Venes Sr.; her sister, Lena Laroux and her grandson, Nick Murphy.

She is survived by her sons John (Margaret) and James (Tish), her daughters; Susan Murphy (Kevin), Judy Horn (Vern Blevins), Margaret Kormendy (Peter), Shelley Zazueta (Gilberto), and Cindy Martin, her brother Elias (Bernie), her sister in law Margaret Reynolds (Curt), her god-daughter that she helped raise, Janel Murphy, 31 grandchildren, and 33 great-grand children.



Footprints in the Sand

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to him, the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints, I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

