

JOHN ROY WINTHER

John Roy Winther, Jr., well-known Alaskan businessman and fisherman and long-time resident of Petersburg, passed away on October 15, 2012, at age 67 following a battle with cancer. He had his wife, Berta, and daughter, Theresa, by his side and was supported by family and close friends in his final hours. He passed away in Mesa, Arizona, where he was undergoing treatment.

John was born on November 12, 1944, in Fairbanks to John Roy Winther, Sr., and Jane Wood Winther. He spent his childhood in Juneau, then returned with his family to Fairbanks to be close to his mother's family, which settled there in 1899. John graduated from Lathrop High School in 1963, then attended junior college in California and Washington before deciding to pursue his passion of becoming a fisherman, following in the footsteps of his paternal grandfather, father, uncle, and several great uncles, including Olaf Winther and Gudmund "Gudy" Winther, with whom he was particularly close. He settled in Petersburg in 1972.

John began fishing with his uncle Olaf on the F/V Fremont, which he later purchased. Shortly thereafter, he fished the F/V Constitution before embarking into the Bering Sea crabbing industry. In 1974, John and partner Collin Martens built the F/V Theresa Marie, which at the time was the pride of the Southeast Alaska crab fleet. In 1984, in an effort to stay ahead of the ever-changing fishing industry, John ventured into longlining with the purchase of the F/V Prowler. He became partners with Bart Eaton and Jerry Kennedy; together the trio began building what became Prowler Fisheries, running the F/V Prowler, Bering Prowler, and Ocean Prowler. Today the business operates as Alaska Longline Company. In 2000, it partnered with the Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association; in 2009, it acquired two vessels and fishing rights in a company expansion; and this year, it launched the construction of the F/V Arctic Prowler.

During John's life, he was very active in many business ventures and volunteered considerable time to serve in both the private and public sectors. He was a director of Icicle Seafoods from 1980-1992, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council from 1983-1989, and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority from 2003-2011. He founded Ultrastar Exploration and Winstar Petroleum in addition to serving as president and managing partner of Alaska Longline Company.

John was well known and respected throughout Alaska and beyond for his dedication to the commercial fishing industry and was highly regarded by the Alaska congressional delegation. He forged relationships over the years with U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, U.S. Sen. and Alaska Gov. Frank Murkowski, U.S. Rep. Don Young, and Alaska Gov. Bill Sheffield, with whom he traveled to Japan on behalf of fisheries issues.

John was preceded in death by his father, John Roy Winther, Sr. He leaves behind his loving wife, Berta "Bert" Winther, of Seattle; daughter Theresa Winther and granddaughter Stella Asplund of Petersburg; and mother Jane Pryor and brothers Rick Winther and Dale Winther, all of Fairbanks. John also is survived by his aunt Jirdes Winther Baxter; cousins Fred Baxter, Ron Baxter, Gary Baxter, Terry Baxter, Sandra Dunn, Sherill Baxter, Leslie Winther Dumont, and Jensine Winther Hayden; and second cousins Sandro Lane and Jean Winther.

Friends and family are invited to join a memorial service on October 27, 2012, at 1 p.m. at Magnolia Lutheran Church, 2414 31st Ave. W., Seattle. A reception will follow at Anthony's Homeport Shilshole Bay, 6135 Seaview Ave., N.W., Seattle.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in John's name to one of the following organizations or to a charity of choice.

- An Oasis of Healing (Mesa, Arizona); contact Rachael Wagner, 480-834-5414 or rachael@anoasisofhealing.com.
- University of Washington Department of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery, Otolaryngology HNS Research Fund, Box 359505, Seattle, Washington, 98195-9505. John was especially thankful to his surgeon, Dr. Albert Merati, for restoring the gift of voice.
- Coast Guard Foundation, 394 Taugwonk Road, Stonington, Connecticut, 06378; www.coastguardfoundation.org.
- Seattle Fishermen's Memorial, P.O. Box 17356, Seattle, Washington, 98127.