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**Alaska's Flag at Half-mast: A Commemoration of Ernest Gruening**

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**Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master copies on CD.**

**Narrator: Jeff Kennedy**

The second half of the program begins.

Gruening speaking: "But I would say that reversing the trend in Alaska by which Alaska was exploited by absentee interests and would have continued to be unless we made that fight, I think that was my most important contribution."

The host, Jeff Kennedy, welcomes us back to part two of "Alaska's Flag at Half-mast." The host briefly mentions some of the highlights of Gruening's career.

Fellow democrat Richard J. Gruel remembers how he and Gruening were both delegates in 1960 to the National Democratic Convention that nominated John Kennedy as president. The day after Kennedy had been nominated, many of the delegates went to Disneyland. After the morning at Disneyland, they travelled back to the convention center in a convertible that one of the delegates had rented. On the radio, there was a story that a prophet had predicted the end of the world that day. The news also said that Kennedy had picked Lyndon Johnson as his vice presidential nominee. The delegates were very surprised and perturbed by this nomination. The news announcer said that the prophet who predicted that the world would come to an end was wrong. Gruening and Gruel said in unison, "What do you mean the world hasn't come to an end?"

Gruel and Gruening had opposed Johnson because they were afraid that the Texan would inhibit the civil rights movement. President Kennedy both pleased and displeased Gruening. Gruening was happy about Kennedy working toward an alliance for progress but thought that the president failed to implement the alliance. Gruening thought that the program failed in Chile and Colombia. Gruening charged that millions of dollars went to support dictators who prevented the very reforms Gruening and Kennedy hoped for such as land reform, equitable taxation and aid to the poor. The narrator lists many of the proposals that Gruening made regarding Latin American countries. Gruening supported another Kennedy proposal: the Inter-American Highway. Gruening thought a highway connecting the Americas would improve relations and increase tourism. Gruening said that highways would benefit farmers in transporting their produce. This, in turn, would increase economic development. Gruening became distressed at the 200% cost overrun for the highway. Gruening was also upset at countries for paying their one-third share of the cost for the highway with foreign aid funds.

A clip of William Wood speaking about Gruening's 1962 campaign for reelection is played. Wood marks about how incredibly active Gruening was. Wood tells an anecdote about a woman, Edith Bullock, following Gruening around and tearing down the posters he was putting up. Wood says that the two, regardless, got together and had a cup of coffee as long standing friends. Gruening resisted moving the capitol from Juneau to the Anchorage area. In 1962, the incumbents won: Gruening, Egan and Juneau.

A clip of Gruening talking about the Rampart Dam project is played. Gruening talks about the relocation of the residents in the area and the increase in quality of living they would have in their new homes with hot and cold running water and cheap electricity. Gruening speaks about the timber to be logged from the area and the infrastructure improvements, fisheries and tourism opportunities the dam would bring. Gruening counters arguments made by conservationists. The clip ends

A clip of Gruening speaking about the 1964 earthquake is played. Gruening praises the President's initial response to the earthquake and how he sent Edmond Dermott(?), Director of the Office of Emergency Planning, to Alaska. He praises how quickly and additional \$50 million was appropriated by Congress. After this initial response, Gruening is less pleased. After these initial measures, it was expected that existing agencies in Alaska just do a little more. Gruening thought this was insufficient; he thought that the principles of applying foreign aid should have been applied in Alaska. The speed of recovery in this situation is essential, since fishing season was coming. Gruening compares very generous loans made by the small business administration to loans given as foreign aid. Gruening argues that loans like those made as foreign aid should be available to help quickly rebuild after disasters such as the earthquake.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 brought the end of legal discrimination; the same thing Gruening had brought to Alaska decades before.

A clip is played of Gruening speaking, at length, about the Vietnam War. Gruening did not believe, as the presidential administration did, that the U.S. would be able to win that war. Gruening thought that the war would just drag on. Gruening states that America in Vietnam is involved in a civil war that America is greatly responsible for creating. Gruening thought it would be better to let the Vietnamese work out their own destiny rather than to impose our idea of democracy on them. Gruening thought that the sooner America get out of the war, the better. He thought that, in the end, the conflict will be settled by the Vietnamese and should have been from the very beginning.

The tape ends.