



Tribal Host **Fred Hamilton Sr.**



Frederick Hamilton Sr. (Skwaal) was born on February 2, 1921 in Craig, AK on Prince of Wales (POW) Island. He is the son of George Hamilton Sr. (Siigaay), and Joy Edenso Hamilton (Haana Iwaans). Fred is Haida and of the Raven moiety and his crests are Owl, Brown Bear and Flicker. Skwaal's younger years were spent in the midst of his large family. Following the death of his beloved mother, Fred went to Sheldon Jackson School (SJS) in Sitka, AK when he was 11 years old. The summer before leaving home Skwaal's first job was on his father's fishing boat with his older brothers. He earned \$90 and used \$35 to pay his tuition. Fred was already doing his part to contribute to his family. SJS was to become his home away from home until he graduated from the first junior college class (1942) with his cousin Beatrice Edenso. Skwaal left with the nickname "Birdie" which his fellow classmates fondly used in reference to his tenor voice that he put to good use in the SJS choir!



That same year, Fred joined the U.S. Navy and was stationed in Seattle, WA for the next four years. At a church dance, he met the love of his life, Beverly Jean Bailey. They married in the fall of 1946 and Fred brought his bride back to Craig to stay. Children soon graced the Hamilton household: Bob, Fred Jr., Evelyn, Jim and June. Fred was the main provider for his growing family and he found work wherever he could. Skwaal seined with his brothers Don and Gil for 12 seasons while working as the janitor for Craig Schools. In 1958, he went to work for Ellis Airlines as the agent in Craig which was a job he loved. After 15 years, he moved on to other jobs and ended his career working for the Alaska Marine Highway System as the ferry agent on POW Island.

"Good for the soul" and "things needed doing" were reasons Skwaal gives when asked why he volunteers. Fred was a Boy Scout leader, volunteer fireman, school board and city council member, Inter-Island Ferry Authority member and leader in the Presbyterian Church. Skwaal gave of his time and talents to his Native community as well and was involved with the Alaska Native Brotherhood, his village tribe, Tlingit & Haida, and Shaan-seet, Inc.

These days Fred is the patriarch of his family as well as the town historian. After losing his wife in 2005, he lives alone and starts each day with a banana and his devotions. Skwaal keeps track of all the special occasions and sends out cards to his loved ones. He is an avid reader and recently finished the book "Hamilton". When asked if he has any advice for the younger folks Skwaal says, "be true to yourself" and "be fair and honest to others." Wise words from a man who has lived 97 years under the Owl crest.