

The Passing of an Alaska Seafood Legend



Chuck Bundrant, a true legend in the Alaska seafood industry, passed away October 17th at home in Edmonds, Washington, surrounded by his family and friends. He was 79.

He leaves behind his wife, Diane, son Joe (Mary), daughters Jill Dulcich (Frank) and Julie Bundrant Rhodes (Randy), 13 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, with two more on the way, his sister Linda Nelson (Doug), nieces and nephews and many others in his broader “Trident Family,” all whom he loved dearly and touched with his passion, vision, generosity and unwavering determination to create opportunity for all of them despite monumental challenges at sea and ashore.

In 1961, at age 19, Chuck talked three friends into dropping out of college and driving a 1952 Ford station wagon from Evansville, Indiana, to Seattle in the dead of winter to seek adventure and fortune. His intention was to make it to Alaska and earn enough money to pay his own way through college in Tennessee, but soon enough his formal education gave way to the school of hard knocks.

Chuck knew nothing about boats or commercial fishing, but his persistence walking the docks at Fishermen’s Terminal landed him his first job in Alaska, processing crab. It proved to be the first leg of a lifelong journey driven by the values that still guide the multigenerational family business he later founded, Trident Seafoods.

While Chuck is remembered for his shrewd business skills, toughness and determination, his generosity and belief in others were equally recognized and key to his success. Every business partner, fisherman, community leader, supplier, customer, employee and competitor was personally important to Chuck. His love for the State of Alaska, his loyal independent fishermen, his employees and customers around the world was evident to all. To him they were all extended family, and that spirit infuses the people of Trident who will carry on his legacy of servant leadership.

Chuck had a unique ability to motivate success with a combination of high support and high expectations. “I find I get a lot out of people when I push them,” he used to say with a smile. But he was never immune to his own tough love. He pushed himself harder than anyone else and was always the first to show up if others needed help.

A devout Christian, Chuck’s faith in God wove through the fabric of his life, binding together his family, his community and his company. One manifestation of that is Safe Harbor Church, which Chuck, with his

partner Kaare Ness, built 25 years ago between Trident's largest, most remote processing location and its neighboring village of Akutan, in Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

Chuck has remained strong, both spiritually and physically. For more than a decade, he has grappled with an incurable degenerative disease. Thanks to Chuck's strength and stubbornness, as well as unending support from Diane and others close to him, he kept doing what he loved most: watching his family grow, spending time fishing in Hawaii and Alaska, and visiting remote Trident operations each summer to personally thank members of his Trident family for their important contributions. Chuck's business instincts remained sharp, and he actively served as Trident's Board Chair until the very end.

Chuck will be remembered for his genuine desire to forge a sustainable Alaska seafood industry that benefits all stakeholders. Chuck led and invested in a lasting future for North Pacific fisheries resources. His processing innovations will drive improvements for generations. He made many sacrifices to create opportunity for his family. He risked everything early on to nurture a stronger seafood industry in Alaska and to solidify the reputation of one of the largest seafood companies in the world.

Thanks to Chuck's foresight, Trident's path forward is solid. Chuck's son, Joe, became Trident's CEO in 2013. The family and business have prioritized succession planning to safeguard the Trident brand and secure its continuity for future generations. Joe and the rest of the Trident leadership are committed to honoring Chuck's legacy and building on the incredible company he founded.

Chuck Bundrant leaves us with his great expectation and abiding challenge to achieve the impossible while looking out for one another along the way. He departs wrapped in the love of God and his family.

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