

# Al Mathews

1951 - 2016



Al Mathews, formerly of Wasilla, died peacefully in his mother's home in Rulo, Nebraska, on Aug. 9, 2016. He was 64 years old. Making it his goal to "enjoy every minute of every day," he bravely and uncomplainingly fought a difficult and painful battle with cancer for more than a year.

Born Nov. 28, 1951, in Golden, Colorado, he was the eldest son of Raymon E. Mathews and Stella Robinson Mathews. Al was a member of the Iowa tribe and his uniquely American heritage includes Native American chiefs alongside ancestors who arrived on the Mayflower and fought in the Revolutionary and Civil wars.

With his hunting guide and commercial bush pilot father in Alaska much of the time, Al's first years and many summers as a youngster were spent discovering the Alaska Interior.

During the school year, he and siblings Ty and Linda were raised in part by grandparents Robert Sherman Mathews and Blanche Selma Tanner Mathews in Ponca City, Oklahoma.

He was an outstanding athlete and won awards and letters in wrestling, boxing, track and baseball during his school years. Baseball remained a

lifelong favorite, and he was always ready to discuss the latest stats with other fans.

Al loved the outdoors from early on and at 16 joined his father in Juneau, where he finished high school in 1970 and began a lifelong fishing tradition. Well noted as a person who "never met a stranger," his outgoing nature led him to befriend experienced fishermen that helped refine his angling skills. Navigating the Yukon, Tanana and other major rivers and tributaries he continued to build knowledge that "improved his luck," as he put it.

During summer 1989, Al officially documented two Alaska state trophy fish. One of these still stands as a current world record. The pictures and framed record certificates are on display at the Iowa Tribe George Ogden Building in White Cloud, Kansas.

As typical of many Alaska residents, Al had a wide range of skills and one of these was learning to fly his father's Taylorcraft airplane. He was also proficient at many different trades and participated in a number of different occupations. These include guiding hunting and fishing trips, working for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, carpentry, gold mining, putting up hay and fighting forest fires.

Al spent many years in the Fortymile region and lived in Wasilla, Tok, Glenallen, Copper Center, Anchorage and at the original Ray Mathews homestead in Tanacross.

Al loved children, enjoyed spending time with friends and family, and usually had at least one canine companion. He will be remembered as a high-spirited and cheerful soul that was great company for any adventure. Like any real fisherman, he will also be remembered for embellishing stories to entertain others around the campfire, sitting in a boat or at the local tavern. He will be missed by his family, all who knew him and those who hoped to discover his latest "record book" fishing techniques.

Al Mathews is preceded in death by his brother, Ty Mathews, and father Raymon E. Mathews.

Surviving are his mother, Stella Coble, of Rulo, Nevada; sisters Lisa Coble, of Wichita, Kansas, and Linda Rae Strong, of Sacramento, California. Also surviving are children Skyler Mathews, Kira Parker and Ciera Burgarin, all of Ponca City, Oklahoma. Also surviving is aunt Carolyn Marie Baldwin Mathews, of Sand Springs, Oklahoma; half-brothers Joe Baughman/Mathews, of Leeds, Utah; Brad Harris, of Humboldt, Nebraska, and Ron Harris, of Haysville, Kansas, along with numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Please visit [www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsminer](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsminer) to sign an online guest book.

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