

Honoring Alaska's Civil Rights Champion: Elizabeth Peratrovich

Elizabeth Peratrovich was a Tlingit civil rights activist who fought tirelessly for the rights of Alaska Natives. She is best known for her powerful speech before the Alaska Territorial Legislature in 1945, which helped to overturn a discriminatory law that denied Native Americans the right to vote.



Fighter in Velvet Gloves: Alaska Civil Rights Hero

Elizabeth Peratrovich by Annie Boochever

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Word Wise : Enabled
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Peratrovich was born in Petersburg, Alaska, in 1911. Her father was a Tlingit chief and her mother was a white woman. She was raised in a traditional Tlingit village, but she also attended public school and learned about the struggles that Native Americans faced.

In the early 1940s, Peratrovich became involved in the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, organizations that worked to improve the lives

of Native Alaskans. She quickly became a leader in the movement and helped to organize protests and rallies against discrimination.

In 1945, Peratrovich was elected to the Alaska Territorial Legislature. She was the first Native American woman to serve in the legislature, and she used her position to fight for the rights of her people.

One of Peratrovich's most important achievements was her speech before the legislature on February 8, 1945. In her speech, she condemned the discriminatory law that denied Native Americans the right to vote. She spoke eloquently about the history of discrimination against Native Alaskans and argued that they deserved the same rights as all other Americans.



“I am a Tlingit Indian, and I am proud of my heritage. But I am also an American citizen, and I am proud of that too. I have fought for my country in two wars, and I am willing to fight for it again. But I am also fighting for my people, and for their right to vote. We are Americans too, and we deserve the same rights as all other Americans.”

Elizabeth Peratrovich, 1945”

Peratrovich's speech had a profound impact on the legislature. It helped to change the hearts and minds of many lawmakers, and it ultimately led to the passage of a new law that granted Native Americans the right to vote.

Peratrovich's work for civil rights continued throughout her life. She served in the legislature for many years, and she continued to fight for the rights of Native Alaskans until her death in 1984.

Today, Elizabeth Peratrovich is remembered as one of Alaska's most important civil rights leaders. Her legacy continues to inspire people around the world to fight for justice and equality.

Elizabeth Peratrovich's Legacy

Elizabeth Peratrovich's legacy is one of courage, determination, and hope. She was a pioneer who fought tirelessly for the rights of Native Alaskans, and she helped to create a more just and equitable society for all Alaskans.

Peratrovich's work has had a lasting impact on Alaska. She is credited with helping to pass the Alaska Equal Rights Act of 1945, which granted Native Americans the right to vote. She also helped to establish the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which gave Native Alaskans control over their land and resources.

Peratrovich's legacy is not only about her accomplishments, but also about her spirit. She was a woman who stood up for what she believed in, even when it was unpopular. She was a role model for generations of Alaska Natives, and her work continues to inspire people around the world.

There are many ways to honor Elizabeth Peratrovich's legacy. We can learn about her life and work, and we can share her story with others. We can also continue her work by fighting for justice and equality for all people.

Resources

* The Elizabeth Peratrovich website * Elizabeth Peratrovich National Monument website * Elizabeth Peratrovich's legislative biography * Elizabeth Peratrovich's speech before the Alaska Territorial Legislature

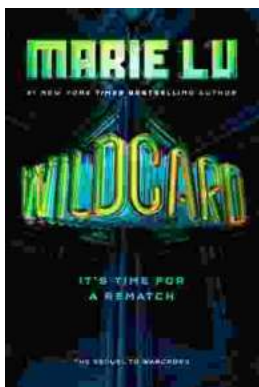


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