

# ALASKA LEGISLATURE

## IN MEMORIAM

### STEPHEN MICHAEL DRYDEN

The Thirty-Second Alaska State Legislature joins family and friends in honoring the life and memory of Stephen Michael "Mike" Dryden.

Mike Dryden was born in Monroe County, Mississippi, in the late 1940s. Growing up, Mike worked for his father's businesses, Dryden Manufacturing Company and Wren Body Works. He graduated from Amory High School in the 1960s and from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science in Education. He earned a Master of Aeronautical Science degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and was a dual-rated instrument commercial pilot. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the US Army, attended Rotary Wing Qualification School, and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, as a helicopter pilot and aviation logistic maintenance officer. He served as a Captain in the Army from 1975 to 1982. He left active duty and continued his military career until 1998, when he retired as a Major in the Army Reserve. At the time of his passing, he was also a member of the Alaska Veterans Advisory Council.

Mike served as public affairs officer for the Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol, editor of the organization's *Wing Tips* magazine, and a mission pilot on search and rescue missions. He served on the board of the Older Person Action Group, wrote a monthly article on veterans' healthcare issues in the *Senior Voice* newspaper, and contributed to the *Stars and Stripes Alaska* military newspaper. Mike also volunteered for the State of Alaska Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, where he advocated for the rights of senior citizens residing in elder care facilities and worked in both secondary and adult education fields. He authored several books, *28 October, 1942: A Date That Will Live Forever in Black Military History*, *Monroe County Murder: The Southern Civil Rights Struggle (1940-1980)*, and *The 95<sup>th</sup> Colored Engineer Regiment: The African-Americans Who Built the Road to Alaska During WWII*. Appointed to Seat A on the Wasilla City Council in 2017, Mike was remembered by his colleagues as a tireless civil servant.

Stephen Michael "Mike" Dryden passed away unexpectedly on August 22, 2020. He was preceded in death by his parents, David and Virginia Dryden, and his brother, Butch Dryden. He is survived by his sister, Melody Dryden Beatty of Highlands Ranch, Colorado.

The members of the Thirty-Second Alaska State Legislature express sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mike Dryden, who will always be remembered, loved, respected, and missed by all those who were fortunate enough to have had him touch their lives.



*Louise Stutes*  
LOUISE STUTES  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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PETER MICCICHE  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPONSOR

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