Unification Church Leader Had Strong Ties to Kodiak

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In this 2005 file photo, Unification Church leader Rev. Sun Myung Moon speaks during his "Now is God's Time" rally in New York. (AP Photo/John Marshall Mantel)

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Korean religious leader who founded the Unification Church died in South Korea at the age of 92.

The Reverend Sun Myung Moon died at a hospital the church owns near his home in Gapyeong. He was hospitalized with pneumonia last month, and his condition grew worse late last week.

Moon also built a business empire that included newspapers, schools, a ski resort and dozens of other ventures in several countries, including a peace institute, carmaker and, in North Korea, a hotel.

Here in Kodiak where Reverend Moon has a large following, the Unification Church owns International Seafoods and several fishing boats. On Sunday, fleet manager Tom Parsons told the Anchorage Daily News that many plant employees were at the Unification Church for services related to Moon's death.

He said the president of International Seafoods went to South Korea when the seriousness of Moon's illness became apparent.

Parsons said Moon loved to sportsfish and used to visit Kodiak several times a year. In June he'd come to fish for kings, and he'd come back in August and September to angle for coho.

Parsons said the reason International Seafoods was located here was because Moon liked Kodiak so much.

According to its website, the Unification Church of Kodiak hosts an annual program for teens inspired by Moon's belief that leaders can be developed from training in maritime skills and fishing.