

UFA Announces First "Hall of Fame" Inductees

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Erik Wander/KMXT

The United Fishermen of Alaska introduced the inaugural members of its Seafood Industry Hall of Fame at ComFish's gala dinner Thursday evening. Among those inducted were some familiar names in Kodiak.

Kodiak resident Al Burch, of the Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association, received a standing ovation when he was announced as an inductee. According to UFA, Burch deserved the honor for helping develop the groundfish industry in the Gulf of Alaska and was instrumental in helping shape federal fisheries management. Burch talked about what the honor meant to him.

-- (Burch 1 26 sec. "I've been working for ... very, very prestigious group.")

Burch said he was surprised by the honor, only realizing that he was among the inductees when he saw the program for the evening. Still, he said he had his suspicions.

-- (Burch 2 22 sec. "It kind of ranges through ... a story or two to each piece.")

Another charter member of the hall with Kodiak connections was Chuck Bundrant, chairman of Trident Seafoods, based in Seattle. Accepting the award on Bundrant's behalf was John van Amerongen, director of communications for Trident. Van Amerongen spoke of Bundrant's humble beginnings in the fishing industry in Kodiak, where Burch gave him his first job.

-- (van Amerongen 1 52 sec. "It was an award from ... where he got his start.")

The concept of the hall of fame was developed in order to inspire people to make a difference, according to Mark Vinsel, executive director of United Fishermen of Alaska, who announced the inductees at the event.

-- (Vinsel 1 32 sec. "To take those steps ... deserve such recognition.")

Another inductee of local interest was the late Oscar Dyson, who according to UFA, pioneered research and development of Alaska's crab and groundfish fisheries. Dyson, who worked in Alaska's fishing industry for about 50 years, died in 1995. Also among the 20 inductees were former Governor Jay Hammond and former U.S. Senators Ernest Gruening, Bob Bartlett and Ted Stevens. Stevens was in attendance to receive a lifetime achievement award.

I'm
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