Rulo, NE

Al Mathews, formerly of Wasilla, Alaska, died peacefully at his mother's home in Rulo, Nebraska August 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 on November 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 that 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 northern backcountry. 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 the age of 16 joined his father living in Juneau where he finished high school in 1970 and began a lifelong fishing tradition. Well noted as a person that "never met a stranger" his outgoing nature led him to befriend experienced fishermen that refined his angling skills. Navigating the Yukon, Tanana and other major rivers and tributaries he continued to build his knowledge and during the summer of 1989 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 near 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 near the old Dick Mitchell ranch and fighting forest fires. Al's last job in Alaska was

working for a mining operation outside of Cantwell. During his lifetime he also lived in Wasilla, Tok, Glenallen, Copper Center, Anchorage and at the original Ray Mathews homestead in Tanacross.

Al loved kids, 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 the right company for any adventure. Like any good 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.

A memorial and celebration of Al's life will be held Saturday August 20, 2016 at 10:30 am at the George Ogden Building on the Iowa Reservation near White Cloud, Kansas. Inurnment will follow at the Partelow Cemetery, nearby.

Al Mathews is preceded in death by his brother Ty Mathews and father Raymon E. Mathews. Surviving is his Mother Stella Coble of Rulo, NE, Sisters Lisa Coble of Wichita, KS and Linda Rae Strong of Sacramento, CA. Also surviving are children Skyler Mathews, Kira Parker, and Ciera Burgarin all of Ponca City, OK. Also surviving is Aunt Carolyn Marie Baldwin Mathews of Sand Springs, OK, half-brothers Joe Baughman/Mathews of Leeds, UT, Brad Harris of Humboldt, NE and Ron Harris of Haysville, KS along with numerous grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Chapel Oaks Funeral Home in Hiawatha, is assisting the family. In lieu of flowers please send donations in Memorial of Al Mathews to the Humane Society of Richardson County, PO Box 365, Falls City, NE 68355. Contact Ardis Ramsey at 402-245-2779 email: rramsey@sentco.net