

## **Walter "Wally" Firth.** (b. 1935)

Wally Firth, a Métis from Fort McPherson was elected as the first Native MP for the Northwest Territories in 1972. Walter (Wally) Firth was born January 25, 1935 in Fort McPherson, NWT. His father was William Firth (1895-1980) and his mother, Mary Wilson (1916-1986). Wally's grandfather, John Firth, who came to the north in the 1870s as a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employee. His service with the HBC included time as manager of the Peel River Post (Fort McPherson). John married Margaret, the Metis daughter of Alexander Stewart in 1875. Following John Firth's retirement in 1921, the management of his HBC post was passed on to family members, first to his son-in-law Jack Parsons and later his son William.

Wally Firth served as the New Democratic Party (NDP) Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories (NWT) from 1972-1979. Self-educated, except for two years when he studied electronics at age 12 and 13, Wally Firth had a variety of careers including bush pilot, flying instructor, broadcaster and fur trader. He was also active as a Native rights advocate. In February and March 1971 he was a field worker for Yukon Native Brotherhood (YNB) in Old Crow. Over the years, he lived in Fort McPherson, Arctic Red River, Ottawa, Victoria, Old Crow, and he retired to Whitehorse in 2000.



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