

Iditarod Trail Committee
2100 South Knik-Goose Bay Road • Wasilla, Alaska 99654
907.376.5155 • www.iditarod.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2025

The ITC Mourns the Loss of Head Veterinarian, Dr. Stu Nelson

Wasilla, Alaska – It is with great sadness that we announce that the Iditarod’s Head Veterinarian, Dr. Stuart Nelson, passed away earlier this week in Idaho. Dr. Stu Nelson, Jr. has been a part of the Iditarod Family and an integral part of The Last Great Race® for 38 years and will be missed tremendously.

We encourage everyone to reflect on the work that Dr. Stu Nelson, Jr. has done for the health and wellbeing of sled dogs over the past (almost) four decades. Stuart Nelson Jr., DVM, graduated from the University of Missouri School of Veterinary Medicine, where his father served on the faculty as a veterinarian. His deep love for Alaska and the outdoors, along with his enthusiasm working with sled dogs and researching animal athletes, shaped a career that perfectly aligned with his passions. In his interview for [Faces of the Iditarod](#), when asked, “what do you know for sure,” Stu stated so perfectly, “Well, I know that we all die; that our Creator has given us the opportunity to be here; that we must be the best stewards of our animal athletes that we can possibly be.”

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his partner, Karen McNaught, her daughter, Isabel, partner of musher, Riley Dyche, and all of Stu’s family, friends, loved ones and those in both the Veterinarian and Iditarod communities. At this time, no other information is available. With regard to funeral or memorial service, updates will be provided as they become available.

###

Media contact:

Shannon Noonan
Iditarod Trail Committee
shannon.noonan@iditarod.com