

## **AFN Presidency**

Congratulations are in order for two of our leaders. Sam Kito deserves a great deal of recognition for his performance as president of the Alaska Federation of Natives during the past two years. Byron Mallot is to be congratulated for his appointment to succeed Sam on February 1.

The job of president of the AFN is one of the most demanding and least rewarding positions a Native leader may assume during these times. As past presidents Roger Lang, Willie Hensley, Emil Notti and Don Wright will gladly confirm, an AFN president usually has to talk his successor into taking the job before the incumbent may leave and do other things.

Five years ago, the AFN president had to concern himself with a half dozen interest groups in advocating for a settlement of the land claims. Now, there are regional profit corporations, regional non-profit corporations, more than two hundred village corporations, a multitude of state and federal agencies and committees, educational organizations and entities—all demanding the attention of the AFN president to their particular problems.

Sam has done an outstanding job for us, for our corporations and villages and tribes, for our students, for our subsistence hunters, for all our varied peoples. His effectiveness in moving legislation through Juneau the past session with favorable programs for our people and with adequate budgets is a brilliant example of how Sam has been working hard to get the job done for us.

He has done equally well in Washington. Sam Kito cultivated relationships with key Members of Congress on important committees, and with decision-makers in both state and federal bureaucracies, which have proved very beneficial for Alaska Native interests.

Additionally, Sam has promoted an image publicly of the Alaska Native assuming his rightful place in the decision-making process. He has ably represented us to the press and public. And he has done this with little reward or acknowledgement of his efforts. Sam will tell you himself that an Alaska Native leader is "a guy who doesn't know whether he is being followed or being chased." Indeed, Sam has made great sacrifices in order to serve the Alaska Native people. He left the regional profit corporation activity, where the most of management talent has settled, in order to serve a term as an under-paid and continually harassed spokesman for Natives. We cannot imagine how Sam was able to talk Byron into assuming the job, but he must have had to talk fast.

Congratulations and thanks Sam Kito—for a job well done. We wish you well in your future endeavors.

We imagine that Byron Mallott is desperately trying to figure out how to grow a thicker skin before replacing Sam. At 33, Byron brings maturity, experience, administrative credibility, and strong leadership qualities to the presidency. A past Commissioner of Community and Regional Affairs in state government, he has comprehensive knowledge of the governmental process and how to influence it. He is chairman of the board of the Sealaska Corporation, owner of a boat charter business, a village corporation leader—and this depth in business activity will prove invaluable to his responsibilities in representing our profit corporate interests.

Byron enters the presidency at a time when social service needs are competing for attention with the requirements of the regional profit corporations. We believe that he will constructively resolve the controversy in a manner acceptable to most of us. We wish to commend him for accepting the new post.