

Another resignation is called for

While there was a nationwide outcry for James Watt's resignation, right here in Alaska a man in a highly-paid public position made another in a series of editorial statements not only degrading an entire culture but also trying to raise public sentiment against the people who live in that culture.

This should not be tolerated.

Watt's resignation was brought about because he made a poor choice of words showing insensitivity to minority groups in this country. We call for Dr. Arthur E. Hippler's resignation from his tenured position with the University of Alaska on similar but more serious grounds. Because while Watt's remarks were extemporaneous, Dr. Hippler had more than adequate time to prepare what is, to our mind, a vicious and racist column under the thin veneer of humor. And in point of fact, he referred to the most insulting and insensitive sections of his column as "funny" to our reporter.

We are running his column verbatim as it appeared in the September 29 issue of the Anchorage Times. We wonder how long the University of Alaska will allow this gentleman to continue spewing such inflammatory garbage behind the banner of respectability and prestige of the University.

Surely the University must see that its very reputation as a respected institution of higher learning is at stake here. To retain such an individual on its payroll is tantamount to endorsing and promoting racial bigotry of the lowest order.

The column in question could as easily have been written by an uneducated lackey for the Ku-Klux-Klan as by a tenured, published professor of anthropology, a man who can call himself a scientist, a member of what should be the honorable Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Dr. Hippler can hide behind the first amendment when he editorializes within the pages of a newspaper such as the Anchorage Times. That is, after all, what freedom of the press is all about. A banner of the Tundra Times for many years was Voltaire's famous quotation: "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." We still live and stand by that motto.

What we do protest, and in the most vehement manner possible, is cloaking such vitriolics and prejudiced opinions behind the facade of a doctorate, and behind the position of a tenured employee of Alaska's highest educational system. In our system today, such degrees and doctorates are supposed to lend credence and respectability to whatever utterances are made. If such were to be the case in this instance, then the reader is invited to ridicule and lambast a culture and tradition, by a person who is supposed to be a scientist of cultures and traditions.

This is abominable.

If Dr. Hippler sees humor behind such poisonous statements; and if the University of Alaska implicitly condones such utterances; and if the Anchorage Times endorses these writings; then we are in a position in which our very essence as decent and caring people is being sorely tested.

And if Dr. Hippler is allowed to retain his position, without recourse, we all will have failed a portion of that test.