

Alaskans pay tribute to Howard Rock

"By nature Howard Rock was a quiet man, but at the same time he was strong, constant and competent," wrote U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens on the death of the Tundra Times editor.

"His newspaper provided the means for the Alaskan Natives to debate issues, to gather opinion from all Alaska, to influence thinking and decision making on a reasonable and rational basis. Even under strong pressures Howard remained objective and fair. I shall always remember him as a very important and steady voice of the Alaska Native People."

Both U. S. Sen. Mike Gravel and U. S. Rep. Don Young spoke of the publishers effectiveness as a voice for his people. Gravel said that besides delivering a message of justice, he conveyed "an understanding of a culture and a way of life to all Alaskans."

Of all the tributes, perhaps the most intimate came from Tom Snapp, editor of the All Alaska Weekly who helped Rock found the Tundra Times and worked

closely with him over the years.

"His loss is an inestimable one for Alaska and its people—he touched so many people, his influence was so great.

"By stressing appreciation of environment, culture, and tradition in his own life, he set an example that won wide persuasion.

"He was the heart and soul of Tundra Times, the small tabloid newspaper, which fought for the rights and betterment of Alaska Native peoples."

Gov. Jay Hammond called Rock "an unusual man with remarkable qualities."

"No one can fill the void he leaves," the governor said. "And few possess the qualities he brought to his work, his state, his many worthy causes and to his friends."

Friends and readers of the paper who did not personally know Rock, wrote too, expressing strong feelings of loss.

"In his Native language, Howard Rock often spoke of someone as "Inupiaq"—a "real man, a true human being." No

finer word can be found to describe Howard himself," wrote Wally Olson a close friend of Rock and the Tundra Times.

"The challenges he faced and the influence he exerted, enlarged immeasurably the scope of the Native participation in the political, economic and cultural affairs of the state," noted Clarence Antioquia, area director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "His impact on those institutions governing the welfare of Native people will be felt and appreciated for generations to come."

Morris Thompson, commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. also expressed sorrow at the news, but added that "The Tundra Times stands as a living memorial to a man whose contributions to Alaska Natives and his state will not be forgotten."

Robert G. Hart, general manager of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Department of the Interior, wired condolences from his board.

"The contributions he made in his lifetime for the good of Native people were fruitful and enriched all our lives," Hart said, "We on the board depended upon Howard for a very special

kind of wisdom concerning cultural assets affecting his own people. We relied on his sensitive counsel as an artist, writer and journalist to guide us. As a commissioner of this board his initiative was directly responsible for fostering the development of a new concept for Native culture education in the state of Alaska."

A sad note came from Rock's long time friend Captain Moe Cole, now retired from the Bureau Of Indian Affairs freighter "North Star". Moe couldn't come to the funeral because he was himself in Virginia Mason Hospital.

"Please extend my sympathy to the family" Cole wired, the Native people have lost a great leader and also a true friend."

Agnes Pete Griffith, former Tundra Times reporter, added an optimistic voice.

"I was thinking that though he has died, he still lives on in the minds of men. Great men don't fade away easily and I am sure Howard will be remembered for many years as the great editor of the Tundra Times."