

# UA STRESS COMMUNICATIONS

## Degrees Conferred on Communications Men At Commencement

By MARGIE BAUMAN



**COMMUNICATIONS STRESSED** — University of Alaska President Robert Hiatt, extreme right, and his Board of Regents this year picked three men involved in communications on whom the university conferred honorary degrees and these men are, left to right: Robert W. Sarnoff, chief executive officer of RCA; William Randolph Hearst, Jr., director of Hearst Corp.; and Howard Rock, editor of the Tundra Times. The honors were conferred on a sunny afternoon on May 19 on the campus of the University of Alaska.

— Photo by JIMMY BEDFORD.

**FAIRBANKS** — The University of Alaska Sunday honored for their distinguished achievements in communications RCA executive Robert W. Sarnoff, and journalists William Randolph Hearst Jr. and Howard Rock.

In ceremonies at the University's Patty Gymnasium, honorary doctor of law degrees were conferred on Sarnoff, chairman and chief executive officer of RCA Corp., and Hearst, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who is chairman, vice president and director of the Hearst Corp.

Tundra Times editor Rock, the son of a Point Hope whaling captain who took on publication of the statewide Native newspaper nearly 12 years ago to provide a united voice for Native peoples, received the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters "for his contributions to art and journalism and his great humanity."

In presenting the award, the university cited Rock for being a "sensitive artist and writer, voice of Alaska's Native people."

As for the newspaper itself, the university said "few publications have had the impact of that newspaper, with its unique perspective. Through it, he encouraged the political organization of the Native people and pressed continuously for settlement of their long-standing land claims, a goal finally achieved in 1971. Friendly persuasion

rather than militancy has marked his journalistic efforts and won for him high honors and great respect."

Hearst was saluted as a "distinguished journalist, who at two critical times in her history has come to Alaska's aid in her struggle for political and economic development." Sarnoff was cited for his work which has "contributed so significantly to the advancement of communications in Alaska, in the world and in space."

In his commencement address, Sarnoff told the class of 1974 that the new federal budget's \$1.8 billion for research on solving the energy shortage has been committed to a program lacking in central leadership and clear design.

The \$1.8 billion is distributed mainly among four different and sometimes competing agencies — the Atomic Energy Commission, the Department of the Interior, the National Science Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency. "It shows every sign of having been conceived in haste," Sarnoff said.

"Only time will tell whether we shall repent at leisure."

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"There appears to be no relationship to any long-term policy other than a general commitment to a goal loosely described as independence from foreign energy sources. Is this to be taken literally — and if so, is it feasible or even desirable?" Sarnoff asked.

In a news conference later, Sarnoff charged that the Nixon administration had "probably done more to dismantle technology and science than any previous administration."

Sarnoff expressed concern with the future of communications in Alaska, a project into which RCA will have invested in excess of \$100 million by 1976, he said. RCA is planning to hold its September board of directors meeting in Alaska, he said.

Questioned about the progress of putting telephones and television into the bush however, Sarnoff said it was simply going to take time. He said that modification of the new satellite set for launching by 1975, would be extremely expensive.

A special communications committee of the Alaska Legislature had urged in the last session that RCA Global Com-

munications be urged to include a video transponder as part of the instrumentation on that satellite in order to bring television to isolated villages in Alaska in the foreseeable future.

The special communications committee also urged passage of a \$6 million bond issue to pay the cost of telecommunications equipment for the state and for creation of a Public Communications Commission whose responsibilities would include establishing a telecommunications system for the state.

The Committee cited the great need of Alaska, particularly its rural areas, for improved communications for purposes of education and health care, in addition to what most in the United States consider normal communications services.

The communications package passed the Senate, but got bogged down in the House in the final days of the session.

RCA spokesman said Alaska now has more earth stations for communications than any other state in the union, but declined to say how long it would be before telephone and television services reached the majority of Alaska's bush communities.