

Editorial Comment—

Alaska Natives Will Benefit from New School of Journalism

We are pleased to note that the University of Alaska President Robert W. Hiatt has recommended that the university's journalism department be upgraded to a state-wide School of Journalism in the university's recent reorganization.

The recognition is richly deserved by a department that has served Alaska well for 20 years. It has contributed much to journalism and broadcasting in Alaska through high quality education of many young journalists. The department's graduates are working on numerous newspapers, magazines and radio and TV stations in Alaska, as well as in many other positions requiring skill in communications. Its alumni include lawyers, doctors, teachers, business leaders and public officials.

The department's faculty also have contributed much in the way of public service. Prof. Jimmy Bedford helped our own Tundra Times get started and has advised it wisely for ten years. Bedford and Prof. Charles J. Keim have for many years encouraged Alaska's Native writers to write, helping them publish their work. Prof. John Ullmann helped establish The North Sloper, a new newspaper in Barrow.

Recently the department responded in another way to the needs of Alaska's Natives through the Village Correspondent Program. The program, planned and coordinated by Prof. B.G. Olson, involved the entire faculty. It took journalism training to 39 Alaska Natives through seminars in Barrow, Nome and Fairbanks, working closely with the media. The seminars offered 20 hours of concentrated instruction and practice in writing. And, the students have continued to write, sending their work to the journalism department for evaluation and continuing instruction by mail. The Tundra Times was happy to be a part of the program. It is highly successful, and we urge that it be continued next year.

The professors have lectured and advised in high schools, to professional groups, clubs and other organizations throughout the state for years. It is fitting that the university now formally recognize this long-standing state-wide program.

We commend President Hiatt for his vision. It is a positive step toward better educational opportunities for Alaska's Natives.