

Greiner Resigns UA Job

FAIRBANKS — James Greiner, author of "Wager with the Wind," the Don Sheldon story, has resigned as curator of exhibits at the University of Alaska Museum here to devote himself to writing full-time.

Greiner, who has been with the university since 1966, will leave his position on Feb. 28.

His book on the famed Talkeetna bush pilot, who died last month, has set sales records in Alaska and is reported selling well outside Alaska. Some 44,000 copies are in print and the publisher — Rand McNally — has scheduled a fourth printing.

Greiner has long wanted to write and the success of the Sheldon book, he says, led him to the decision to embark on a writing career.

Early in March he will leave on a five-week national tour sponsored by the publisher to promote the book. He will appear on television and radio in 15 cities — including New York and Los Angeles.

A Japanese firm plans to bring out a Japanese language edition of the book and 20th Century Fox has expressed interest in it, said Greiner.

Academy Award-winning actor Cliff Robertson, himself a flier, would like to play Sheldon, said Greiner. "He looks a lot like Sheldon and would be a natural."

A sequel to "Wager with the Wind" "is definitely a possibility," said the author, who has unused taped material from his many interviews with Sheldon he estimates would be the basis for up to a third of a second book. "Lots of people close to Don who flew with him and worked with

him have urged me to do another book," he said.

In his new career, Greiner expects to continue to write articles for newspapers and magazines, perhaps become a regular contributor to "Flying" magazine. He has been working on a novel for about a year and says a publisher has expressed an interest in looking at it. He may also do a biography of another Alaska bush pilot.

Greiner intends to remain in Fairbanks and travel as necessary to research his various writing projects. He and his family live in a log home on Chena Ridge they built themselves.

He will still be associated with the university after he leaves the museum position at a month's end. He is working on a master's degree in creative writing and serving as a consultant to the university's television station, KUAC-TV, in production of a documentary program on Sheldon.