

Letters to the Tundra Times

Tribute to

Eben Hopson

August 1, 1980

Dear Editor:

After reading your July 9th issue of Tundra Times about Mayor Eben Hopson's death I felt compelled to write this letter. I was Director of Public Safety under Eben for 3½ years and worked with him and for him almost on a daily basis. While controversy certainly surrounded my leaving Barrow in January, I feel it is important for people to know how I felt about Eben. In 1976 Eben asked me to be the Director of a new Public Safety Department under the Borough government. We had many discussions about the role of public safety in the North Slope. He was strongly supportive of all my efforts thereafter to bring safety, peace, and security to the people of the North Slope. Early in the development of the State's first locally controlled tri-service public safety department operating on a regional basis for native villages Eben told me that he would support its development and insure that there would be no political interference. He wanted the same services available and provided to larger cities for his people

in rural villages. I want the people of the North Slope and of Alaska to know that he kept his word.

I have never worked for a finer individual nor a person with consistent foresight in matters that effected his people. He fought the state government in establishing this locally controlled department, backed up and stood firm when controversy surrounded both the department's authority and jurisdiction, and even maintained confidence and support in me when I was faced with a grand jury indictment. He gained my respect early, I only hope he gained respect for me. He was a fighter when an issue arose and had tremendous tenacity when confronting problems that arose over the years.

There were constant battles over issues of public safety and law enforcement on the North Slope and Eben lead them all to a very successful conclusion. In fact his last involvement with the department that he created was to insure the completion of a Regional Service Center for public safety that included the best facilities for detention in the state establishing locally controlled community-based corrections for the North Slope. I'm sure he felt as I did that native people of the North should not be sent "outside" of the slope to serve time in an alien environment separated from family, friends, and visitors. He also saw to it that there would no longer be reason for people in

distant villages to live even one day in fear of an intoxicated person with a rifle shooting up the village. Children could live in safety and peace, older citizens could live without fear of intimidation or threats. Above all, Eben brought peace, safety, and security to the villagers and their children should not forget this — Eben was responsible for far better lives lived in his villages from that date on. He believed in justice for all and saw that it was done whatever the obstacle. Eben brought justice to his people in the North Slope. A major accomplishment for which his name will not and should not be forgotten with his passing.

Eben and I agreed in early July of 1976 that local control over public safety and law enforcement meant native control and not white administrative independence. That agreement was maintained right up to January 23, 1980 when Eben dismissed me over the controversy of an alcohol study that was perceived as a slight against the people of the North Slope. It was never meant to be that, at least not by me. I suppose it seems strange that a man who was fired by Eben would praise him — but it could never be any other way as far as I am concerned. He fought for his people and those would not or could not understand that are forever missing the importance of Eben's life. I respected Eben in life and I will forever respect him in death.

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Letters to the Tundra Times

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I sincerely hope that others will follow his example in strength and courage — Eben had both in large measure.

One who would call
Eben and the people
of the North — Friend
Kim Moeller
P.O. Box 16
Sand Point, AK 99661

Arthur Hippler/ Safeway Stores

701 S. Klewin No. 26
Anchorage, AK. 99504
August 18, 1980

Dear Editor:

The irrationality of Arthur E. Hippler in his views of Eskimos and whaling can be demonstrated simply by supplanting Eskimos/Whaling with Arthur Hippler/Safeway stores. . . .

Arthur Hippler bases his claim to groceries on two grounds, one that there is a nutritional need and that he will go hungry if he does not go grocery shopping. . . the second leg of the Arthur Hippler argument is that his culture demands grocery shopping and that somehow his cultural identity will wither if he does not engage in this afternoon leisurely activity, but that somehow grocery shopping will preserve it. Both arguments are specious. There is nowhere in Alaska that groceries are crucial to anyone's nutrition. . . groceries are unqualifiedly not necessary for anyone's nourishment.

The second is equally inadequate, but more emotional. No one can tell someone else what their culture should be. But in reality, all those things that go to make up a truly distinct cultural tradition, with the exception of the language are extinct now. . . .

Arthur Hippler, however, has a tremendously powerful argument that he should exert to the fullest if he wants to go grocery shopping. It is the simple admission that he likes to spend money. . . .

The weakness of Arthur is his racist character. Why can not everyone go grocery shopping if he wants to? I'm sure any number of non-urbanites might like the chance. . . how many (Safeways) are there? Arthur Hippler is not a reliable, because not unbiased source, of such information. . . National quotas for this leisure, and it is a leisure, should be allocated by lottery to anyone interested (the only fair way), and no preference provided by race. If Arthur Hippler is the most interested, he will mostly be the quota applicant. If not, so be it.

It is kinda silly to be trying to overcome racism (as we are) by tying all kinds of quotas in every sphere of life to race (which we also are). This strategy may someday backfire with terrible resolute, if we do not abandon and denounce it now.

Sincerely,
Gilbert Hendrickson

—University of Alaska (Institute for Social and Economic Research) Associate Professor of Anthropology Arthur Hippler in his Sunday column in the Anchorage Times.

"...no place for extremists."

Naval Arctic Research Laboratory
Barrow, Alaska 99723

19 August 1980

Dear Editor:

I recently received our issue of the Tundra Times which

printed Arthur Hippler's views on Inupiat culture and your editorial on it. I certainly do not endorse Dr. Hippler's views. However, I was also a bit disappointed with your remarks which gave me the impression that the University of Alaska was not responsive or culturally sensitive to Inupiat values.

Every research institute at the University with which I have regular contact is very sensitive to the cultural needs of the native Americans of our State. Your opening paragraph is most apropos to the problem when you state that "the extremists believe that there is no place for human beings in the Arctic Ecosystem." The truth is that there is a very real place for the human beings. There is no place for the extremists.

The Naval Arctic Research Laboratory is a research unit of the University of Alaska which is operated under contract for the Office of Naval Research. Over the 33-year history of this Laboratory, it has interacted strongly with the Inupiat community. Numerous individuals have become valued research consultants, informants, assistants, and co-workers. The native people have a profound knowledge of their environment and an attachment to their land. It is also very understandable that they are apprehensive about the changes resulting from resource development and the cultural impact that will result.

The Inupiat leaders respect research which can lead to the protection of their arctic homeland and preservation of their culture. We were very well aware and sensitive to this when we developed our PROJECT WHALES research program through financial support from the Bureau of Land Management/OCS program (Anchorage). At the very inception of the program, association was made with the North Slope Borough School District, Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, and Alaska Federation of Natives. This association was a valuable one and afforded active participation of our Inupiat colleagues in this extensive and multidisciplinary project.

PROJECT WHALES is now over. It is gratifying to us to note that followup projects are being sponsored directly by the AEW. It also saddens us that the NARL will soon cease to exist as a scientific laboratory due to lack of funding and an unsuccessful search for a new host. It disappoints us that despite the numerous positive comments for the continuation of the Laboratory from the local, national, and international science communities that it will enter a caretaker phase and ultimate closure particularly at a time when arctic research activity in Alaska shows promise of sudden and continued growth.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. John J. Kelley
Technical Director