

Clark's Colleague: AFN Attorney Unjustly Accused

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The relationship between the Alaska Federation of Natives and its

attorneys is a complex and often strained one. Even more confusing is the relationship between the attorneys who represent the AFN.

In a story which appeared

in the February 10 issue of the Tundra Times, AFN counsel Ramsey Clark was reported to be acting contrary to the wishes of his clients.

It was alleged by certain at-

torneys and others concerned with Alaska Native affairs, that former Attorney General Clark believed 60 million acres was too large an amount of land to seek and that he was actively

lobbying for 10 million acres of land as part of the Alaska Native land claims settlement.

When confronted with the charge, a representative of the

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AFN Attorney . . .

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firm with which Clark is associated (Paul, Weiss, Goldberg, Rifkind, Wharton, and Garrison) expressed amazement that such an allegation had been advanced.

A number of the principals involved in the effort to resolve the Alaska Native land claims feared that the former Attorney General had been unjustly accused.

Tlingit and Haida attorney I.S. Weissbrodt, a well respected lawyer noted for his experience in Indian claims, expressed concern that Clark's professional ethics had been wrongly questioned.

"Mr. Clark has observed the canons of ethics. I have never seen any sign that he has acted against the wishes of his clients. He is a decided asset to the Alaska Natives," stated Weissbrodt.

The originators of the charge against Clark, contacted this week by the Tundra Times, admitted that perhaps there was little foundation for the allegation.

They indicated that, while they feel Clark may have private feelings about seeking 10 million acres as opposed to the 60 million acre figure, the former Attorney General has not actively lobbied against the wishes of his clients.