

# Rose Albert paints self portrait of winner

By Dan Bloom

Tundra Times Correspondent

Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic, and Rose Albert dog-mushed to Nome. In both cases, they said it could never be done, but Columbus did it in 1492 and Albert did it in 1982.

The first Native woman to ever enter and finish the world-famous Iditarod Sled Dog Race, Rose Albert crossed the finish line on a cold and windy afternoon along the ice-choked Bering Sea in Nome and immediately told reporters she was very happy to be there.

"It was a lot of fun," she beamed at the finish line, with a big smile for the photographers.

She looked relaxed and refreshed after the long and storm-swept race from Anchorage to Nome, and an admiring crowd of visitors and race fans welcomed the Ruby artist and writer to Nome. Her dogs were in excellent condition.

"It was a great race," Rose told a reporter, "and I was sad it had to end. I could have gone on for another 1,000 miles. I feel really good."

Albert said that she was proud to be the first Native woman to finish the difficult race and hoped that her example would be an inspiration to other young Native women across the state.

"If you've got determination, you can do almost anything you want," Albert said, her remarks full of confidence and self-assurance.

"I hope that the younger Native women reading about me in the papers will be inspired to join the race in future years. It's just a question of getting the dogs and training for the 1,000 miles. But there are a lot of other Native women in the state who can do it, too, and I just say: Go for it! Go for it and do it!"

Rose Albert is 25 and a graduate of the Indian Art Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Born in Ruby, she is an accomplished artist as well as a trail-proven musher. One of her oil paintings was sold at the Iditarod awards banquet for \$700. It was a picture of dogs mushing along the trail.

Will she paint more pictures now that she has raced the Iditarod?

"I took a lot of mental pictures along the trail this year," Albert told a reporter, "and when I get back to Ruby I plan to start painting again. My dream is to have my own art gallery in my village someday."

Rose says that she will skip the 1983 Iditarod but will definitely be back for the 1984 race, during Alaska's Silver Anniversary celebration.

"I'll be back in 1984 for sure and I want to get a dog team prepared for that one," she says. "And I also hope to

line up a group of sponsors as well."

Rose Albert has a lot of the same kind of charisma and friendliness that Herbie Nayokpuk of Shishmaref is famous for, and if she becomes a regular on the Iditarod Trail, she may very well become a legend in her own time. People Magazine in New

Yrok City has already expressed interest in writing a story about Ruby's Rose Albert. If you see her picture on the front page of Newsweek or Time Magazine in the next few years, don't be surprised.

Rose Albert ("The Iditarod Rose") is one woman who is going places. Nome was just her first stop.