

# **Superb choice**

Morris Thompson was an excellent choice for the job of President of the Alaska Federation of Natives. His qualifications include a superb blend of ability, experience, and personality. Thompson's background in state government as a key advisor to the governor, in federal government as Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Alaska BIA Director, and in private enterprise as vice president for Northwest Alaskan Pipeline Company is well known to most of us.

Any one who has had the privilege of working with Thompson on a project is aware of his winning personality, his inclination to be a team player, and his open door policy in listening to his constituency.

Thompson assumes the top Native post in the state at a time of uncertainty and apprehension about the future of our statewide Native community. Native corporation turmoil has been lead story material for the major newspapers in Alaska. Congress and the Carter Administration are carving up vast areas of Alaska into assorted land-use categories, making decisions which tremendously affect the Alaska Native and his or her use of land and resources. Cultural and economic survival of Alaska Native peoples is of utmost concern to our Native community. Time is running out on villages in their efforts to become viable entities.

The problems are serious and the challenge is great. This is the first time Thompson has actually been a salaried representative of Native people, directly on our payroll. In a real sense, he has made a commitment to fulfill a period of service to the Native cause. We applaud him and thank him for that choice and congratulate the AFN for making the appointment. Thompson will serve us well. Now, it is up to the rest of us to dedicate ourselves to the support of his efforts and burdensome responsibilities.

Survival is our only option. We need to do more than wish Thompson well. We must also follow him to victory.