

TT BANQUET GREAT SUCCESS

Tundra Times Annual Feast Sparks Season

By MARGIE BAUMAN

ANCHORAGE — Tundra Times editor Howard Rock, a writer and artist whose newspaper has become recognized as the voice of Native Alaskans, was honored Monday night for more than a decade of unique journalism.

For several hours before a packed dinner audience at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage the tributes poured in, from a distinguished list of speakers ranging from publishers and politicians to the Native leadership of Alaska.

"Howard Rock is an editor, writer, artist, historian—but most especially, he's an Eskimo," said Roger Lang, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives Inc. "Through his writing, he transfers his concerns for the people. Howard has taught us the most important lesson there is—that first you are a Native," Lang said.

Lang noted the impressive list of honorary degrees of R. Sargent Shriver, the 1972 Democratic vice-presidential candidate, who was the keynote speaker at the dinner honoring Rock and the Tundra Times.

The editor, raised in the North Slope village of Point Hope, "owns honorary degrees in hardship and need," Lang said.

Shriver, who flew nearly 5,000 miles from the nation's capital to attend the dinner, offered his congratulations too, to the Tundra Times, but devoted most of his speech to blasting the Nixon administration for the economic and political problems facing the nation today. He appealed to Republicans at the dinner to help oust the present administration, commenting "they gave us Nixon and they can take him away."

His criticism of Nixon was greeted with mixed emotions,

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especially Nixon supporters in attendance who grimaced at Shriver's words.

Other speakers, among them the publishers of Alaska's two largest newspapers, stayed clear of politics and lavished praise on Rock for his journalistic accomplishments.

"Howard has earned any honor we folks can give him," said Robert Atwood of the Anchorage Daily Times.

"He created a newspaper out of just an idea," Atwood said. "If you have an idea and you pursue it, there's no limit to where you can go.

"This delay in the money does change things," Atwood said, referring to a lawsuit tying up \$130 million due to Native regional corporations from the Alaska Native Fund. "It's just another instance where Alaskans are suffering from absentee controls—but we'll find some way to get that money."

Publisher C.W. Snedden of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner hailed Rock for his influence in settling the land claims issue.

"If we had a few more Howard Rocks, we would have had the land claims settled sooner," he said.

Congressman Don Young, whose telegram of congratulations was read by State Sen. Willie Hensley, D-Kotzebue, said Rock had transformed the Tundra Times from an idea into an institution. Other tributes came by letter from Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton, Ann Stevens, wife of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, at the head table with Rock, and Frank Degnan of Unalakleet, who spoke of the history of the paper.

One of the highlights of the dinner was an auction of a painting and sketch of a whale hunt—both done by Rock in his office at the Tundra Times. Executive director Sam Kito of Doyon, Limited, regional Native Corporation of the Interior, used a fork for a gavel in the lively auction. Top bidders for the oil painting, at \$4,500 was Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. Doyon President John Sackett had the top bid of \$1,600 for a sketch by Rock of the same scene.

Prior to the bidding Rock spoke for several minutes about his background as an artist, the story behind the painting being auctioned and the Tundra Times. Of the latter, he said, "It's been rough going, but now it looks as if things will be better. We're still keeping our nose above water—maybe soon we'll be able to get up to our shoulders," he said.

Of the event, the largest sit-down dinner in Alaska history, Rock said, "I'm very proud."