

Editorial —

Elaine Ramos Affair

We cannot help but suspect that some of the blame for the Elaine Ramos affair should rest with the Native community. Without addressing the question of whether Dr. Hiatt was correct in his judgement that Elaine Ramos' professional performance was not up to acceptable standards, the manner in which the deed was executed was in extreme poor taste and not at all appropriate treatment for a lady of the stature of Ms. Ramos. It may be possible that Elaine Ramos is a very competent administrator, or it may also be possible that her talent may be better applied in a position of lesser responsibility. In either situation, the handling of the Ramos affair was bungled by the University and Dr. Hiatt, and it was bungled by the Native leadership involved.

What should have been a process involving thorough review by the education administrators and community leaders throughout Alaska who are closest to the rural education program may have been much less than that. If affidavits filed in the Ramos case can give an indication of what is most likely to have occurred, the University made the decision to ineptly terminate Mrs. Ramos upon the advice of one or two Native leaders without broad based input from the many interests involved. In the future, regardless of how the Ramos case is finally resolved, serious decisions about programs of such massive importance to Native people in rural communities should be made with more participation than University administration and a Native Mafia in isolated backroom dealings.

Such serious decision making should involve careful evaluation of circumstances and broad-based input from educators, education administrators and representatives of affected communities who care about the future and well-being of such an important program of bringing higher education opportunities to rural Alaska communities. It is incumbent upon the entire Alaska Native community to press for greater people participation in that process.

—T. R.j.