

Daily News Opinion

Stay free by listening to your 'Little Guy'

At age 6 I came home from Sunday school and told my mother I was going to live to be as old as Moses. Mother laughed. And how she could laugh!

Now, at age 90, I doubt if I can match Moses, but I feel blessed by a life of good health, the love of my wonderful wife, Ermalee, and our family. I also greatly value the friendship of many Alaskans and people throughout the North who share the values and visions that have propelled me into a life of public service and global involvement.

My 50-year dream that we are at the dawn of the Age of the Arctic is now a reality. I hope to live long enough to see the world appreciate, care for and benefit from the richness of the Arctic, both its untold beauty and its vast natural resources.

On my 90th birthday on the 18th, friends and family gathered for a Kansas farm-style picnic at the Hotel Captain Cook. Wally Hickel Jr., his family and the hotel staff organized it. The food was great, including an Alaska-shaped cake cooked by our son Joe, and we reconnected with old friends and family, some of whom traveled from as far away as Washington, D.C.

Messages were received from President George H.W. Bush, President Olafur Grimsón of Iceland and friends in Russia and elsewhere, and stories (some true) were told at an open microphone.

I am no Bill Egan when it comes to remembering names. And, as those who attended the party will attest, I forgot more names than usual that night. But throughout the evening, Ermalee and my secretary Carole Anderson reminded me of many, and to the rest, I apologize.

**WALLY
HICKEL**
COMMENT



As the Anchorage Daily News invites me to use this space on the editorial page once a month, and my longtime colleague and friend Malcolm Roberts helps string my ideas and thoughts together, here are some of my most strongly held beliefs at turning 90. And to make a difference in life, you have to believe.

- There is no legitimate reason for poverty. If we use the resources of this Earth wisely for the good of the people in each region, we can abolish poverty from this world.

- Alaska, the Owner State, can be a model for that better world. Our people own our state land and resources in common.

- An Owner State prospers when its leaders and citizens understand the obligations of ownership, and it requires a governor who has the courage to act as an owner.

- God didn't make the oil, gas, fish, forests, fresh air and water for any one company. He made them for everyone.

- Of course, we benefit from the private sector, including large corporations. But they don't own our land or our resources. We do!

- As an individual, the key to success is

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to stay free: financially free and free of conscience.

- Ideas are more important than money.
- If you don't believe what is being said in your presence, speak up. Silence implies consent. I spoke up in the Cabinet of the president of the United States. It eventually cost me my job, but my life — and, I believe, America — are better for it.

- Listen to your inner voice. I call it the "Little Guy." It doesn't matter what you call it, but pay attention.

- Why war? Why not big projects? War is just a big project. The resources of the Earth and people's lives are far too precious to waste on war.

- Anything conceivable in the human mind is possible.

- There's still so much to see and do in this world of ours. When I die, if St. Peter doesn't have room for me, I'm going to tell him to send me back because I'm not through yet!

Walter J. Hickel served as governor of Alaska 1966-1968 and 1990-1994 and as U.S. secretary of the interior 1969-1970. For his 90th birthday see www.90yearsofvision.com.