



Anchorage Daily News

J. Patrick Doyle President and Publisher **Patrick Dougherty** Senior Vice President & Editor **Matt Zancey** Editorial Page Editor

Michael J. Sexton, President and Publisher, 1999-2008 Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1971-1983
Fuller A. Cowell, Publisher, 1993-1999 Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1967-1971
Gerald E. Grilly, Publisher, 1984-1993 Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

President can spread Alaska's lesson

As millions stood on the vast mall in the heart of Washington, D.C., and billions watched worldwide, we discovered that the inauguration of President Barack Obama was not just about an individual. It was about a breakthrough for the human race. It was about the realities we face worldwide. And it was about stepping up to the challenges ahead of us.

On that historic day, President Obama demonstrated a clear understanding of this moment in history.

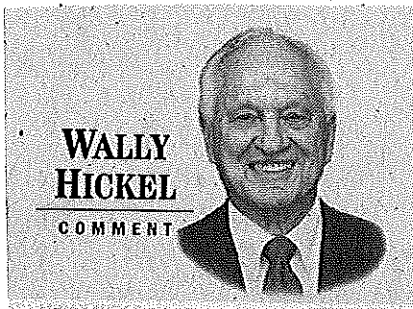
Former Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young says that Obama will be a "planetary leader." Other presidents have thought globally, but there is something unique about Barack Obama. He is the world, and the world likes what it sees.

The common man reads him well. For Obama, it's not personal. That's why he has sparked almost universal support and will have a lasting effect.

The impact of the images from the inauguration on tens of millions of African Americans, as well as the multi-ethnic community across our land and around the world, cannot be overstated. It's his competence and his confidence. He cracked the ceiling of prejudice through sheer talent, hard work, innate leadership and an instinct for good judgment.

Obama understands the gravity of the moment and the urgency of the task at hand. He will shape and guide the recovery, both economic and in terms of fundamental values, just as he led his campaign for president with a steady hand, a gift for inspiration, and a rock-solid belief in the best of American ideals.

Now that he is on the job at the White House, all Americans old enough to remember have JFK's timeless appeal



ringing in our ears. Each of us feels called on again to discover what we can do to help.

And Alaska and Alaskans have much to offer.

We should share with our new president the Alaska approach that has developed our successful relationships with the nations on the Pacific Rim and in the Far North.

The president didn't mention Russia or China in his inaugural address, but America can and must enlist these economic powers to help get the world back on its feet and move in more enlightened directions. And Alaskans can help him turn these former enemies into stalwart friends.

The key, we have discovered, as a state with a strong balance of trade with China and cordial relations with Russia, is to approach these countries and their people with respect for their cultures, their histories and their strengths.

We can also introduce our new president and his team to the Arctic world. To those in the Lower 48, the Arctic is as mysterious as the moon. But to us it is home, and it is rich in resources on land and sea. Our role will be to show how to tap our precious resources while caring

Each of us feels called on again to discover what we can do to help.

for the unique Arctic environment. There is another gift Alaska can offer at this time when those who have preached the gospel of "enlightened self interest" have driven us to the edge of another Great Depression. Here in Alaska we have created a very different model, using commonly owned lands and resources to benefit our people, all our people.

This model intrigues the Russians and the Chinese, because they share our tradition of common ownership, and they are interested in how we use our "commons" to create a strong economy and a healthy lifestyle in the context of a constitutional democracy.

I believe that the Alaska approach is the way forward for these nations and for many countries in Africa and the Middle East where millions are engulfed in war and conflict in spite of their great natural resource wealth.

No one is better suited and prepared to grasp the importance of the Alaska experience than President Barack Obama. And once he understands it, I believe he will take it to the world.

Walter J. Hickel served as governor of Alaska from 1966-1968 and from 1980-1984 and as U.S. Secretary of the Interior from 1989-1990. Founder of the Institute of the North, his latest book is "Crisis in the Commons: the Alaska Solution." He can be reached at wjhickel@gcl.net.