

Remarks of Norm Eck

November 1, 2012

This evening I want to take a few minutes to honor an Alaskan who has made a historic contribution to education.

I am president of CEAAC, the Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children.

In 1997, CEAAC began fighting for fair funding for school construction in rural Alaska. Rural education was at a dead low in our state at that time, with buildings in disgraceful condition. Ten years had passed without any new schools built.

Within two years, Howard had won a decision in Superior Court stating that the state's treatment of rural schools was unconstitutional, unfair, and racially discriminatory. That ruling broke the logjam, and since then the state has spent approximately 1.5 billion dollars on rural school construction, directly or indirectly because of the case.

With other partners, CEAAC and Howard next took on the state for the poor results in many of our rural schools. The Moore case was even bigger than Kasayulie, because the

purpose was to define the promise of the Alaska Constitution and make it real in students' lives.

That case became known nationally and has been written about as a model in a legal textbook. Howard stuck with it, year after year, when there seemed to be very little chance of success.

Attorney Colin Middleton, who was involved in the early phases of the case, couldn't be with us today, but he sent this message about Howard:

I am pleased that CEAAC is honoring Howard. He has been indefatigable in his work on both Kasayulie and Moore. He is brilliant as a litigation strategist, and brilliant as a trial lawyer. More so, he was particularly brilliant in forging a settlement of both cases. I admire Howard immensely, and I am very pleased he will be recognized by CEAAC Thursday.

I also want to recognize some of those who worked with Howard over the years, in addition to Colin, and who all deserve our thanks for their hard work. Please each of you, stand:

- Cheryl Mandala, who was Howard's associate at Jermain, Dunnagan and Owens
- Jeanine Huston, Howard's assistant at Jermain Dunnagan and Owens
- Rob Sato, of Sato and Sato
- And former Supreme Court Justice Alex Bryner, who helped CEAAC during settlement mediation.

Please give them a round of applause, as they join us in honoring Howard.

In fact, Howard is the only person present at the start of CEAAC who was also there when the Kasayulie and Moore cases settled, which occurred over the last year.

Thanks to those settlements, in one year alone the legislature has appropriated approximately 100 million dollars for rural school construction and more than 18 million dollars for programs targeted at struggling rural schools.

I have already received grants from those funds for my own district, to hire reading specialists. Because of this settlement, we will be seeing four-year-olds entering kindergarten all over the state over the next few years.

But on top of the money involved, the settlement locks in the interpretation of the Alaska constitution that CEAAC has been fighting for over many years. Now and forever more, the obligation of the state to our kids is set down in law.

Next time we need to defend Alaska's kids, it will be much easier.

Thanks to Howard's work, we will also have the resources to defend students' right to education. The Kasayulie settlement has allowed CEAAC to create a 300,000 dollar Constitutional Defense Fund.

This fund will be saved permanently, for use only when needed to stand up once again for the right to education in Alaska. It is CEAAC's legal arsenal, one we hope we won't need to use. As President Reagan used to say, "Peace through strength."

Today, we are announcing the creation of the Howard S. Trickey Constitutional Defense Fund.

We have copies of the resolution available that creates the fund. Let me read just one of the whereas sections before I invite Howard to join me.

Whereas, when others lost heart, Howard persevered in litigating the Moore suit for the benefit of neglected rural schools and students, and won major constitutional rulings that defined the public education right in Alaska and established the state's failure to fulfill it;

Now, therefore,

CEAAC designates a fund of \$300,000 for the purpose of the legal protection of the constitutional right of Alaska's children to public education; and

The fund shall be known as The Howard S. Trickey Constitutional Defense Fund.

Ladies and gentlemen, Howard Trickey...