



*A Tribute
to
Walter J. Hickel
from
The President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson*

As we in the North look back over the life of Walter Hickel on his 90th birthday, we salute a visionary leader, a true statesman who has transformed our view of the world.

Now, in the early 21st century, the Arctic and the Northern regions are finally being recognized as the Earth's most crucial territory, of monumental significance for the future of mankind.

All his life, Wally has been the champion of the North, from the times of President Eisenhower to the Administration of Barack Obama.

He has served with distinction, not only America but also all nations of the North; convinced people in every continent of the importance of the resource-rich commons.

He has been both a visionary and a man of action – a proud Alaskan who has inspired us all.

It was my great fortune to welcome Wally to the Presidential Residence in Iceland in the early years of my presidency. That meeting transformed my mission. Ever since then, it has been my privilege to serve as a footsoldier in Wally's forces, to benefit from his wisdom and insights, his comments and conclusions; to enjoy his stories and his jokes.

Wally Hickel has shown as a campaigner, as a Governor, as an activist and as a statesman, how one man can change the world.

On the occasion of his 90th birthday, Dorrit and I, and all Wally's friends and admirers in Iceland, send our congratulations to him and his family.

The people of the North salute a great leader and thank him for his work and inspiration.