

SB

222

STATEMENT TO THE STATE HOUSE AND SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEES ON:

A

HB 309 and SB 222

An act naming the Robert B. Atwood Building.

My name is Lew M. Williams, Jr. I began running Alaska newspapers in Wrangell in 1946. I retired as publisher of the Ketchikan Daily News after owning and/or running newspapers in Juneau, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka and Ketchikan over a period of 44 years. I currently serve on the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska.

I have known Robert (Bob) Atwood since 1946. I am currently editing a history of Alaska newspapers authored by his late wife, Evangeline.

Bob Atwood was chairman of the Alaska Statehood Committee in the 1950s which successfully lobbied for the legislation that created the State of Alaska. For that reason alone there is justification for naming the building at 550 West Seventh Avenue, Anchorage, for the man. We already have named state facilities for the other prominent fighters for Alaska statehood such as Gruening, Bartlett, Egan. It's appropriate to commemorate Atwood's contribution.

In addition, Atwood was a major contributor to the economy and to education in Alaska. He editorially supported development of resources and made a school of journalism and communications at the University of Alaska Anchorage possible with annual endowments of \$50,000 to \$100,000 for the past 17 years.

He similarly contributed to Alaska Pacific University, was one of its founders and served on its board of trustees. He also supported other public and private organizations for the benefit of the state and community.

He was one of the founders, with this retired publisher, of the Alaska Newspaper Association in an effort to improve newspaper performance in Alaska. He was recognized nationally as a leader in the newspaper field by his service as a judge for Pulitzer Prizes and as an officer in various national organizations.

newspaper

Although the newspapers I operated may have disagreed with Atwood and his Anchorage Times on Alaska issues on occasion, I always found Atwood a true Alaska statehood pioneer. And unlike some who made their fortune in the state and left, Atwood maintained his home in Alaska and continued to contribute to the betterment of the state after he retired from the newspaper business. His estate still contributes to Alaska's universities.

Atwood Building

1/19/98 11:39 AM

Renaming the Bank of America Building In Anchorage the Robert B. Atwood Building is very appropriate.

FAREWELL



What advice would he give young people today who are beginning their careers in Alaska?

Robert Atwood's answer to the question came with simple words from a complex man. Do it. Have the courage to persist in what you believe. Overcome the obstacles that rise from those who challenge change.

Before a roomful of young journalists, Robert Atwood spoke the essence of his success. He did it.

His career in Alaska is that of legends. He built the Anchorage Times, making it a voice of Alaska, one unafraid of challenging presidents, senators and the common man alike.

He believed Alaskans deserved the benefits of statehood and he let no one, absolutely no one, impede that dream. He believed a strong military presence was good for Anchorage and good for Alaska. He let no one forget.

He saw benefit in the development of Alaska's natural resources and he never let that belief wither from lack of voice. He was a journalist who found it his duty to be that voice.

He believed in keeping that voice alive, and founded the Atwood Chair of Journalism at the University of Alaska Anchorage so professionals can teach young minds the ways of the field.

Last September, he spoke at a luncheon meeting of the Alaska Press Women. His hands shaking, his gait unsteady, his viewpoint rock solid. The secret to his success, he said, is that he found the courage to do, to follow through on his beliefs of right and wrong.

Robert Atwood's legacy is best measured by not only what he did, but why he dared to try, and how he persevered.

He was born to will and determination. He lived in the hope and promise of this great land. He carved his dreams in bold idea.

Doing, he knew, was the soul of thought.


Robert Atwood

March 31, 1907

January 10, 1997



Anchorage Daily News



Fuher A. Cowell
Publisher

Kent Pollock
Editor

Michael Carry, Editorial Page Editor

Gerald E. Grilly, Publisher, 1984-1993
Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1971-1983
Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher, 1967-1971
Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Fitting tribute

Lawmakers propose Atwood building

Lawmakers in both houses have proposed legislation to rename the Bank of America building, which the state bought last year, after the long-time publisher of the Anchorage Times, Robert Atwood. The suggestion is both timely and appropriate.

Mr. Atwood, who died last January, had a major role in transforming Anchorage from a dusty country town into a serious city. His name is synonymous with civic service. At the state level, he was a leader in the fight for statehood and figured prominently in the development of Alaska's oil industry.

Robert Atwood left his mark all over Alaska. Now the state building will mark his achievements.

Proposed Amendment to House Bill No. 309

Section 1 is amended to read **Sec.35.40.110. Robert B. Atwood Building** The state office building at 550 West Seventh Avenue in Anchorage is named the Robert B. Atwood Building (.) subject to the termination or expiration of existing name and signage provisions contained in the lease between the Bank of America and the State of Alaska



TELECOPY COVER SHEET
 Ketchikan Legislative Information Office
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TO: Senate State Alliance

ATTN: Sen. Green FAX: 465-3805 PHONE: _____

FROM: Low M Williams, Jr PHONE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Testimony for TC 80104

SENT: Date 1/20/98 Time 11:59 am

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Testimony on HB 309 and SB 222, for "An Act naming the Robert B. Atwood Building" January 20, 1998

I am testifying on behalf of the three living Anchorage delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, each of whom also served in the Alaska territorial legislature: Seaborn J. Buckalew, Jr., Steve McCutcheon, and myself, Victor Fischer. The three of us enthusiastically support naming the new office building for Bob Atwood.

As you know, the state constitution was written as part of Alaska's fight for statehood. And statehood was Bob Atwood's biggest cause. There was not one person who so fervently and outspokenly argued for statehood as Bob Atwood. As an individual, as a publisher, and as Chairman of the official Alaska Statehood Committee, Atwood devoted endless energy to bringing self-governance to Alaska. He fully deserves to be remembered and honored for this tremendous contribution to Alaska.

Statehood was an overriding, non-partisan goal, and the fight was waged together, on a completely bi-partisan basis. Bob Atwood, a Republican, worked shoulder to shoulder with Democrats Bob Bartlett, Alaska Delegate to Congress, and Ernest Gruening, our Territorial Governor, in providing the leadership and drive for statehood, in which each of us participated. It was a long, tough battle, and it was glorious when we finally did become a state. And Bob Atwood was there all the way.

In addition to acknowledging Bob Atwood's contribution to statehood and his total dedication to Anchorage, Steve McCutcheon, Judge Buckalew, and I also considered Bob a good friend. We were sad when he left us, but we will be glad to see his name emblazoned on Anchorage's state office building.

Thank you.

**Statement submitted Jan. 20, 1998, to the Senate State Affairs
Committee by William J. Tobin, on behalf of SB 222,
"An Act Naming the Robert B. Atwood Building."**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate State Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to endorse Senate Bill 222. I regret that I could not appear in person before your committee, but I was prevented from doing so because of a prior commitment to be at Elmendorf Air Force Base this afternoon for a meeting at the same time as your hearing this afternoon.

Were I able to appear, I would have spoken in full support of the measure — and to provide some background as to my reasons why.

I am Bill Tobin, an editor of The Voice of The Times — and for some 30 years an editor and executive of the old Anchorage Times. Prior to that I was for more than 17 years a newsman, correspondent, regional executive and bureau chief for The Associated Press — including a four-year assignment in Juneau that spanned the last two years of Alaska's territorial history and the first two years of statehood.

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As such, my friendship with Bob Atwood dates to my arrival in Alaska in 1956 — and includes, of course, not only those 30 years as his No. 2 man at The Times but also a continued close friendship after his sale of The Times and until his death a year ago.

Because I knew Bob as well as I did, and because I know first hand of his contributions to Alaska— perhaps better than any one else because of my close association with him over the years — I am very grateful to members of the Legislature for their consideration of this bill to name in his honor the new state office building in Anchorage.

It would be a fitting tribute to a great Alaskan — and provide for generations yet to come a continuing reminder of the men and women whose courage and dedication and relentless belief in Alaska's future made statehood possible.

I came to the territory when the battle for statehood was still being waged — here at home, in Washington, and across the land. I was privileged to come to know all of those who were in the front ranks of the battle.

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If you liken the Alaska statehood effort to a great athletic team, facing the mightiest football teams in the land, the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame come to mind. Alaska's Four Horsemen were not Stuhldreher and Miller and Crowley and Layden. They were Atwood and Bartlett and Egan and Gruening.

And like Stuhldreher on the gridiron, Atwood was the quarterback. He was the leader, the signal caller, the inspiration in the huddle, the passer, and the one who ran interference for others who helped carry the statehood ball.

As an editor and publisher, his editorials fired the furnace of the statehood engine — generating support among Alaskans everywhere, and telling the statehood story to other editors and publishers all over America, and through them, to newspaper readers in many states across the land. As chairman of the Alaska Statehood Committee, he was the organizer, the planner, the fundraiser, the chief executive officer of the whole campaign. He led countless trips to Washington, lobbying Congress and developing the eventual successful strategy that produced that great day when The Times proclaimed in a giant-size headline: "We're In."

Bill would name building for Atwood

JUNEAU — A Senate panel wants to rename the Bank of America building after former Anchorage Times publisher Robert Atwood, who died about a year ago. A bill proposing the name change was filed in the Legislature Monday by the Senate Rules Committee. The state bought the downtown Anchorage building last year to house some government agencies. Atwood died Jan. 10, 1997, of heart problems. The state paid more than \$26 million for the building. A similar bill also was filed in the House by Rep. John Cowdery, R-Anchorage, and four other lawmakers.

Daily News staff and wire reports

ADN

Saturday 17, 1998

Fitting tribute

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