

More Committed Than Ever

By: Rep. Vic Kohring, February 4, 2002

Recently, the media has attempted to dishonor my reputation by suggesting I no longer have my heart in Alaska and no longer have my constituents' best interests in mind because I happen to have a new wife who lives in Oregon. For example, a caricature in the December 14th edition of the Frontiersman strongly implies I no longer care for my constituents in the Valley.

Well, other than the giddy, wonderful, mental bliss known as a honeymoon where my mind concentrated on my wife and *nothing* else, I have, if anything, worked harder than ever in my job as Representative. In fact, I arrived in Juneau almost two weeks early to set up shop and get ready for the next legislative session.

There was no mention in the February 1 newspaper article of where I intend to spend my time now that I have a new bride. And for that matter, nothing was said about why my new family lives in Oregon in the first place.

The answer is simple. My wife is educated in classical music and teaches voice, violin and piano. She needs to be near a larger pool of musicians and talent than what Anchorage offers. And her mother, sister and niece reside in Oregon. So I am willing to commute in a different direction when I'm off duty.

But *on duty*, my focus is Alaska. This is where I grew up. This is the land I love. This is where I have family and friends. When a man marries he does not turn his back on his old responsibilities or his old friends in favor of the new. He takes on *both*.

If anything, I feel that as a married man I can do a *better* job for my constituents because I'm more centered while no longer a bachelor. I have a lovely wife who backs me and who permits me to do what I need to do for my constituents and state ... while she pursues her musical vocation three hours by jet a little south of Anchorage. I intend to return to my district during the legislative session for town hall meetings as I've always done to seek input from my constituents, who I believe are my bosses. Following the session, I will resume my duties in my Wasilla office.

The business of representing a specific area, going to Juneau during the session and having a wife in another state is not unprecedented. I know of at least one other Representative who does the same. I'm sure he has his reasons. I've just stated mine.

Despite my dedication to my job, my family is the most important thing in my life. If I'm going to be criticized for that, then I'll let my constituents be the judge.

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