

The Challenge of Change

At their annual meeting on April 13, 2000, the Board of Directors of The Arctic Institute of North America bid farewell to Mike Robinson. The eventful evening included a “roast,” which recognized Mike’s many initiatives over the past 14 years as Executive Director of AINA. The financial situation of the Institute is healthy today. It is a vibrant organization, with research projects in northern Canada, Russia, and Alaska. Mike’s energy and optimism were contagious, as evidenced by the continuing activity on the 11th floor of the Library Tower at the University of Calgary.

The search for a new Executive Director has been successful. Karla Jessen Williamson has accepted the Directorship. She will begin her tenure on September 15, 2000.

Karla will be a powerful leader for the staff at AINA. Born in Appamiut, Greenland, she received her primary education there and her secondary schooling in Denmark. After coming to Canada, she completed her Bachelors and Masters degrees—in her third language, English—at the University of Saskatchewan. She is now completing her Ph.D. in the Department of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Karla is married to Dr. Robert Williamson, known to many of you for his work in the Arctic. They have two children.

In a future issue of *Arctic*, Karla will tell us more about herself, her research, and her goals for the Arctic Institute of North America. What I can say is that Karla was an outstanding choice to guide this historical Institute into the 21st Century. In an era of significant social, economic, and political changes North of 60, she is well positioned to lead AINA in meeting research challenges not only in Canada’s North, but in all circumpolar regions of the world.

Mark O. Dickerson
Acting Executive Director
The Arctic Institute of North America