

CAPITOL NETWORK NEWS

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LAWMAKERS TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) With their right hands raised, 23 recently-elected and reelected members of the state Senate and all 101 members of the House of Representatives took their oaths of office and began the move toward the opening of the 46th Legislature.

Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice Alma Wilson administered the oath to members of both legislative houses, reminding the legislators of the importance of their job.

"There is probably no greater trust than yours that you enact laws that preserve the rights provided in the constitution and that they be retained by the people," Wilson said in the Senate, adding that she knew of no better state constitution than that of Oklahoma.

Noting the turmoil in other nations, Wilson said, "It is a privilege to be born in a nation under and in the great state of Oklahoma."

Sen. Charley Ford, R-Tulsa, was absent from the Senate proceeding, but had already been administered the oath of office, Senate Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor, D-Claremore, told those on hand, which included a gallery full of well-wishers for those on the floor.

Absent was the usual seriousness of the legislative day as members introduced their

family members, friends, neighbors and campaign workers.

Sen. Penny Williams, D-Tulsa, took the time to get to know the son of a new member, Sen. Jeff Rabon, D-Idabel, trading play punches with the young boy as he was held by his father and allowing him to briefly wear the trademark glasses dangling around her neck.

Sen. Trish Weedn, D-Purcell, was joined on the floor by her grandson, which the senator dubbed the "sine day baby" for his birth on the last day of 1994's legislative session.



Sen. Trish Weedn

Her father, she explained, passed away on the first day of the last legislative session and her mother was too ill to make the trip.

"This campaign," she said, "was for my dad."

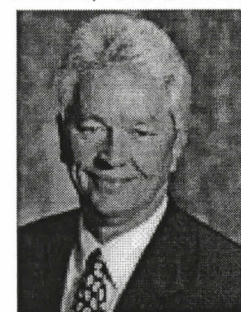
It was a tearful Weedn who explained that Tuesday's swearing-in ceremony was the first missed by her mother and father.

Sen. Gene Stipe, D-McAlester, who has been serving in the legislature since 1948, told those gathered for the ceremony that he had attempted to convince members of his family to attend but without success.

"My granddaughter is having a ballet recital today," he said, "so I was kind of preempted."



Sen. Gene Stipe



Sen. Bill Mickle

Sen. Bill Mickle, D-Durant and majority floor leader, will not face reelection until 1998, but he joined his fellow lawmakers on the floor, taking advantage of the time to announce his reelection bid and to comment on Stipe's tenure.

"I was three-years-old," Mickle said, See *Lawmakers*, page 2

BILL TO PROTECT PUBLIC WORKERS FILED

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Two state lawmakers filed a measure on Monday which would forbid municipalities and counties from adopting rules or policies for employees who act to defend their family or home that are more harsh than those applied to other citizens.

SB3, by Sen. Charley Ford, R-Tulsa and Rep. Ray Vaughn, R-Edmond, follows publicity during the summer about the case of John Jerkins, a Stillwater police officer who was demoted and disciplined after refusing to admit that he was wrong when he slapped a 17-year-old boy he found in his home and who had just had sex with his daughter.

Ford, who pledged in August to file the bill, said then, "This whole situation is ri-

diculous. No charges were ever filed against the officer and the only reason he's being punished is because he disagrees with his superiors. In my day if a father caught a boy having sex with his daughter, a slap was the least he could expect."

Ford said neither a city nor a county has a right to tell its employees how to parent their children in their own homes.

"This is an example of why people are fed up with today's intrusive government," Ford said in August. "This affair is none of the city's business and this bill will keep the city or county from sticking their nose where it doesn't belong."

The bill is third to be filed in anticipation of the 46th legislative session and the first to carry both a House and Senate author.

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