

My Decision Not to Run

By Senator Randy Phillips

As some of you may know, at the age of 51 I still enjoy playing hockey and at the present time I play on two different teams. My jersey for one of the teams bears the number "77." 1977 was my first year in the legislature. A couple weeks ago I realized another coincidence; my other jersey bears the number "26." This is the 26th year that I have served in the legislature. On Wednesday, June 19, at a luncheon meeting of the Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, I announced that this year -- my 26th -- will be my last, for the time being.

I feel privileged and honored to have represented the best group of people in the state of Alaska. I have come to know many of you personally over the years, and I couldn't ask for a better constituency. Through my legislative questionnaires and town meetings I have always sought your opinions to guide me in making decisions on issues facing our community and our state. But the redistricting process has taken the heart and soul out of my district and the people I have served all these years. If I were to run again and win the Senate seat in the newly formed district, I would represent a district spanning the South Fork/Eagle River Valley to all of Anchorage's Hillside, Girdwood, Hope, Sunrise and Whittier. This new district contains only about 5 percent of my former Senate District "L." This is the main reason I have decided not to seek another term this year.

During these past 26 years our district has grown and changed more than any other time in the history of our state, and we have together faced the challenges and rewards that come with that growth. In the process, I have had the opportunity to work on many diverse issues. During my years in the State House we created the Permanent Fund and the Permanent Fund Dividend program. I sponsored legislation to provide information on how the dividend is impacted by administrative expenses and the "hold harmless" provision. As a member of the Senate I sponsored and co-sponsored bills on a variety of issues, including legislation that changed the way school funding is distributed throughout the state, bringing more dollars to the Anchorage School district. Education has always been a top priority, and I, along with my colleagues from the district, was successful in bringing new schools and improvements to existing schools in Muldoon and Chugiak-Eagle River and Fort Richardson. We also secured funding for road construction and improvements for Northeast Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River. In 1982 I started an annual legislative exchange with the Legislative Assemblies of the Yukon and Northwest Territories to foster good relations with our Canadian neighbors. I have also been a legislative representative at the Arctic Winter Games and helped bring the Games to Chugiak-Eagle River in 1996.

Over the past 26 years, I have served on many committees and have been chairman of several: the Senate Rules Committee, the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee, the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee (twice), and the Administrative Regulation Review Committee. I was also a member of the Senate Finance Committee and chaired several budget subcommittees. But my best memories of my time in the legislature will always be of the contacts I have made with you, my constituents.

I will continue working hard as your senator for the remainder of this year. My legislative office will be open until January 2, 2003. My staff and I will be just as responsive to your concerns as always. Feel free to call us at (907) 694-4949. My e-mail address is:

Senator_Randy_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us. And as I've made clear to my friends and colleagues this past week, I do not consider this is to be a retirement, just a temporary break. After my term is up next January, I will concentrate my efforts on my marketing business, but do not expect that I will stay away from politics for long. In the meantime, I want to sincerely thank you all for the honor and privilege of representing you, my constituents in Muldoon, Chugiak-Eagle River and Fort Richardson in the legislature over the past 26 years.

Senator Randy Phillips

Senate District "L"