

Arnick readies his return

Former delegate said to want to fill House vacancy

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John S. Arnick, the former Dundalk delegate who lost a judgeship earlier this year in a controversy over sexist remarks, wants to be appointed to his old seat in the House of Delegates, sources say.

Mr. Arnick has prepared a resume to submit to the Baltimore County Democratic State Central Committee next week, when sources said he will declare his intentions to the four Dundalk committee members and to the Democratic senator from Baltimore County, Norman R. Stone Jr., the 7th District's senior legislator.

The former delegate declined to comment on his plans yesterday, but did say, "No one ever questioned my voting record" during his tenure in the House.

The seat Mr. Arnick resigned in January to accept an appointment to the District Court bench became vacant again on Aug. 31 with the unexpected death of his replacement in the House, Edward G. "Nipper" Schafer.

Mr. Schafer, a Central Committee member, died of a heart attack at a political softball game in Towson.

The Central Committee will decide who serves the 15 months remaining in the legislative term.

Mr. Arnick resigned from the General Assembly in January to accept a judgeship and had already begun hearing cases when his confirmation by the Senate was short-circuited by a controversy over vulgar and sexist remarks he allegedly made to women lobbyists.

He eventually withdrew his nomination and returned to private law practice.

Two months ago, Gov. William Donald Schaefer said he had lined up a state job for Mr. Arnick, but so far, nothing has materialized.

Mr. Arnick's return to the legislature could revive the controversy,

but several Dundalk political sources, including at least one Central

Committee member, see a clear reason for returning him to the General Assembly.

"John did a hell of a job when he was down in Annapolis," said Anthony Narutowicz, one of four remaining Dundalk Central Committee members who must vote to fill the vacancy.

Marlene Planowski, another Central Committee member from Dundalk, said she would have no trouble voting for Mr. Arnick, though she said no choices have been discussed.

The other two committee members, Janet Wood, and Joan Ammon, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Other politicians from the area said it would make sense to put an experienced person in the job with only one legislative session left in the four-year term.

Mr. Arnick served in the House for 22 years and was one of the few Baltimore County legislators to hold leadership positions.

These ranged from serving eight years as House majority leader in the 1970s and 1980s to his most recent job as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee between 1991 and 1993.

The full county Central Committee will meet Sept. 27 at the Towson library to fill two vacancies within its ranks and recommend someone to replace Mr. Schafer.

The full committee usually ratifies the choice of local members, with the recommendation of the senator from that district — in this case, Mr. Stone. Mr. Stone was out of town and could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Under Maryland's constitution, the governor has 15 days to appoint whomever the party committee recommends.

House Speaker R. Clayton Mitchell Jr., D-Kent, said he has not spoken with Mr. Arnick in several weeks, but said Mr. Arnick's return to the legislature would not cause difficulties.

"Would it cause any problems? No," he said, adding that Mr. Arnick would start again at the bottom of the seniority scale in committee assignments.

Del. Betty Workman, D-Allegany, chairwoman of the legislative Women's Caucus, said Mr. Arnick's return to the house could cause some controversy but added, "I would be neutral about it."

She added that if Mr. Arnick were reappointed to the judiciary committee, "he would be one more voice

helping us pass legislation that would help women."

During the controversy surrounding his conduct and remarks, Mr. Arnick's voting record on women's issues was never attacked.

Mr. Mitchell and Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. issued an eight-page policy Wednesday that defines sexual harassment and establishes procedures for reporting, investigating and resolving complaints.