

Arnick chosen for old House seat 7 months after stormy judgeship

By Patrick Gilbert
Staff Writer

John Arnick is going back to Annapolis.

Making a political recovery just seven months after being forced to withdraw from a District judgeship because of sexist remarks to women, the former delegate was selected by the Baltimore County Democratic Central Committee last night to occupy the same seat from which he had resigned to become a judge.

The committee — voting 26-2, with two abstentions — acted on a unanimous recommendation from the five members of the 7th Legislative District Central Committee.

"I think John was the best quali-

fied candidate to send back to Annapolis because he has a record of outstanding service to the district, the county and to the state," said Marlene Planowski, senior committee member from the 7th. "We feel he was treated unfairly when he came up for his judgeship confirmation and he should go back take his rightful seat."

The 59-year-old Mr. Arnick said he is "glad to be going back. I pledge to do the same credible job I've always done in Annapolis."

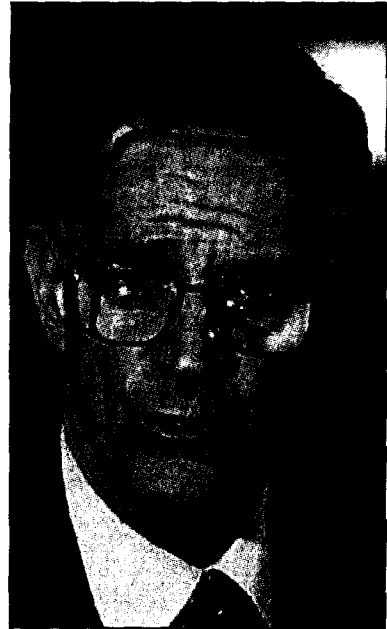
After the vote, held at the Towson library, the Dundalk Democrat received a standing ovation from about 60 supporters wearing yellow ribbons with Mr. Arnick's name on them. The show of support was or-

ganized by Jacqueline Nelson of the Battle Grove Democratic Club and the Miller Island-Edgemere Business Association. "You know how people wore yellow ribbons until the Iran hostages came home and the soldiers came back from Desert Storm; well, we're wearing these yellow ribbons because we want Mr. Arnick to come back and represent us in Annapolis," Ms. Nelson said.

The committee's nomination now goes for pro-forma confirmation to Gov. William Donald Schaefer, who is expected to give his approval.

The current vacancy arose Aug. 31 when Del. Edward G. "Nipper" Schaefer died of a heart attack at a

See **DELEGATE**, 10A, Col. 1



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Central Committee picked John Arnick by a vote of 26-2.

Arnick picked for same House seat he left for stint on court

DELEGATE, from 1A

political softball game in Towson. The Central Committee had named Mr. Schafer to replace Mr. Arnick.

Mr. Arnick had resigned from the General Assembly and was sworn in as a judge Jan. 27, pending what was expected to be routine confirmation by the Senate. But at his confirmation hearing, former lobbyist Judith A. Wolfer testified that Mr. Arnick had called women "lying bitches" and used other vulgarities in a dinner meeting last year.

Mr. Arnick testified that he didn't remember the conversation, and he said that he had meant no offense.

The allegations and subsequent protests threw the General Assembly into turmoil. Mr. Arnick 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 no such job has materialized.

When he left the House in January, Mr. Arnick had served there for 22 years. He was majority leader for eight years in the 1970s and 1980s and chaired the Judiciary Committee between 1991 and 1993.

There are 15 months remaining in the House term to which Mr. Arnick is now preparing to return.

Mr. Arnick said the controversy should not hinder him in performing his job in the legislature.

"I've been in the middle of controversies many times and survived and did my job with integrity and honesty," he said.

In a sometimes rambling address to the Central Committee last night, he apologized for his remarks to Ms. Wolfer and another female lobbyist, remarks that he called "a 30-second chunk of my life".

"I've apologized once before and I will apologize a second time here tonight," he said. "I offer no excuses. I tried to explain those 30 seconds, but there were those who just didn't

want to listen."

He went on to urge the committee not to judge him only on those 30 seconds, but on his entire record.

"I reviewed my record on minority and women's issue and of the 300 or so bills . . . I only voted against 10 of them and they were what I would call minor bills," he said.

Mr. Arnick faced only two questions from the committee. Barbara Seabolt, a member from the 10th District and a lobbyist for child-care issues, asked if he would support the legislative agenda of the Maryland Commission for Women. Mr. Arnick said that he did not know all of the details but that "conceptually" he would do so. "Mr. Arnick assured me he was ready to work with me and others on women's issue and I will count on him doing just that," Ms. Seabolt said after the vote.

Daniel Morheim, a District 5B committee member, asked Mr. Arnick if he had learned anything from his experience over his language.

"Times change, and now you have to always be careful and sensitive about thing like this," Mr. Arnick replied. "You can't say the same

things you could before."

Mr. Morheim cast an abstention.

Two female committee members voted against Mr. Arnick. Vicki Almond, selected to fill a 10th District vacancy just before the Arnick vote, and Mary Jo Neville, a member from the 12th District, said his remarks to women influenced their decisions.

"I've been the victim of those kinds of remarks before and I don't feel Mr. Arnick deserves to go back to Annapolis because of that kind of attitude," said Ms. Neville.

Del. Betty Workman, D-Allegany, who chairs the legislative Women's Caucus, said yesterday that Mr. Arnick's return could cause some controversy, but "it could afford him the chance to make amends for some of his remarks and treatment of women in the past. "If he gets back on the Judiciary Committee, where a lot of bills related to women's issues come up, his vote would be very welcome." Ms. Wolfer, who is practicing law full time and no longer serves as a lobbyist in Annapolis, said, "I can only hope that the Democratic Central Committee's decision reflects the desires of the citizens of Dundalk."