

Rapid rise to top post for freshman from Walla Walla

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OLYMPIA — Who is Jeannette Hayner?

Today she is the first woman ever to be a caucus leader in the Washington Legislature.

Wednesday she was just Senator Jeannette Hayner, a Republican freshman from Walla Walla.

It was a wind of discontent which carried Mrs. Hayner from her seat in the rear of the Senate chamber to the position of leader of the 19 Republicans.

To the surprise of almost everyone, 10 of the 19 Republicans voted Wednesday afternoon to oust Senator James Matson of Yakima, their leader for several years, in favor of Mrs. Hayner.

Among the questions flying around yesterday morning was:

"Why Jeannette Hayner?"

Although she is only in her first term in the Senate, her colleagues among the dissidents — who now call themselves the new majority — have high praise for the Walla Walla legislator's ability.

"I have sat next to her both when she came to the House in 1973 and now in the Senate, and I have been impressed with her ability, intelligence, high moral standards and the fact that she is a pleasant person, the kind people like to deal with," said Senator Kent Pullen, Kent Republican.

"Jeannette is regarded as a conservative, but not a divisive one, so when the different factions among us looked for a leader she was the obvious choice."

Senator George Scott of Seattle, caucus chairman under the new leadership, described Mrs. Hayner as:

"Able with a logical, bright mind, a good technician with a good grasp of parliamentary procedures — an all-around good legislator."

A TRIM redhead, whose ap-

pearance belies her 60 years, Mrs. Hayner's political activities go back to 1947, the year she and her husband moved to Walla Walla.

"I worked on campaigns, for candidates and on ballot measures," she said.

Later she served as Republican state committeewoman, put in seven years as a school-board member and was involved in numerous other community activities.

"In the spring of 1972, Vaughn Hubbard, a former House member, decided not to run again so I filed for the seat, the day before filings closed," Mrs. Hayner related.

In a field of several candidates she was the winner and served two two-year terms in the House.

In the 1976 elections she won her Senate seat and the respect of many senators because of her quick grasp of the upper-chamber operations.

In addition to her political experience Mrs. Hayner had the advantage of being an attorney, and the wife and mother of attorneys. (She is a member of the bar in Oregon and does not practice law in Washington.)

AS TO THE events which led to the startling upset in the Republican caucus, the new leader said:

"Several of us decided at the end of the 1977 session that the caucus needed changes.

"A lot of us found things were not as comfortable as they could be, so we began talking informally last year."

This year, she said, the people she had been talking to felt there would have to be a shakeup if Republicans were to win a majority in the upper chamber next year, something they have not had since 1953.

Will the ousting of two long-time Democratic senators split the Republican caucus, Mrs. Hayner was asked? (Matson has served 10 years and Senator Charles Newschwander of Tacoma, who also was replaced, served 18 years in the Legislature.)

"I hope we can heal the wounds," she replied.

"I don't think it will be impossible to work together and I'm determined to do so," she added.



JEANNETTE
HAYNER