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Legislature passes resolution to begin Douglas impeachment

By Patty Pryor

The Legislature voted Wednesday to begin impeachment proceedings against Nebraska Attorney General Paul Douglas.

The vote on LR277, sponsored by Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, was met with scattered applause from the capacity crowd.

Only one public official has been impeached in Nebraska history. The state's first governor, David Butler, was removed from office in 1871 on a charge of misappropriating state funds.

Douglas' impeachment was considered after legislators passed a separate resolution, LR278, condemning the attorney general's actions in his dealings with Commonwealth Savings Co. and Marvin Copple, son of Commonwealth President S. E. Copple.

Both resolutions, along with a third recommendation for censure, were debated in a special five-hour meeting of the Legislature's Commonwealth Committee March 4.

Much of Wednesday's discussion concerned Douglas' knowledge of his involvement in inside transactions between Copple and his secretary, Judith Driscoll.

In earlier investigations, Douglas gave conflicting testimony concerning his awareness of such transactions.

Several senators called for impeachment proceedings rather than condemnation to allow Douglas the opportunity to defend himself.

Impeachment proceedings must be taken up within 10 days by the state Supreme Court, which will conduct a full trial on the events in question.

"I felt that Paul Douglas needed that opportunity to go to the supreme court and defend his actions," said Sen. Bernice Labedz of Omaha, who voted for impeachment during the Commonwealth Committee's March 4 meeting.

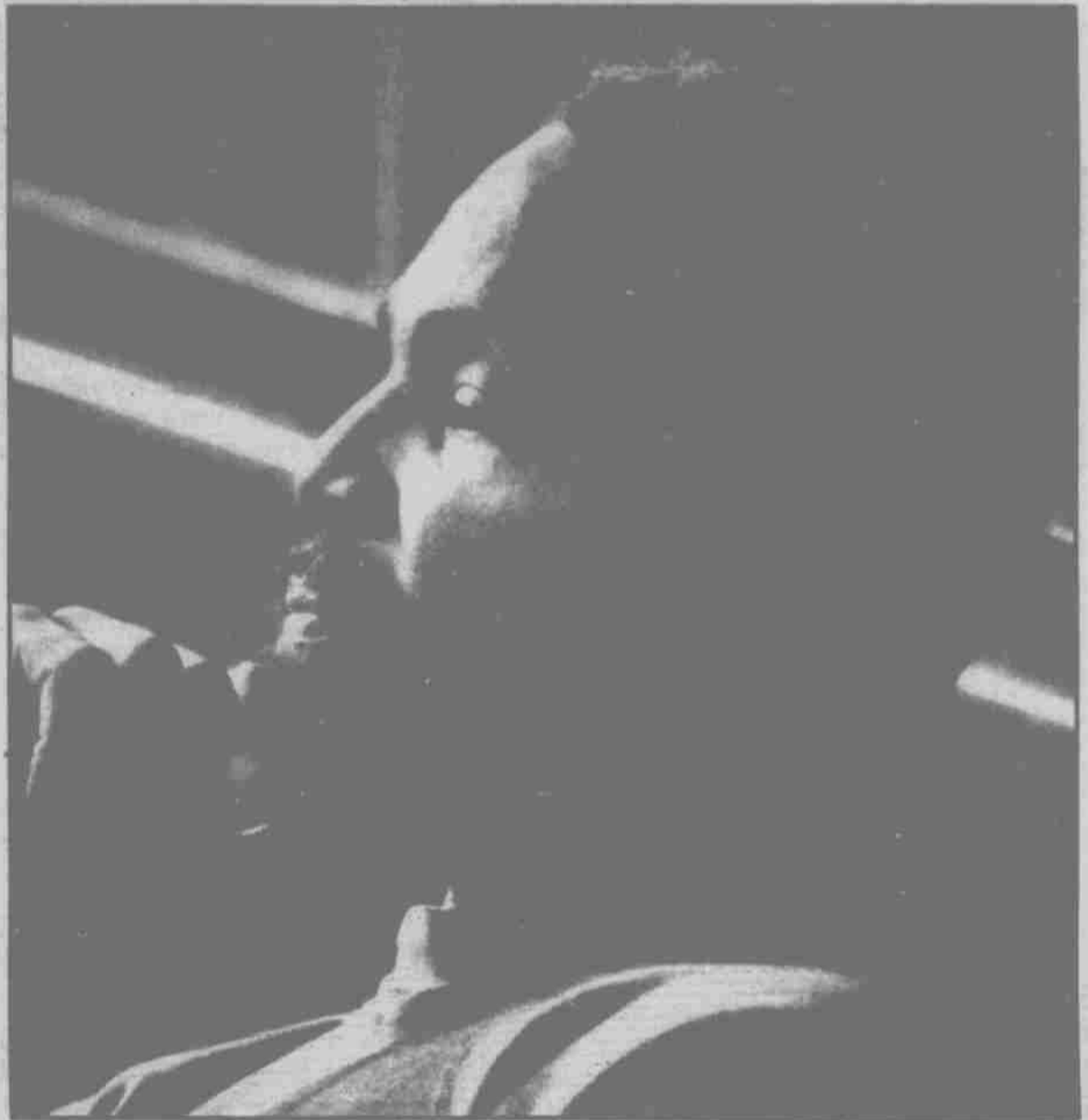
"If I were in his situation, I would ask for impeachment; I'd ask for my day in court," she said.

Chambers, in introducing the impeachment proposal, said that passing just the condemnation resolution alone would be "a symbolic washing of the hands by Pilate."

Others also expressed support for both condemnation and impeachment.

"We've just condemned the attorney general — now he's going to serve another two years with that hanging over his head?" Sen. Don Wesley of Lincoln asked. "The same reasons that justify condemnation also justify impeachment."

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Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Sen. Ernie Chambers listens to arguments in favor of Attorney General Paul Douglas before speaking on his motion for the impeachment of Douglas.

Aim and Scudder coast to ASUN election victory

By Terry Hyland

Aim Party candidate Mark Scudder easily captured the ASUN presidency Wednesday, outdistancing his closest opponent by almost 400 votes.

Scudder's running mate for first vice president is Curt Oltmans.

Scudder was as surprised as anyone when the final tally came in about 11:45 p.m. Wednesday.

"I'm just very happy right now," Scudder said. He spent election night with more than 100 Aim supporters crammed into his home on the outskirts of Lincoln.

"I don't think I would have won if it hadn't been for the organization of my candidates," Scudder said. "We had people out 12 hours (yesterday), and no one's ever done that before. The whole party is so close, there is a unity among us that's almost like family."

Aim also swept the early senatorial

seat returns, with one exception on the business advisory board, where an Aim candidate lost by two votes.

A total of 2,266 students voted in the election, representing about 11 percent of eligible voters.

Dave Spencer, director of ASUN Election Committee, said the turnout was better than expected. He said he thought reducing the number of polling places to three for the elections might have an effect on voter turnout. But the effect was negligible.

"Three polling sites still pulled in about the average for every (previous) election," he said.

The final vote totals and percentages: Aim, 871, 38 percent; United Students, 494, 22 percent; United, 300, 13 percent; Don Ho, 298, 13 percent; Fashin, 180, 8 percent; Roo, 89, 4 percent. There were 34 write-in votes.

Complete election results will run in Friday's Daily Nebraskan.



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Aim party candidates Paul Edens, Mark Scudder and Curt Oltmans celebrate their ASUN election victory Wednesday night.

Loss surprises Goldstein

Reactions were mixed from the five losing ASUN parties Wednesday night.

United Students presidential candidate Kevin Goldstein said the election results surprised him.

"I was especially surprised at the margin," Goldstein said. The second-place US party received 22 percent of the vote, while the Scudder's Aim party received 38 percent.

Goldstein said US campaign methods had not been as effective off-campus and in residence halls as he had hoped. This affected the size of the voter margin, Goldstein said.

Mike Geiger, presidential candidate for UNITE said he was disappointed at the loss.

"But, I've won and lost things before, and when I lost, something better has often turned up," Geiger said.

Geiger said his campaign and the election were "seriously affected" by the Electoral Commission ruling, which stopped UNITE's campaigning at 8 a.m. Wednesday because of improper filing of its financial statement.

In Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan

article, "Error stops UNITE campaign," also hurt the party, Geiger said. Geiger said he thought the headline was misleading because voters thought his party was disqualified.

Although not surprised by the outcome, Fashin presidential candidate Tim Burke said he had hoped a last minute media blitz by his party would provide a winning margin.

Aim is a "fine, good party," Burke said. "I just hope they appoint me to some high executive office."

"I'm crushed...speechless," said Ed Bennett, first vice presidential candidate for the Don Ho party. "Oh well, we knew we didn't have a chance."

"We didn't kiss enough babies, I guess," said Jeff Jackson, presidential candidate.

"I'm glad we didn't win," Bennett said. "They'll get more done than we'd have time for."

"We didn't plan on winning," said John Hazuka, presidential candidate of the Roo party. "We just wanted to corrupt the other parties."

"If Aim needs any corruption, we'll do it for them," said Hazuka.



Dave Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

Troy Hilyard, Julie Meusburger and Kevin Goldstein of the United Students party react to their loss in Wednesday's ASUN elections.