

Burbach remembered for structuring state tax laws

The weathered face and colorful vocabulary of former State Senator Jules Burbach tell a lot about Nebraska.

The retired senator and farmer points proudly to a long row of appreciation plaques in his basement. Plaques presented to him by his constituents, by farm organizations, by business organizations, by his former colleagues.

Burbach served in the Nebraska Legislature for 20 years. His role in shaping Nebraska's tax structure has been compared to the role of the Missouri River in shaping the state's geography.

Most UNL students were struggling through grade school while Burbach, chairman of the Revenue Committee, was struggling with tax reforms that are now so basic to our lives that few notice.

But Nebraskans might remember Jules Burbach anytime they drive down a scenic Nebraska highway, pay sales tax on a candy bar, fill out a state income tax form or receive a property tax exemption on their home.

Burbach now lives in Hartington, Neb. where he was born, raised and worked on his farm for 19 years.

Hunched over a mail-heaped table topped by an open copy of the 1943 Nebraska Revised Statutes, he discussed his political career in a mixture of the four-lettered profanity of a Nebraska farmer and the sophisticated vocabulary of an experienced lawmaker.

Burbach said he first was persuaded to run for the Legislature because of a friendly argument with a group of farmers in 1956.

"I had business to take care of that I couldn't afford to take time off from," he said. "I had no more damned intention of running for the Legislature than I had of going to the moon."

He finally agreed to file, Burbach said, and with 14 carloads of supporters and five days of campaigning in Cedar and Knox counties he easily was elected to represent the 19th District in the Unicameral.

He said when he first came to Lincoln he was "green," but he said he learned fast.

"It was practically unheard of for a second-year senator to be selected as committee chairman, but in my second year I was named chairman of the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee."

In 1959 he was placed on the Revenue Committee where he served for 16 years. He chaired the committee for 12 years.

"I feel the issues facing us then (during his early years as senator) were of a more fundamental importance to the state than issues facing the Legislature now," Burbach said. "We didn't have to mess with sunshine and sunset laws like the Legislature does now. That's babysitting

stuff. We didn't have to mess with so much special interest legislation, protective agencies and consumer agencies."

The list of Burbach's accomplishments runs on like a broken record. A few of the highlights were:

- sponsoring a constitutional amendment which allowed a tax exemption on property taxes.
- sponsoring legislation allowing, for the first time in Nebraska issuance of state bonds to finance state highway and interstate improvements.
- helping enact personal property tax exemptions for farms and businesses.
- sponsoring legislation which centralized and brought order to Nebraska's Natural Resources District.
- to serve as Speaker of the Legislature for two years and expand the Speaker's power to efficiently direct the work of the Legislature.

But Burbach spoke with the most enthusiasm about his role as chairman of the Revenue Committee in sponsoring a constitutional amendment in 1967 replacing the state's property tax with a sales and income tax as the basis for financing state government.

Burbach is credited by many with steering the Legislature through one of its most traumatic sessions.

"A series of bills in 1967 had left Nebraska with no way of financing its state government," Burbach said. "We needed to come up with some bucks fast."

"We worked up a bill ready to go into effect in five months," he said.

"Nebraska has been recognized as having one of the best and most comprehensive sales and income tax laws in the nation," he said. "We have income tax down to a pretty fine science."

Burbach ran for governor in 1970 but lost in the Democratic primary by 3,000 votes to Gov. J. James Exon, who Burbach admits was his foremost political opponent during most of his political career.

"I was not a very stout Democrat," Burbach said. "And Gov. Exon had the party's blessing in 1970. The voters looked to me as a man of fairness and experience but I lost by a few thousand votes."

"Gov. Exon is a very astute politician and he has been a very popular governor, but that does not necessarily mean he has been a good governor," Burbach said.

"The implementation of a good working relationship between the governor and the Legislature has on state government is like the influence parents who fight all the time have on their children," he said.

Burbach said that with his experience in the Legislature he could have established this good working relationship very well as governor.

Burbach said it is very important that a good balance of farmers, businessmen, attorneys, males and females and old people serve in the Legislature.

He warned against what he saw as a trend towards overliberalization in the Unicameral.

Although he said state senators should not be overpaid, he thinks senators should get raises and retirement benefits.

It takes experience and acceptance by colleagues to be an effective senator, and most of the young senators cannot afford to stay long enough to be effective when they are paid \$4,800 a year, Burbach said.

Texas farmers rally for jailed brothers

Edinburg, Texas - A column of about 75 tractors and pickup trucks their lights flashing and carrying signs supporting American Agriculture—moved into this Rio Grande Valley town Thursday to support about 200 of their jailed comrades.

Law enforcement officers kept the traffic flowing as the vehicles were parked away from the downtown area.

About 300 farmers had gathered in the town by mid-morning.

associated press datelines

Sheriff's officials said the farmers would not be bothered as long as they did not block traffic or cause trouble.

However, standing by were a helmeted squad of riot police and several tow trucks.

The farmers were Valley residents who did not take part in the strike activities Wednesday. After the trouble at the International Bridge between farmers and law enforcement officers, they threw their support to the strikers.

More than 200 farmers, claiming they were victims of police brutality during the Wednesday melee, decided to remain in jail overnight rather than pay \$18.75 for bond.

union
calendar

- 9 a.m. - Cultural center task force, Room 216.
- 11:30 - Carriage Hill School - Papillion, Conference Rooms.
- 12:30 p.m. - Muslim Student Association, Room 337.
- 3 p.m. - Campus activities and programs staff, Room 203.
- 3:30 p.m. - Teaching and Learning Center, Room 242.
- 7 p.m. - Iranian Student Association, Auditorium.
- 7:30 p.m. - Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship, Room 202.
- Chi Phi Marathon Dance, 4:30 p.m.—Registration, 6 p.m.—Dance, Ballroom.

short
stuff

- Applications for Outreach are due today in Health Center 104.
- The UNL Campus Girl Scouts will be selling cookies in the Nebraska Union North Lobby beginning Monday.
- The UNL French Club will meet today in Brannigan's lower level.

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