

Packwood announces resignation from Senate

WASHINGTON — A teary-eyed Sen. Bob Packwood announced his resignation Thursday, heading off a vote by colleagues to expel him for allegations of sexual and official misconduct after 27 years in the Senate.

"It is the honorable thing to do," the Oregon Republican said in an emotional speech shortly after leaders of the Ethics Committee warned him he would have to quit or face expulsion. Packwood, who earlier vowed to fight the charges, gave up less than 24 hours after the panel voted unanimously to recommend that he be expelled.

The committee, evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, had spent 33 months on the investigation. It concluded he should be expelled after studying allegations that he made unwanted sexual advances to 17 women, tried to obtain a job for his then-estranged wife from people with legislative interests, and altered his diaries to obstruct the investigation.

Fellow Republican Mitch McConnell, chairman of the Ethics Committee, said the alteration of diaries as Packwood anticipated a committee subpoena was "clearly illegal" and could bring Packwood a prison sentence if he were convicted of such a crime. The committee's resolution referred the diary alterations to the Justice Department.

The sexual advances, McConnell said, "were not merely stolen kisses,

as Sen. Packwood has claimed. This was a habitual pattern of aggressive, blatantly sexual advances, mostly directed at members of his own staff or others whose livelihoods were connected in some way to his power and authority."

McConnell also disputed Packwood's complaint of unfairness, saying, "The victimizer is now claiming the mantle of the victim."

Packwood did not mention the allegations in his Senate farewell, recounting better times in his long career.

"I leave this institution not with malice but with love," Packwood said, his voice periodically breaking. "Good luck. Godspeed."

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, close to tears himself, praised his long-time colleague and declared: "I believe Senator Packwood has made the right decision. It's not easy. It hasn't been easy."

Other male colleagues also praised Packwood for his Senate accomplishments. And one female senator, Democrat Dianne Feinstein of California, said he shouldn't be remembered for the accusations that brought his departure.

She quoted her father as telling her: "Don't let a man be known for the last thing he does. Let him be known for the best thing he does."

Several senators, including McConnell, suggested earlier that the

expulsion recommendation showed senators had learned from the wrenching days of the Clarence Thomas Supreme Court hearings.

Recalling criticism that senators didn't "get it" when a former aide accused Thomas of unwanted sexual advances, McConnell said, "There can be no doubt today that the Ethics Committee got it."

Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., vice chairman of the committee, said the action recommended by the panel was like "the atomic bomb" to answer such criticism. "We can do no more than to expel a member. Those days are over."

But Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the resignation should not be seen as a time to celebrate some new awareness by senators about the relationship between men and women. "Let us not celebrate a thing today. This is a day of grieving," he said.

Another close Packwood friend, Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., said women's groups who had once supported Packwood's political stands had, in the end, turned on him.

"He was the man who always fought so hard for women and their rights," said Simpson. "He was the man who carried the banner for women's reproductive rights."

Packwood had called his staff into a meeting at mid-afternoon, closing the office for about 15 minutes. Several staff members emerged crying

"There have been many successes in these 27 years, some failures, some frustrations... Friendships beyond count."

SEN. BOB PACKWOOD
after his resignation speech

afterward.

"There have been many successes in these 27 years, some failures, some frustrations," Packwood said as about half the Senate and his staff looked on. "Friendships beyond count."

His colleagues sat dolefully in their seats as he spoke. Aides lined the wall at the back of the chamber.

Packwood's resignation would elevate Sen. William Roth of Delaware to chairman of the tax-writing Finance Committee at a vital time for Republican efforts to implement their balanced-budget plan.

Packwood, 62, was elected to the Senate in 1968 and arrived at age 36 as the chamber's youngest senator.

McConnell said resignation was "the appropriate response" for Packwood.

"I agree," said Bryan, calling Packwood's behavior "unconscionable, unwanted, offensive, repugnant."

Packwood on Wednesday had de-

nied that he altered his original taped diaries. He acknowledged that he altered copies of his diary tapes after he gave the originals to his lawyers.

The copies were altered, he said, because they contained "personally or politically embarrassing information" and he feared that they would be leaked from his lawyers' office.

In an interview, Packwood was asked about his future. "If I had my druthers, would I like to stay here? Sure," he said. But he added, "I've talked with enough people who are not here who say, 'Gee it is amazing, there is a life after the Senate.'"

Expulsion would have taken a two-thirds vote, or 67 of the 100 senators.

Fifteen senators have been expelled, one in 1797 and 14 during the Civil War for supporting the Confederacy. The Senate in 1877 posthumously reversed the decision for one of the Civil War expellees.

In the House only four members have been expelled, three in 1861 and one in 1980.

Simpson unlikely to be called before defense rests

LOS ANGELES — O.J. Simpson decided not to testify in his own defense after his lawyers told him it would prolong his trial and wasn't necessary to answer a prosecution case "in shambles," one of his lawyers said Thursday.

The confirmation that Simpson would not tell his story to jurors came from F. Lee Bailey after lead attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. argued unsuccessfully to have former Detective Mark Fuhrman be the final defense witness.

Judge Lance Ito rejected the defense's attempt to recall Fuhrman and force him to invoke his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent in front of the jury.

On Wednesday outside the jury's presence, Fuhrman invoked that right when the defense asked him questions, including whether he planted evidence against Simpson.

Ito said he would tell the jury that Fuhrman became "unavailable," although he will not tell them why. The judge also said he would tell the jury they can consider Fuhrman's unavailability a factor in evaluating his credibility.

Prosecutor Marcia Clark opposed the instruction, but Ito snapped back, "Counsel, I've ruled. That's a final ruling."

But a few minutes later, Ito granted the prosecution until noon Friday to appeal.

Bailey told The Associated Press that Simpson's legal team advised the celebrity defendant not to testify in light of Fuhrman's tape-recorded statements about racism and police wrongdoing.

"With the case in shambles, this just wasn't necessary," Bailey said of Simpson's decision. "I didn't see what was left to be gained, when you have the chief witness, a law enforcement officer, refusing to testify because he might incriminate himself."

Bailey said that whether Simpson would testify wasn't decided until recent disclosures thrust Fuhrman and his racist tapes back into

the forefront, climaxing in Fuhrman's dramatic appearance Wednesday.

Fuhrman's lawyer, meanwhile, publicly apologized for the former detective's racist comments, made during interviews with an aspiring screenwriter from 1985 to 1994.

"All I can tell you is that Mark Fuhrman regrets the inconvenience and harm that he has caused a lot of innocent people to suffer," attorney Darryl Mounger told KCBS-TV. "That's all I can really tell you. ... He's sorry, and I don't know if that's enough."

As the defense moved to wrap up its nine-week case, defense attorney Gerald Uelmen pressed Ito to let jurors hear Fuhrman invoke his Fifth Amendment rights in person, or at least tell them what he did.

The judge refused to tell jurors about Fuhrman's invocation but said jurors would be informed that the detective was "unavailable" as a witness.

Uelmen said the jury has a right to all information that would help them assess Fuhrman's credibility, and Fuhrman's refusal to testify was critical. Fuhrman's witness stand appearance came during a hearing on a defense motion to suppress a bloody glove and other evidence collected by Fuhrman and other detectives the day after the bodies of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were found.

Ito rejected the defense bid first thing Thursday morning, saying Fuhrman's explanation for entering Simpson's estate without a warrant can still be trusted because it was confirmed by other detectives.

"The testimony of Fuhrman ... is corroborated by the testimony of other witnesses," Ito wrote in a two-page ruling.

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