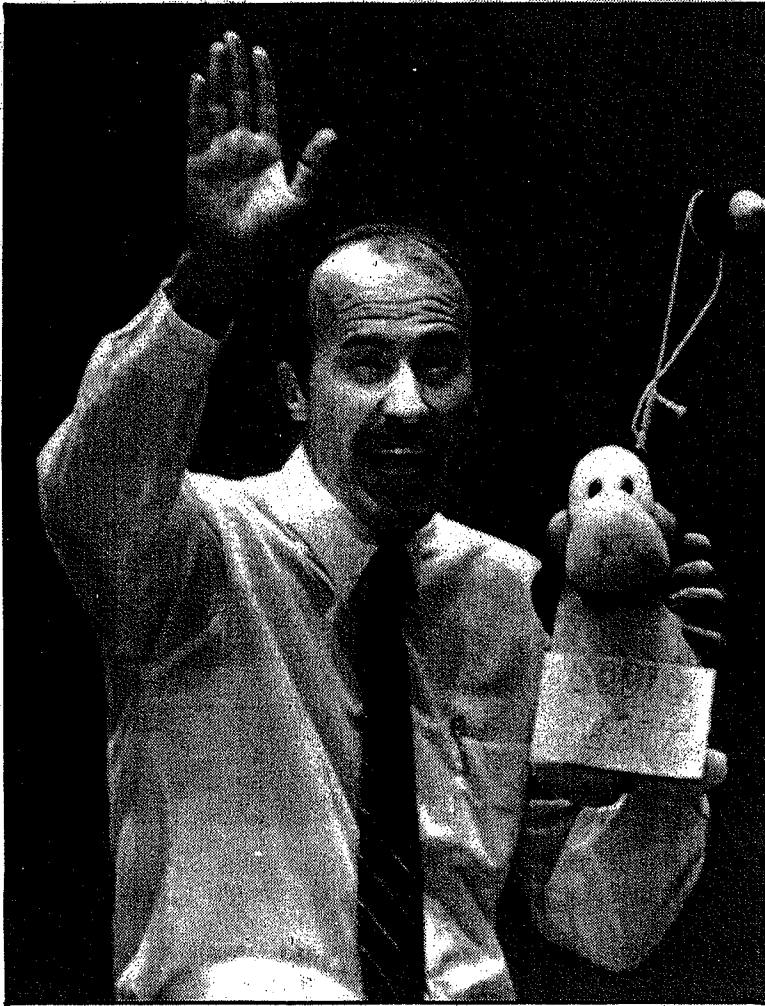


Rep. Burton leaves deep tracks in 1st House term



Associated Press

SO LONG — Rep. Mike Burton, D-Portland, holds his pet stuffed penguin, Opus, as he delivers farewell remarks to Oregon House Friday. Someone put sign "squid bait" on Opus when Burton wasn't looking.

By **DON JEPSEN**
of The Oregonian staff

SALEM — Rep. Mike Burton, a Democrat who succeeded maverick Rep. Wally Priestley, is an intense 43-year-old college administrator who may well have emerged as the top freshman of the Oregon Legislature.

In the process Burton and another freshman Democrat, Rep. Margaret Carter, whose district adjoins Burton's, probably gave the area its best representation in years.

Other talented first-termers include Ron Eachus, D-Eugene; Paul Phillips, R-Tigard; and Stan Bunn, R-Dayton, who returned in 1985 after serving several terms in the 1970s.

Scott Gallant, lobbyist for the Oregon Medical Association, characterized Burton as "the most mature freshman member."

Al Thompson, who lobbies for Standard Insurance, termed Burton open and willing to listen to both sides on an issue. "Then he would go out and get a third opinion before making up his mind," said Thompson.

Burton, who ran unopposed in 1984 after losing to Priestley in 1982, tempers his seriousness on issues with a self-deprecating sense of humor. Early in the session he collapsed while making a speech in Portland.

"A reporter from The Oregonian and a television cameraman saw me go down. It hit the news real fast. They (the hospital) had to put me in intensive care because of all the telephone calls from friends and colleagues," he said.

The collapse was triggered by an aneurism in the lining of his stomach that resulted in internal bleeding. Burton had half his stomach removed, fol-

lowed by a bout with a staph infection. When he tried to return to the Legislature, he developed pneumonia.

"I lost a little momentum," he said of the four weeks he was out.

A member of the Judiciary and Housing and Urban Development committees — although his first choice was Revenue — Burton shepherded

"I think we have had good leadership."

through both the House and Senate a landfill siting bill that, he hopes, will allow the Portland metropolitan area to come up with a new garbage disposal site.

"We worked with everybody in the world on it," recalled Burton, noting it went through 11 legislative counsel drafts. The St. Johns landfill is in Burton's district and is scheduled for closure in the near future. His bill directs the Environmental Quality Commission to come up with a new site.

Another pet project, again keyed to his district, was money for a marketing survey of the rundown Multnomah County Exposition Center "to see if we could use it as a trade and show center for Oregon products." The appropriation request died in Ways and Means.

The balding former Metro director and state Intergovernmental Affairs employee arrived at the Legislature with some perceptions that were quickly dispelled.

"I thought the floor debate was where all the decisions are made, but I

found that wasn't the case at all," Burton said. Instead, it was in committee and with the power brokers in the House, the leadership and more senior members.

"I think we have had good leadership, but as a freshman you're kind of out of that," he said.

A second eye opener was the gamesmanship over allocation of lottery proceeds. Burton said he testified throughout the session before the Trade and Economic Development Committee only to have Ways and Means dictate in the closing days where the money would be spread.

"You realize there is a difference in the way they do things," he said, adding what happens in the substantive committees can have little impact on the money committee.

Burton also lent his name to a number of bills that he wished he hadn't, flattered that more senior members asked him to join as a sponsor. One was a bill pushed by Rep. Wayne Fawbush, D-Hood River, and aimed at Rajneeshpuram that would have given the governor broad police powers over cities' municipal operations.

"I took my name off that one," Burton said, adding that although "I have no real respect for the Rajneeshes," the broad power the bill would have given to the state "was scary." Burton wound up voting against the bill, and it was defeated.

Burton today appears the picture of health and plans to run in the Cascade Run Off in July. He plans to run for re-election in 1986, then possibly go for the Senate.

"I like the House. There's more action over here," Burton said. "But I'm not ruling out the Senate in 1988."