

# Former Members Often Find Way to Stay

By KAREN FELD

(Feld, a former Roll Call reporter and columnist, is a free lance writer now. Her articles have been published in People, Time, Vogue, Family Circle, airline in-flight magazines and major daily newspapers via the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.)

"I don't want to embarrass Wichita Falls folks, but yes, it would be dull back there," says former Rep. Graham Purcell (Texas). "You can afford to be dull if you can make a living, but I thought I could do better here."

"The bright lights are here. This is the best game. You get used to it. Politicians with their egos have got to be where the fastest game in town is," according to former Rep. Bill Stuckey (Ga.).

"I just have to keep occupied, and I knew the opportunity to be occupied was greater here than down home," is why former House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills (Ark) is still in the capital. "See I lived in a town of about 1,500 people and I wouldn't be satisfied just going to the drugstore to get coffee at 3 or 4 o'clock every afternoon and to sit down and visit. It wouldn't appeal to me. I couldn't stay sober doing that. I'd bust out."

Many former members of Congress upon retirement or defeat have chosen to remain in the Washington area, rather than return to that place called "home" from where they were first elected.

Even the drama on Dynasty and Dallas can't begin to compare to that on Capitol Hill—Hollywood on the Potomac. That's why Roll Call Editor and Publisher Sid Yudin, who fled Connecticut for California, where he began his career as a Hollywood reporter long before "Roll Call" was even a dream, has been able to make his newspaper the successful institution that it has become.

Financially, the reward of being a former member of Congress means more in Washington than anywhere else. Here, one is able to traffic off of what he was and who he was. So Washington is often a practical solution to an economic problem, something more immediate than a lifetime

case of Potomac Fever. Members of Congress quickly become accustomed to a lifestyle which includes jetting around the globe on committee fact-finding missions; nightly cocktail receptions and dinners; free staff; office space; parking; long distance telephone lines; use of the gym; and other perks. After Congress, they need a greater income to support the lifestyle to which they have grown accustomed. Few accept less than six-figure salaries when they leave Congress.

One reason they are able to command high fees in Washington is that their Congressional experience is presumed to make them experts in dealing with the legislative process. Those who



Former Rep. STUCKEY

stay can be found in Cabinet positions, government agencies, law firms, trade associations, teaching positions, and on publication mastheads. Others are retired; and still others have put their life on hold while they wander Congressional corridors or Capitol Hill pubs clinging to memories and deliberating whether to run just one more time.

Congress has changed in the thirty years since Roll Call began. In his newspaper, Sid Yudin has chronicled those changes. Congress has become a year-round job with constituents demanding more of their legislators. With the limitations on outside income, many cannot afford to stay in Congress and support their families while maintaining two homes.

"It was costing me money being in Congress. Was my ego worth losing 'x' number of dollars a year?" Bill Stuckey asked himself. He and others including Tom Rees (Calif), Bill Hungate (Mo), and David Henderson (NC) became disillusioned or frustrated with the system and retired at a relatively young age. Those who leave public life voluntarily usually find greater options in the private sector. And the opportunities are greatest for those with a law degree or service on a powerful committee, such as Ways and Means.

"I find that having been in Congress is an asset because you get an understanding of how the system works, where the pressure points are, and how individuals view themselves and the process," says former Rep. Jim Symington (Mo), now a partner in a Washington law firm.

Many former members of Congress who join law firms are actually lobbyists, although some such as former Sen. Charles Goodell (NY), prefer to call themselves "legislative attorneys." Lobbying is not really a new role for anyone who has ever served in Congress since Congressmen are

always lobbying one another to gain support for a particular piece of legislation. "There's nothing wrong with it except I just didn't feel like I wanted to go out and impose on my friends and make money doing it," says Wilbur Mills.

Former Rep. Frank Ikard (Texas) agrees with Mills. "I think a former member should have the right to The Floor (a lifetime perk), but I don't feel that I ought to exercise it," says Ikard, now a partner in the Washington office of Finley Kumble.

"I have something to sell here and I would have had to develop something back home," says former Rep. Jack McDonald (Mich), who is not an attorney, but uses his congressional experience to serve clients.

It's not only congressional experience which is translated into bigger bucks in the Washington market, but there is also a feeling of being closer to decisions of national and international consequence in Washington. "You don't feel like you're quite so far out to pasture if you keep up with things that go on in Washington," says Purcell.

"It would be difficult to completely change gears right away, to go back to Orlando (Fla), and to do nothing, but write wills, when you're used to dealing with international issues," says Louis Frey (Fla), who joined a Washington law firm after he was defeated in a bid for the governorship in 1978, and then again in a primary against Paula Hawkins in 1980. In the House, Frey helped rewrite the Communications Act and much of his current law practice is business and communications oriented.

"My interests can be developed here, particularly in health, in environment and in energy. This is where there would be more need for my services," says Paul Rogers (Fla). The chairman of the powerful Public Health and Environment subcommittee of the Interservice and Foreign Commerce Committee, retired from Congress in 1978 at the height of his career after serving a dozen terms. He joined the Washington offices of Hogan and Hartzen.

"In Washington, you feel that at any minute you might have a chance to make a difference. When you're back home (in St. Louis), you're only reacting to the press, radio, or TV, and not with any of the personalities," says Jim Symington. That's one dimension of Washington life that holds Symington here, although he feels close to Missouri and has even written and recorded ballads about his home state.

When he was defeated in his bid for the Senate in 1976, he asked himself, "How do you reduce the campaign debt, and also maintain the kind of interest you have in what was, for me, a permanent lifetime interest in public affairs?" He felt staying in Washington was more in line with those objectives than going back to his old law practice in St. Louis.

The transition from public life to life in the private sector is a difficult one, but gradual in Washington. After defeat, it's easier for those already in Washington to stay, not just physically, but also emotionally.

When Wilbur Mills retired following his aquatics at the Tidal Basin with Fanne Fox and his admission of alcoholism, he was faced with a decision.

"I couldn't make up my mind in

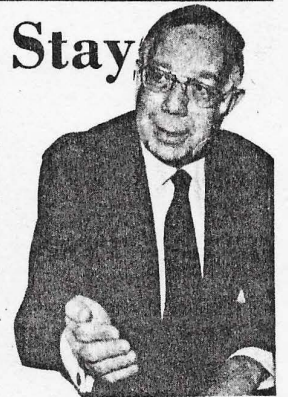
the beginning whether I wanted to actually resume my activities or whether I just wanted to mope—I did that for seven or eight months," says Mills. "I stayed on here because if I wanted to do anything I'd do it here rather than in Arkansas. This was the place where I thought I could do more good. I have to do those things that are necessary to keep my mind satisfied to where I don't want to drink."

In order to do that, Mills became of counsel to Shea Gould Climenko and Casey, where his expertise in tax matters is in great demand. He also speaks around the country on alcoholism.

The elective political career is generally over for those who stay. Few get elected at home by staying in Washington. But for some, Washington affords a base and keeps the hope alive for an appointment, such as a Cabinet slot or ambassadorship in a future administration.

Symington feels there ought to be a school for prospective congressmen, as well as "a Society for the Protection of ex-Congressmen." His advice is to have your life in order when you first make the effort to run. "Think ahead to that turn in the road. Two years is a very short time to kick away for a lifetime of security," says Symington.

Just as there is a caucus on Capitol Hill for every imaginable interest, the Former Members of Congress even have their own alumni association. It was founded in 1970 by two former members: Brooks Hays (Ark) and Walter Judd (Minn). Although the initial intent was principally so-



Former Rep. ROGERS

cial, they are compiling a congressional oral history and have developed a campus fellows program, essentially a public relations vehicle to boost the image of Congress as an institution.

What is it really like being a former member of Congress?

"It's like being taken off a fast treadmill," says Stuckey. "You're no longer somebody they're always making a fuss over, taking care of every little whim," he continued. But it is difficult to step off that treadmill, which is why so many keep up the same routine, a fast paced lifestyle, including travel, packaging deals and finding a cause to perpetuate."

In spite of the fact that some members of Congress go back to their districts on weekends and complain about Washington, most admit, "It's not a bad place to live." In fact, once you have had the experience of serving in the most exclusive club in the world, the U.S. Congress, home is never quite the same again.

Former Sen. John Culver (Iowa) has said: "Politics is still the only game in town for adults."

I think there are two games—politics and journalism. In Roll Call, Sid Yudin has combined the best of each. Roll Call has chronicled the careers of the politicians who have served over the past three decades—the legendary and the not so legendary, those who went home and those who did not. As Congressional incumbents and a new generation of hopefuls prepare their campaigns for election to the 100th Congress, Roll Call, as much an institution as the Congress itself, will undoubtedly be the first to report the inside scoop as well as the results.



Former Rep. MILLS

## Happy Birthday

Roll Call extends birthday greetings to the following Members: July 1: Reps. William Carney (R-NY), 43 and Charles Hatcher (D-Ga), 46 ... July 3: Rep. Joseph Gaydos (D-Pa), 59 ... July 5: Rep. David Dreier (D-Calif), 33 ... July 7: Sen. Alan Dixon (D-Ill), 58 and Reps. Carroll Hubbard (D-Ky), 48 and Richard Arney (R-Texas), 45 ... July 8: Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich), 59 and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), 43 ... July 9: Reps. Thomas Luken (D-Ohio), 60 and Paul Henry (R-Mich), 43 ... July 11: Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass), 39 ... July 12: Reps. Mickey Edwards (R-Okla), 48 and Bill McCollum (R-Fla), 41 and Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore), 63.

Roll Call also extends birthday greetings to the following former Members: June 30: Rep. H.R. Gross (R-Iowa), 86 ... July 1: Rep. Thomas Kleppe (R-ND), 66 and Sen. William Scott (R-Va), 70 ... July 2: Sen. Edwin Mechem (R-NM), 73 ... July 3: Sen. Harrison Schmitt (R-NM), 50 ... July 4: Rep. James Harvey (R-Mich), 63 and Sen. George Murphy (R-Calif), 83 ... July 6: Reps. Thomas Lane (D-Mass), 87; Patrick Caffrey (D-La), 53; Joseph Holt III (R-Calif), 61 and Garner E. Shriver (R-Kans), 73 ... Reps. Dan Kuykendall (R-Tenn), 61; David T. Martin (R-Neb), 78 and Donald Rumsfeld (R-Ill), 53 ... July 11: Reps. Frank Coffin (D-Me), 66; Peter Kyros (D-Me), 60; Neil Stabler (D-Mich), 80; William Walsh (R-NY), 73 and William Wheeler (D-Calif), 70 ... July 12: Rep. Clark MacGregor (R-Minn), 63.



Former Rep. Frey