

Sen. Frank Church rules out future elective offices

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U.S. Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, saying he has given 24 years of public service to the people of Idaho and the nation, is now looking forward to private life and as of now rules out any desire for future elective office.

Church didn't say so, but it would appear he will earn far more in the private field and with much less effort.

In a telephone interview from Boise where he is enjoying the Thanksgiving holidays with his family, Church sounded far from depressed, but rather like one who has had a burden lifted and looks with joy and anticipation for the future.

"I feel it was a privilege to have had the opportunity to have served the people of Idaho," he said. "I'm so happy to have had such a wide support.

"It has been exhilarating to have received such a flood of mail from all parts of Idaho and the nation following the election. Bethine (his wife) and I feel blessed to have had so many loyal and stalwart friends.

Church said he has had a number of options for the future, all of which he is weighing carefully.

He said he is thinking seriously of keeping connections with one of the leading universities in the nation so that he can teach part time and also speak out on public issues on a lecture circuit in the nation and abroad.

"At the same time," he said, "I am looking at several offers for establishing contact with one of the leading law firms engaged in

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Idaho Falls, Idaho, Sunday, Nov. 30, 1980

international practice. I have had a number of offers that I have not looked at yet. I will sift them and probably make a selection by the time I leave office Jan. 5."

Church said that although he is not interested in seeking further political office, such as trying to win back his seat, he wants to "keep a hand in the public sector as well as make money in the private field."

"As for any future political aspirations I think 24 years is enough," he said. "My interest in government will always remain strong.

"I doubt I will ever seek elective office again. There are forms of government service that may come to me that I may be interested in but that remains to be seen.

"I want to to make a new life and now I can spend more time with my family. I hope my new work will be partly academic, partly legal and partly government. I will keep the door open for future options

but the way I feel now I'm interested in a new life."

Church said he has no regret of the past; that he served to the best of his ability and feels no bitterness over his defeat, but on the contrary, feels it may be the best thing that ever happened to him personally.

Church, who turned 56 last July, will still get a large pension of \$39,564 yearly for the remainder of his life as result of his 24 years service, plus other governmental benefits, such as insurance and health.

Church acknowledges that the Republicans winning control of the Senate and his losing his coveted chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee eases his pain. Republicans won 13 seats and now control the Senate 53-47 from its previous minority status of 40-60.

Church observes Sen. Charles Percy, of Illinois, becomes the new chairman but three seats to be filled by ultra conservatives will make his task difficult and likely weaken effectiveness of the committee.

"If my loss had been the deciding seat I would have really felt bad," he said. "However, I ran a close race and I feel I did my best. I was running against a strong Republican tide."

He noted he was only defeated by 4,000 votes of a record 433,000 votes cast, or 1 percent, to Republican Congressman Steve Symms. This compared with the overwhelming victory of Ronald Reagan of 66.5 percent to President Carter's 25.5 percent in Idaho, the second

widest margin percentagewise of any state in the union, except Utah.

Church said he takes especial pride in having been responsible for landmark legislation that will bring benefits for future generations in Idaho and the nation.

These include the River of No Return Wilderness, the Gospel Hump wilderness, the Sawtooth Recreation Area and Hells Canyon Area.

There was countless other legislation that helped farmers, ranchers and the senior citizens, such as the Reclamation Reform Act, the cost of living increase in Social Security for the senior citizens and many agricultural bills that helped farmers.

He declined to comment on current issues, says he preferred to keep a low profile.

Church said he owns two homes, the family home in Boise and the one in Washington where he will make his future home.

He said he plans to visit Idaho frequently, keeping contact with Idaho friends.

In his formal message of farewell to what he called his "loyal and stalwart friends, he said "Because you worked so hard for us in such an adverse part for Democrats; because of the many long days and late nights you volunteered in the campaign; because of the countless phone calls you made and the thousands of doors you knocked, we came within 1 percent of winning despite the enormity of the Reagan tide.