

# Leroy looks eagerly to challenging future

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**BY BEN J. PLASTINO**

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David H. Leroy, only 35, has already climbed two rungs in the state office ladder and may reach for the top in four years.

The meteoric rise of Leroy for one so young has been so phenomenal that it can be compared with that of Frank Church who at 32 was elected to the U.S. Senate and served with distinction for 24 years before being ousted in 1980, one of the many Democratic victims of a tremendous Reagan Republican landslide.

Leroy has left his mark where he has served, first educated at the University of Idaho where he was elected student body president.

In 1971 he began law practice in Boise, then joined the Ada County Prosecutor Office as a deputy in 1974, serving two 2-year terms.

In 1978, as one of the youngest prosecutors in the nation, he was elected the 27th attorney general in 1978.

Regarding his future plans, he said significantly "I intend to be a hard-working and very effective lieutenant governor each day I serve. I will take a look at the future political possibilities. Among the races I will consider in all likelihood will possibly be the governor's race in 1986."

That's about the strongest he has admitted he is looking at the governor's chair.

He then hastily added "I'm not worried about these future political possibilities right now as so much immediate work needs to be done."

Leroy pointed out last early last summer a special session should have been called as early as June or July.

"I still stand by that statement," he added, "as there were and still are two assets in dealing with the financial problem."

He identified this as (1) the amount of general fund money that taxes actually raise, and (2) "we badly squandered time."

He said he recognized the political implication of holding a special session during the campaign but insisted "it was the time for statesmanship and good government and a very poor time for politics."

To hold a special session in December, he said, has many political overtones, particularly for the legislators who might find property taxes could be drastically increased for payment by taxpayers in June, 1984.

"While I understand why the governor did not call a special session it is still unfortunate neither he nor the legislators acted earlier," said Leroy.

He said "it is virtually impossible to have 105 legislators agree on any of this type of legislation with a two or three day wrap."

Leroy said he felt his relations with the Gov. John V. Evans should be good, particularly now that the governor has said "I have run my last election for governor."

"The governor seems very relaxed with the Legislature," said Leroy. "I would expect to have a strong relationship with the governor over the next four years. John and I have worked together the last four years. We have disagreed on some land board matters but once they were settled, we have gone on to other votes. I expect the basis for a strong relationship will continue."

"We will be meeting later on basic understanding on conducting of business when he is out of town and I am the acting governor."

Leroy said there will be no situation such as in California where the Republican lieutenant governor sought to make appointments and perform other tasks

disapproved by Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown.

Leroy said he has joined the well established law firm of John Rumft which has seven lawyers.

He hastened to add he will be available for his lieutenant governor chores at all times, not only during the Legislature while he is serving as the presiding officer of the Senate.

He and his wife, Helen, are parents of a three-year daughter, Jordan, who is celebrating her third birthday on Jan. 8, the day Leroy and other state officers will be sworn in for the new term.

Leroy's lieutenant governor's salaries jumps from \$12,000 to \$14,000 for so-called part-time duties.

Leroy is proud of his accomplishments the past four years and likely become one of the best known political figures in the state by his vigorous activities, such as a frequent popular dinner speaker and master of ceremonies, a favorite among newsmen for his willingness and clarity in comments on a myriad of subjects, and who led the Republican ticket in garnering the most votes in contested races.

Leroy also pointed to his accomplishment in office, saying "we have a reorganized and professionalized the office."

He noted the office represented the state on five major matters in the U.S. Supreme Court, and thousands of times in in state and federal courts.

The five U.S. Supreme Courts includes the corporate takeover status, Salmon steelhead, Carey Act Lands, ERA and the multiple state corporation state suit which cost the state millions.

On the land board, he said the state succeeded in transfer of 19,000 of the 23,000 in lieu lands from the federal government but fell short of perfect as he had hoped.

He said the amount of in lieu land has been reduced from the original 39,000 acres but there still remains the 4,000 acres of non mineral land and the complex-shrouded 5,000 acres mineral land which likely may be delayed several years to clear its status.

He noted the office presented major legislative package every year to improve Idaho laws.

The landmark one which eliminated insanity as a defense and set an example for the other states of the union to follow was the first in the nation.

He said he plans a package of four or five major bills as lieutenant governor and is working with the governor and his staff to try to create an executive order that gives specific duties of the lieutenant governor.

"It is the first time in the state history this has been tried," he said.

He said he presently is working on Senate rules as a parliamentarian "to run the Senate in a competent manner."

"I want to be active in all kinds of issues," he said.

He added he has had numerous conferences with business and local government because he wants to be active in those kind of issues. He also has had talks and discussions with other lieutenant governors, and executives of the Department of Interior and Department of Commerce.

"I want to become active on the national and regional level though the National Lieutenant Governor Association," he said.

Hazel Keefer, who served as the secretary for Lt. Gov. Phil Batt the past four years has transferred to work in the Senate.

Leroy said he will have three part-time assistants, Mark Musick, Mud Lake; Tanya Rossum; Boise, and Katie Beebe, Coeur d'Alene.