

Forbes retires from House

Joe Forbes has decided to call it quits after 14 years as a state representative. The 55-year-old House majority floor leader Monday announced he will not seek re-election to an eighth two-year term. Before reappointment in 1982, his House district included Southfield.

He ruled out being the Democratic candidate for Oakland County executive this fall. Forbes also said he would not become a lobbyist.

Forbes, D-Oak Park, told a news conference in the State Capitol Monday:

"ALL MY life I have met new challenges. My family and I have concluded that such a time has come again — a time to seek new opportunities and allow someone else to take on the particular challenges to be met in the Legislature.

"I have enjoyed the past 14 years in the Legislature. I have worked with many peo-

ple who have come to mean a great deal to me. There have been legislative successes and disappointments. Issues have come and gone.

"But the basic sense of satisfaction I have derived from serving the people of my district and the state of Michigan has remained constant.

"I now look forward to a new phase in my life which would involve new contributions and a new career in either the public or private sector."

In an interview, he added that Gov. James J. Blanchard has asked him to think about an administrative appointment, but no firm ideas have developed.

FORBES WAS first elected to the House in 1970 and won the majority floor leader post in 1975.

As such he was the floor "traffic cop" on the timing of votes on bills. Nearly every-

one went to him, and he made the visits. Always ready with a joke, sometimes ribald, the cigar-chomping Forbes became one of Lansing's most colorful political figures.

He had hoped to become House speaker in 1983, but the Democratic members, with an infusion of first-termers, turned instead to 39-year-old Gary Owen of Ypsilanti.

Taking it with good grace, Forbes went on to chair the Committee on House Policy and the Legislative Council. He also serves as House facilities officer.

FROM 1948 to 1964, Forbes was an Oak Park city councilman and served as mayor in 1964-70.

He was one of the founders of the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments, chairing its cities and villages bloc. SEMCOG gave him its "onward and upward" award in 1975.

Prominent in municipal circles, Forbes is a past president of the Michigan Conference of Mayors, was an executive board member of the Michigan Municipal League and served on the old Oakland County Board of Supervisors from 1964-69.

As a businessman, Forbes designed concession stands for such well-known facilities as Cobb Hall, Pine Knob and movie theaters.

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