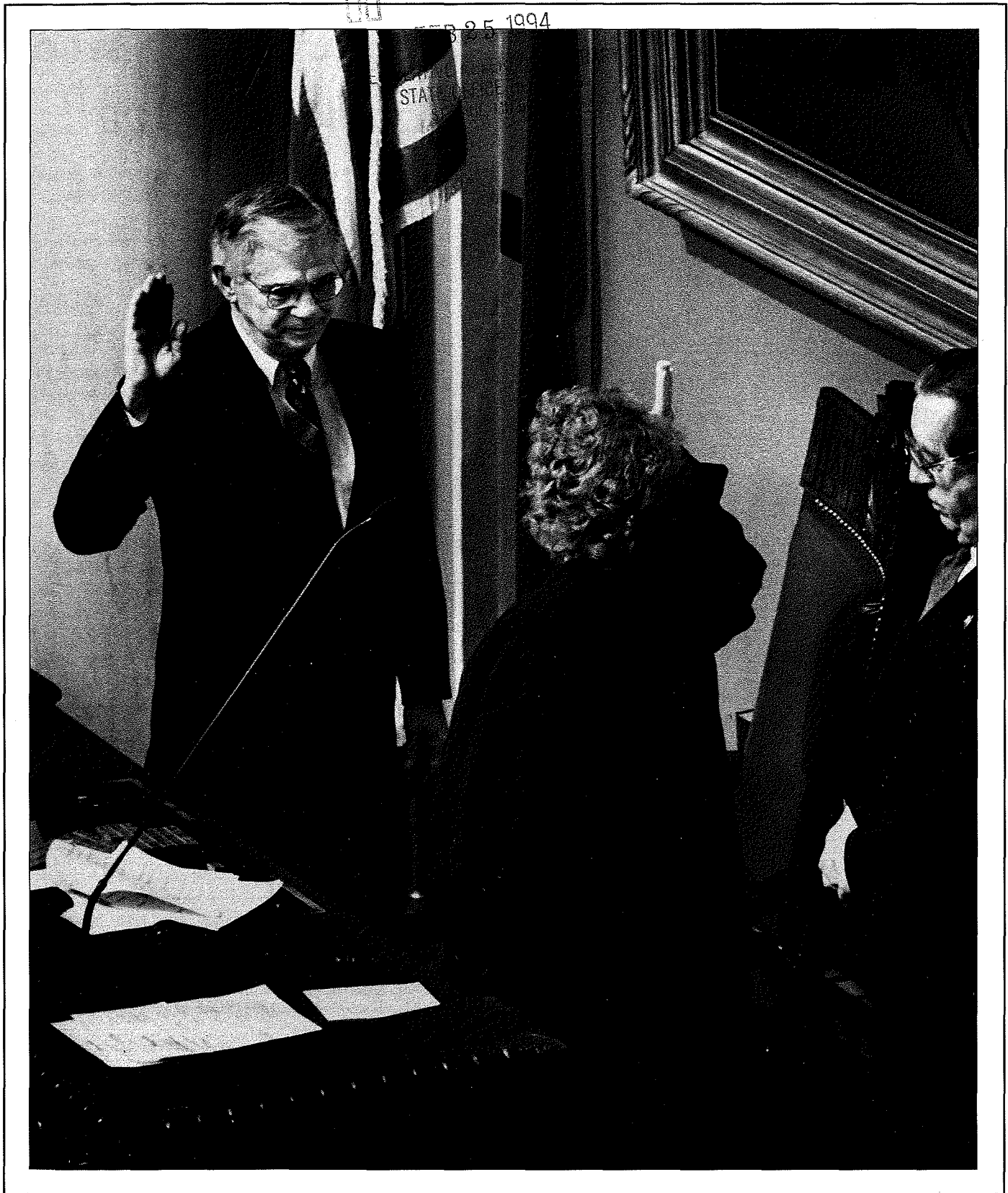


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SESSION WEEKLY

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Highlights

1994 opening ceremony. . .

House session focuses on Anderson, TV cameras

No one waved to the cameras but everyone was aware of them Feb. 22, as the 1994 Minnesota Legislature got under way.

For the first time in history, the House televised its floor session. And if lawmakers suffered stage fright, they didn't show it. Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) was one of the first people on screen, taking the microphone to sing "From a Distance" to kick off opening day.

For their first order of business, House members elected Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) speaker by an 81-to-50 margin over Rep. Steve Sviggum (IR-Kenyon). Three legislators were excused from the opening session.

Anderson has served as speaker-designate since Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls) resigned in September. He served as majority leader for about six months last year.

Anderson's ascension to speaker is a story of patience and persistence.

The 70-year-old DFLer was first elected to the House in 1964. He served as majority leader from 1974 to 1978 but lost a bid for speaker in 1980 when a group of DFLers joined with Independent-Republicans to elect another DFLer as speaker. He lost his House seat in 1982 and lost bids for re-election in 1984 and 1986. He even lost an election to sit on the Koochiching County Board of Commissioners in 1988.

When he returned to the House in 1990, some said Anderson, who had a reputation as a shrewd and tough negotiator, had mellowed. He had suffered electoral defeat, grown older, and undergone quadruple bypass surgery.

The new speaker referred to his electoral losses in his remarks before the House opening day. "A candidate can overcome losing an election better than a family can. My family stood with me many, many times." He introduced his wife, Phyllis, and children, Greg and Cindy.

Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), who led the first session before Anderson's oath, told members a man had asked him earlier that day: "What's going on at the Capitol?"

"We're going to elect a new speaker," Munger replied.



On Feb. 22, Speaker of the House Irv Anderson acknowledged his wife, Phyllis, standing, and other family members for their support throughout his political career. Seated are his son, Greg, and his daughter, Cindy.

"Are you going to elect the new Irv or the old Irv," the man asked Munger.

"The new, but we'll keep the old in reserve in case we need him," Munger said, drawing laughs from legislators.

Before the close of the first House session, Sviggum conceded the speakership to Anderson and promised IRs would work with the majority party to ensure an efficient session.

"But the rights of the minority won't be trod on," he reminded DFLers.

Both parties look forward to a short, intense session, during which they hope to pass judgment on a variety of issues, ranging from crime to the storage of nuclear fuel.

"We'll know the outcome in April," Sviggum said, referring to the projected end of the 1994 Session.

AGRICULTURE

Flood relief bogs down

Talks on a compromise relief package for victims of last spring's floods have broken down between the Office of the Governor and House and Senate DFLers.

Both sides want to subsidize federal disaster relief to farmers and business owners but neither can agree how. So far Minnesota is expected to receive \$700 million to \$800 million in federal aid to help with its estimated \$1.3 billion in damages.

IR legislative leaders, headed by Lt. Gov. Joannell Dyrstad, have met with DFLers in three separate "flood summits." Both sides left the last summit Feb. 24 planning to submit separate flood relief bills.

The major point of disagreement is whether relief aid will come in the form of loans or grants.