

Time to shine

Once-shy Jacobson steps out, hoping to shape policy and reform the tax system

By DAVID MAEDA

Rep. Carl Jacobson (R-Vadnais Heights) began his career as an accountant working for a corporation — a factory in Iowa that made



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filing cabinets.

Quiet and introverted by nature, Jacobson said that corporate accounting appealed to him because it focused on working with numbers and didn't require a lot of direct contact with others.

But he eventually switched over to public accounting precisely because it required talking with people and that was what he ended up finding most enjoyable about his work.

As a member of the Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants, Jacobson came to the Capitol on a day last year for MnCPA Lobby Day. He met with his representative, former Rep. Sherry Broecker, who mentioned to him that she was considering not running for another term.

He had previously worked with Broecker and former state Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines) when he served as the party treasurer to his House district. Both encouraged him to run for Broecker's open seat.

"It's something I always wanted to do but always thought that I would do later on," Jacobson said. "I've always believed we need good people with common sense, which is sometimes lacking."

Born in Hibbing and schooled at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Jacobson has spent most of his life in Minnesota. He worked for awhile in Iowa as his wife, Joyce, completed her post-graduate education in chemistry.

Once he decided to run, the most difficult part was getting out and knocking on doors — something that again challenged his shy nature.

"It was something I was not looking forward to but ended up enjoying the most," he said.

Jacobson said his accounting background will lend itself well as he serves as a member of the House Taxes Committee, and House Sales Tax Division.

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As a CPA, he worked with a broad spectrum of clients — from large and small corporations, to single person businesses. He said that wide range of experience gives him a broader perspective on various tax issues.

In addition to reducing the tax rates in the state, Jacobson thinks the system itself needs to be simplified.

He supports reform with two specific goals. The first is decreasing the number of people required to file. And the ultimate goal would be to reduce the form for those who do file to a postcard size.

Jacobson had the privilege of being the author of this session's first bill (HF1), a bill that would reduce the income tax rates for a third consecutive year.

Along with his interest in taxes, Jacobson will also serve on the House Health & Human Services Policy Committee. Although it is an area he doesn't have a lot of experience in, he thinks the committee will deal with some

extremely important issues.

"From talking to the state agency people they tell me that the people on welfare are really the ones that need to be there," he said.

He said that while that is good, it also raises issues of how best to take care of those who most need the help.

Jacobson said his personality and work background will help shape the type of legislator he is likely to be.

"I'm more likely to sit back and help shape how things are going rather than come in with my own long agenda," he said.

He learned a lot while campaigning — from talking to people and his own self-reflection. And he had plenty of help along the way as his wife helped door knock and another

family member, the couple's dog Rocky, was a star in the parades they attended.

"We learned Rocky is highly intuitive," Jacobson said. "He would go right up to the children. He was a big hit."

DISTRICT 53B

1998 population (estimate): 37,307

Largest city: Vadnais Heights

County: Ramsey

Location: Northern suburbs of St. Paul

Top concern: "Our (tax) system is better than some but I think we could do better. Not only reducing rates but simplifying the system."

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