



Rochester Senator, Nancy Brataas, listens intently at her first committee meeting.

### District 32 Senator Begins Term

## "I'm Learning The Ropes"

When former Minority Leader Harold Krieger resigned from the Senate after being elected Olmsted County Judge, Nancy Brataas did not even consider running for his vacated seat. In fact, when the nominating committee met to select a candidate last December, Mrs. Brataas was in Cleveland working on a March of Dimes project.

"I was called in Cleveland," she remembers, "to see if I would be interested in running for the Senate. Obviously, I couldn't come home and run, but people wanted to put my name before the Republican convention. I have been in politics long enough to know that is not the way to run for endorsement, so I really put it out of my mind. It was just another time that it didn't work out for me."

Nevertheless, upon her return to Rochester, one of the first things she learned was that the nominating convention had not endorsed any candidate. And the time was right. Mrs. Brataas declared her candidacy and found herself in a primary fight for the Republican nomination.

Quite a contrast to the usual lengthy, drawn-out campaign, Mrs. Brataas recalls that her campaign strategy was planned between December 19 and January 2.

"We had to make some quick decisions. Are we going to have billboards, and, if so, how many? Are we going to have lawn signs? A telephone campaign? How much money do we need? Who is going to be the Finance Chairman? All of this while we were eating Christmas turkey. Really, so many people interrupted their lives on my behalf."

Senior Brataas is no stranger to politics. An activist for many years in the Republican party, she is a former state GOP chairwoman and headed

former President Nixon's re-election campaign in ten industrial states. But even with her extensive political background, she hesitates to take a stand on any issue at the present time.

"Being elected to either the Senate or House is just like anyone else taking on a new job," she states. "One doesn't have a handle or grasp on a new job immediately and you can't define what your accomplishments are going to be, particularly if you're in the Senate. My main challenge at the moment is learning the new procedures, which, of course, I'm not that familiar with. The conventions I have attended over the years are based on Robert's Rules of Order. The procedures are fascinating in the Legislature, but they are also much more complex.

Senator Brataas is also not hesitant to relate some amusing stories since she began her term — one of them directly related to the orientation all new Senators face after election.

She has been asked to co-author a number of bills and, like most other Senators, finds her desk flooded with legislation which she must read in an effort to determine if her name should be added as a sponsor.

"Well, I took the advice from a person I trust to co-author a bill, fully assured that I would never have to speak for it. But at my first committee meeting, the bill came up for discussion and the main author did not appear to testify on its behalf. And so it was a joke, because normally second authors are not called upon to testify. Afterward, Democrats and Republicans came up and told me the same thing happened to them — it was all good-natured."

As might be expected, Senator Brataas is constantly asked if her main legislative efforts will be in the area of women's rights. She believes that her

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election represents "equal rights in action" but that her main responsibility is to perform as well as she can as a Senator — not as a "woman" in the Senate."

"It would be a mistake for all other issues to become secondary, and for me to concentrate only on women's rights areas. I represent both men and women in Rochester."

Nonetheless, Brataas will not support the Republican party platform position to rescind the Equal Rights Amendment.

"Throughout my campaign I said repeatedly that I wouldn't vote to rescind the amendment. If there is new information that comes to light which I was not aware of at the time, obviously I want to consider it. But as of this time, I have not seen anything that would bring me to that point. I am really amazed at how many other women's issues there are that I, at least, have not been reading about in the paper."

"One thing in particular that impresses me is the caliber of people in the Senate. Often you hear derogatory remarks concerning the Legislature, but I'm truly impressed with the dedication I see. I think the courteous way in which Senators listen to testimony in committee, the types of questions they ask, all show a genuine desire to understand that particular issue."

"When I was in charge of the ten industrial states for the now infamous, Committee for the Re-election of the President . . . I could see the great assets of the Minnesota political system. In 1943, Governor Stassen did away with patronage for the most part in our political system. And that has made the whole difference. The volunteer ethic is so deeply engrained in the Republican and Democratic parties there is hardly any fraud — we don't have fraud as they do in other states. And it is a tribute to both Democrats and Republicans that this ethic has been carried out in the way it was meant to be."

Mrs. Brataas has been appointed to the Senate Education and Labor and Commerce Committees, and will also serve on the Labor subcommittee and special education and institutions subcommittee.

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*Move To Community Facilities Urged*

## State Institutional Closing Plan Studied