



SENATOR MARC BASNIGHT  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Dear Dave

Sorry to hear about your little  
set back. I'm glad to hear you're  
doing better, and I look forward  
to seeing you back  
Marc



# Some Lawmakers Still In Dog House Over Coup

## Diamont, Others Still In Power

RALEIGH (AP) — Former state House Speaker Joe Mavretic says he's spurned by some Democrats, including former friends who stuck by him when he was going through a divorce and who helped him celebrate his new marriage.

"I would say there are still probably a half dozen members who will never forget the coup, will never forgive those of us who were in the dissident group, and are always looking for a

way to get us back, to pay us back," said Mavretic, who toppled longtime speaker Liston Ramsey in 1989.

But most of the 20 Democrats who joined with Republicans that year not only have survived, but have moved up since the short-lived revolt ended two years later.

"They've done better than I thought they would do," said state Rep. Vernon James, who started the Kennel Club, a social group for the 54 Democrats whose loyalty to the toppled speaker, Liston Ramsey, put them in the political doghouse for two years.

Among those back in the establishment are former Rep. Sam Hunt, now Gov. Jim Hunt's transportation secretary. Former Rep. Harry Payne became labor commissioner last year. And Rep. David Diamont has stayed on as House Appropriations Committee chairman, a post he won after the coup that felled Ramsey and put Joe Mavretic in the speaker's seat for two years.



Diamont

RALEIGH (AP) — Here's how the 20 Democratic dissidents, who helped oust House Speaker Liston Ramsey in 1989, have fared since then:

### POLITICAL WINNERS

Ten dissidents either held on to their House seats or moved up politically.

■ Former House Speaker Joe Mavretic. Lost a bid for re-election to a second term a speaker. But he has been appointed chairman of the new House Health and Human Services Committee, which will handle health reform.

■ Fred Bowman of Burlington. Recently won re-election to a fifth term.

■ Roy Cooper of Rocky Mount. Now in the state Senate.

■ Dan DeVane of Raeford. Recently won re-election to a sixth term.

■ David Diamont. Re-elected to 10th term and appointed to third term as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

■ C.R. Edwards of Fayetteville. Retired after coup, but recently won election to state Senate.

■ Sam Hunt of Burlington. Recently appointed state transportation secretary by Gov. Jim Hunt.

■ Harry Payne of Carolina Beach. Newly elected state labor commissioner.

■ John McLaughlin of Newell. Recently won re-election to a fifth term.

■ Alex Warner of Hope Mills. Recently won re-election to a fourth term.

### TWO WHO RETIRED

■ Don Beard of Fayetteville. Held No. 2 House post during coalition, won re-election,

"We saw ourselves as 20 Democrats who had nothing to lose," Mavretic told *The News & Observer* of Raleigh. "Because we weren't going anywhere unless there was a change — and if we lost, we weren't going anywhere. So we had nothing to lose."

Not only have the 20 Democrats survived, but some of the legislative reforms they pushed — more open-

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ness and more inclusion of rank-and-file legislators — also live on.

Leaks about the plot began surfacing weeks before the coup. But many — including Ramsey, who had just been nominated by the 74 House Democrats for an unprecedented fifth term as speaker — found it hard to believe.

On Jan. 11, the opening day of the 1989 session, the 20 dissident Demo-

crats voted along with 45 Republicans to oust Ramsey as speaker.

"This is the sort of thing that happens in a state once in a hundred years," said Thad Beyle, a political scientist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "It's very rare. Party lines just aren't broken like that."

Said former state Rep. Paul Pulley of Durham, who was a lobbyist at the

then retired last year, ending an 18-year career in the House.

■ Alex Hall of Wilmington. Didn't seek re-election to the House after the coup, but later won election to the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, one of the most prestigious posts in state government.

### POLITICAL LOSERS

Eight participants eventually lost their House seats or failed in bids for other political offices.

■ Jim Crawford of Oxford. Won re-election after the coup, but lost a bid for lieutenant governor last year in the Democratic primary.

■ Don Dawkins of Rockingham. Won re-election after the coup, but lost a bid for Congress last year in the Democratic primary in the 8th District.

■ Pryor Gibson of Wadesboro. Defeated in Democratic primary in 1990 and again in a comeback attempt last year.

■ Pete Hasty of Fayetteville. Won re-election after the coup, but lost his seat in the Democratic primary in 1992.

■ Bill Hurley of Fayetteville. Won re-election after the coup, but was defeated in the Democratic primary in 1992.

■ Walter B. Jones Jr. of Farmville. Won re-election after the coup, but lost bid for Congress in the Democratic primary in the 1st District.

■ John Tart of Goldsboro. Defeated in 1990 Democratic primary.

■ Betty Wiser of Raleigh. Defeated in 1990 Democratic primary.

time: "It was the most acrimonious, fractious, bitter experience I have ever witnessed. It was a situation where people were literally scared to be seen talking to someone because people on the other side would see them."

Some consequences of the coup remain:

■ The entrenched leadership of the state House was broken up, allowing a younger generation to move up.

Some say that Rep. Dan Blue, a 43-year-old Raleigh lawyer, would not be the state's first black House speaker if not for the coup. Lt. Gov. Dennis Wicker, 40, a former Ramsey lieutenant, rose to prominence during the revolution as House majority leader, a new post established by House Democrats who found themselves out of power.

■ Changes were made in the way the House does business.

The so-called Supersub — eight House and Senate leaders who had met behind closed doors to write the state's budget — disappeared. Budgets now are put together painstakingly in open meetings. And copies of budget documents are readily available to the public.

"There are little things that are being forgotten," Diamont said. "Going into the Appropriations Committee and seeing the budget bill for the first time and voting on it two hours later — a 150-page bill with not even an index to look things up."

Of the 20 dissidents, 10 have held on to their seats or won elective office or appointive office. Two have retired from politics and eight eventually lost their House seats or were defeated in bids for other political offices.

Former House Minority Leader Johnathan Rhyne, who led Republicans during the coalition's rule, said Democrats and Republicans are back in traditional roles.