

Rep. Sharon Nelson pledges to protect environment, fix traffic and boost education

November 5, 2007

SEATTLE -- The newest member of the state House of Representatives was sworn in today by Judge Mary Yu as family and friends watched.

"I fully understand that each community in the 34th District has unique issues," said **Rep. Sharon Nelson (D-Maury Island), appointed** to the 34th District seat vacated when Rep. Joe McDermott moved up to the Senate. "Yet we share so many common interests, including improved transportation, protections for the environment, universal health care and the best possible education for our children and grandchildren."

While Nelson is new to the Legislature, she is a long-time community leader. Nelson is the founding president of Preserve Our Islands and works as chief of staff for King County Councilmember Dow Constantine.

Her top three priorities as a lawmaker in the House are:

- 1) The environment -- "The Puget Sound Partnership was a first step toward restoring Puget Sound, but there is more to be done. We must look at programs, such as the aquatic reserve program, and utilize them effectively if we are going to prevent further damage."
- 2) Transportation -- "Regardless of the fate of the roads and transit measure, the Legislature will have to make major decisions as to how we will reduce congestion and improve transit all over the state."
- 3) Education -- "The Legislature made great strides last session in investing in education, but there is more to do. My goal is to continue to reduce class sizes, invest in bilingual tutors, counseling and other programs to move our schools into the top 10 percent in the nation."

Nelson lives on Maury Island with her husband, John, and was joined at her swearing in by daughters Amy and Lyssa and her mother, Betty Haas.

As appointed lawmakers, Rep. Nelson and Sen. McDermott will both be up for election in 2008. Nelson's legislative e-mail phone number will be nelson.sharon@leg.wa.gov and her Olympia office number 360-786-7952. She can also be reached through the toll-free Hotline at 800-562-6000.