Gov. Rick Perry's Remarks at Sec. of State Phil Wilson's Swearing In

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Wednesday, July 18, 2007

Thank you, Tan (Parker). My fellow statewide elected officials, members of the judiciary, distinguished guests, friends and fellow Texans- thank you for joining us on this historic day as Texas’ 106th Secretary of State takes the oath of office. It is great to see so many people here today. All I can say is Kristen must have a lot of friends.

We are here today to celebrate the appointment of a Texan who is the embodiment of character, whose life is a testament to the value of perseverance and whose career demonstrates that public service remains an honorable pursuit. Phil Wilson does not see public service as a job, but a calling. He recognizes that we are all given a finite amount of time, and he has chosen to use his time to make the greatest difference for as many people as possible. For those of you who know Phil personally, you know him as easygoing and yet intense. He can be quick with a joke, and also quick to make decisions. And he is driven to use every opportunity he has been given for the greatest good.

His friends at Hardin Simmons always knew there was something special about Phil. If nothing else, he was the only guy who carried a briefcase to class while everyone else was wearing backpacks. After graduating from Hardin Simmons in Abilene, Phil jumped into the public arena and made a difference in several areas: as State Director for Senator Phil Gramm; working as my Communications Director; serving as deputy chief of staff in my office; providing leadership with the Emerging Technology Fund and the Texas Enterprise Fund. In my office, Phil played a direct role in job creation, due in large part to his ability to recruit companies to come to Texas. If you need no other proof of Phil’s ability as a salesman and a recruiter, you need look no further than Kristen Wilson, a remarkable woman he somehow recruited to be his wife. I am confident that Phil is going to succeed mightily on behalf of the people of Texas, advocating for a more prosperous border, marketing Texas to potential trading partners at home and abroad, helping to bring jobs and opportunity to our state. And even more importantly, I know Phil is a man of high ethical standards, a man I can count on to ensure the integrity of our elections and advise me on the important issues of international affairs, trade and strengthening the border region.

In Phil Wilson, Texans get more than a public servant of nearly two decades, they get a leader who has been shaped by adversity. He has come through the fire, defeating cancer twice, but only after enduring the pain and uncertainty such a traumatic event can bring. He has a faith that is unshakeable, and he knows what is truly important in life: caring about others. When you have a brush with death, it tends to clarify your thinking. No longer do you consider having the largest house or the best resume most important, but instead you see life as a gift, and you realize that only in giving of yourself- spiritually, physically and mentally- to serve others and the God who created you can you...
truly live an enriched existence. Phil Wilson loves Texas because he loves her people. I know him, I trust him and I wholeheartedly believe that he is the best choice to represent Texas to the world. Phil Wilson has my complete confidence, my highest expectations and my sincere thanks for answering the call of public service. I want to congratulate Phil and Kristen and their entire family on a day they will remember and cherish forever.

At this time, I would like to ask Phil and Kristen to step forward for the oath of office.