

HOUSE MEMBERS SWORN-IN KLECKLEY, LEGER HEAD LEADERSHIP TEAM

The House of Representatives convened its organizational session today at 10 a.m. with state Rep. Jeff Arnold, the most senior member of the body, presiding. After opening preliminaries and the judging of qualifications and elections, the 105 members took the oath of office and elected officers for the 2012-2016 term.

The first order of business following the administration of the oath of office, bestowing of 2012-2016 legislative lapel pins, was led by Rep. Simone Champagne of Jeanerette. The election of the clerk of the House followed. Current House Clerk, Alfred "Butch" Speer was nominated by Rep. Hunter Greene of Baton Rouge. The nomination was seconded by Rep. Karen Gaudet St. Germain of Pierre Part. There being no other nominees for the office, Speer was deemed elected. His oath was administered by Mary Quaid, Director of House Legislative Services.

Following the clerk's oath, Rep. John M. Schroder, Sr. of Covington nominated Rep. Chuck Kleckley for the position of speaker of the House. The nomination was seconded by Rep. Patrick Williams of Shreveport and Rep. Frank Hoffmann of West Monroe. There were no other nominees and Kleckley was declared elected the 67th speaker of the House and the first speaker from Calcasieu Parish. He is only the second Republican speaker elected since Reconstruction. John F. DeRosier, District Attorney for the 14th Judicial District, administered the oath to the new speaker.

The gavel was passed to Kleckley by Arnold and he began his duties as speaker, presiding over the next order of business, the election of the speaker pro tempore.

Rep. Stephen F. Carter of Baton Rouge nominated Walter J. Leger III for the position of Speaker Pro Tempore. The nomination was seconded by Rep. Herbert Dixon of Alexandria and Rep. Helena Moreno of New Orleans. Leger was elected without opposition. He is the 11th speaker pro tempore of the House. His oath was administered by his father, Walter J. Leger, Jr.

The Speaker then appointed Clarence Russ Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives. His oath was administered by the Clerk.