



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF INTERIOR RAY ARNETT RESIGNS

Assistant Interior Secretary G. Ray Arnett has expressed his wish to resign to pursue business and conservation opportunities, the Interior Department announced today. Arnett, who served through President Reagan's first term, made his wish to resign known in letters to President Reagan and Interior Secretary William Clark.

An internationally known conservationist and two-term former President of the National Wildlife Federation, Arnett was appointed Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks by President Reagan in early 1981, thus becoming the top official with direct responsibility for the Department's National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Ray has been asked to work with us in finding a successor and to advise the Department on conservation matters," Secretary Clark said. "He has been my strong right arm in working with park and refuge improvement programs that this Administration initiated early in the President's first term," Clark said. "His judgment, courage and leadership have been of great help to me. The conservation community and sportsmen owe Ray a debt of gratitude for his ceaseless work on behalf of wildlife, parks, and refuges and on behalf of the America people who use and enjoy these resources. Ray will be missed but his advice will continue to be available to me and to the Department."

(more)

In his resignation letters, Arnett said:

"With the first term, and your reelection campaign so splendidly concluded, I have a strong desire to pursue business and conservation initiatives that have opened to me in this area and in California.

"Please know that I leave with the highest respect and admiration for you and the Vice President, and for Secretary Clark, a fellow Californian who has been an outstanding leader of this Department.

"I leave also with satisfaction that we have successfully rehabilitated our national parks with the \$1 billion Park Restoration Improvement Program initiated in your Administration. A similar program is also now underway on behalf of our refuge system. And the duck stamp program, so important to wetland acquisition and protection, is stronger than ever. I feel quite satisfied that during your first term we have made enormous strides in the protection of natural resources and in their enjoyment by the American people. I could go on and mention a myriad of other accomplishments, but the key point is that under your guidance a pride and can-do attitude has emerged in the area of resource management that never before existed. Those of us who have been a part of that effort will never forget it and are eternally grateful for your leadership.

"May God bless you and your continued leadership of America and the free world."

Born in Quantico, Virginia, June 14, 1924, Arnett attended Virginia and California schools and earned degrees in geology at the University of Southern California. He served four years with the Marine Corps during World War II, and saw combat in the Pacific Theater, during which he received a field commission. He served two additional years during the Korean conflict.

Active in civic work, after World War II and the Korean conflict, Arnett became involved in many groups concerned with wildlife and fishery resources. He has served as a director of the National Wildlife Federation for 17 years. He was one of the founders, and later board chairman, of the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America and its companion organization, the Wildlife Conservation Fund of America. In addition, he has held leadership posts with the Wilderness Leadership School; Game Conservation International; World Wilderness Congress; Californians for Recreation; Ducks Unlimited, and other bodies.

Arnett has served on the San Diego-LaJolla Underwater Park Advisory Committee, the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission and numerous other groups concerned with ocean resources; the Advisory Committee to save the endangered California condor; the California Environmental Quality Study Council; the Wildlife Society; and the seven-State Colorado River Wildlife Council, among others. Arnett served as Director, California Department of Fish and Game during President Reagan's two terms as Governor.

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