

# Woman Named to High Court

By James Gerstenzang

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan today chose Arizona Judge Sandra D. O'Connor to become the first woman justice in the history of the Supreme Court, calling her "truly a person for all seasons," and fulfilling a promise he made on the way to the White House.

Reagan said he did not name a woman to succeed retiring Justice Potter Stewart "merely to do so," but because O'Connor has the qualities needed on the high court.

"She is truly a person for all seasons, possessing those unique qualities of temperament, fairness, intellectual capacity and devotion to the public good which had characterized the 101 brethren who have preceded her," the president said in his nationally broadcast and televised announcement.

"I commend you to her, and I urge the Senate's swift bipartisan confirmation, so that as soon as possible she may take her seat on the court and her place in history," Reagan said.

IN A STATEMENT released by the White House, Judge O'Connor, 51, said: "I am extremely happy and honored to have been nominated by President Reagan for a position on the U.S. Supreme Court. If confirmed, I will do my best to serve the court and this nation in a manner that will bring credit to the president, to my family and to all the people of this great nation."

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Local, National Reaction to Her Nomination—Page A-4

Reagan said the O'Connor nomination will be sent to the Senate as soon as FBI background investigations have been completed. The court is in recess until next autumn but hearings on her nomination are to begin July 15.

"We're satisfied that she will have no problem as far as confirmation is concerned," said Atty. Gen. William French Smith.

There remained the prospect that ardent conservatives would challenge O'Connor for past support of a constitutional amendment on the rights of women, and on abortion. Smith said he was confident that no single issue would dominate the confirmation proceedings.

Reagan said he was completely satisfied with Judge O'Connor's record on right to life issues.

AT A NEWS conference in Phoenix about two hours after Reagan announced her selection, Judge O'Connor said she would not talk about her attitude on that or other substantive matters until she goes before the Senate Judiciary Committee in confirmation hearings.

Asked about her feelings on becoming the first woman ever appointed to the

court, she said, "In approaching the work on the bench, I can only say I'll approach it with care and effort and try to do the best job I can do."

Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he hoped to open hearings on July 15.

"I am glad the president has made his choice," Thurmond said. "I will do everything I can to help the president."

AS MAJORITY leader of the Arizona Senate, O'Connor backed the Equal Rights Amendment resolution introduced in 1972.

However, she backed away from the resolution after learning that Arizona's two Republican senators at that time, Barry Goldwater and Paul Fannin, were among eight U.S. senators who voted against it.

In 1974, she sponsored a conservative alternative to ERA, an advisory resolution referring the issue to voters. She also strongly supported Arizona's first spending-limit resolution.

Reagan described the selection of a justice as "the most awesome appointment" that presidents make because justices leave "footprints on the sands of time."

Justice Stewart's decision to leave the high court opened the first vacancy there in six years.

REAGAN'S CHOICE of a woman justice fulfilled a campaign promise made last Oct. 14, when candidate Reagan said, "One of the first Supreme Court vacancies in my administration will be filled by the most qualified woman I can find."

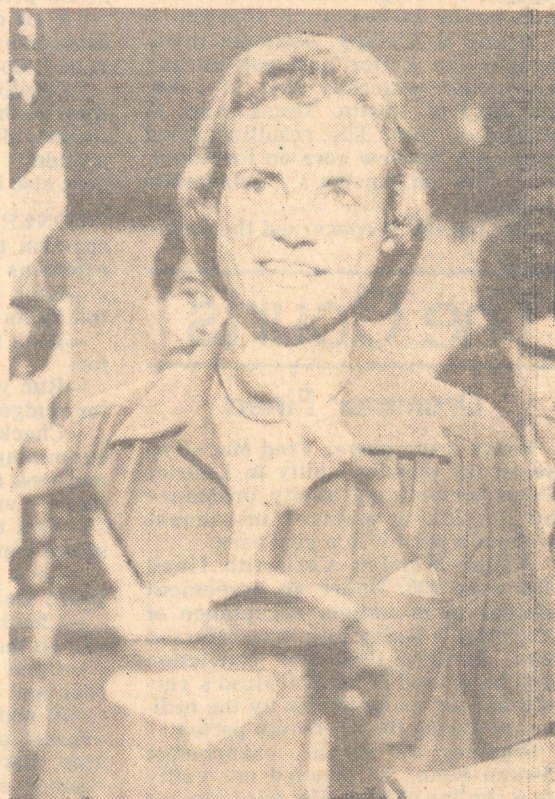
Reagan repeated that campaign pledge as he announced the choice of O'Connor and urged swift Senate confirmation so that she can take her seat on the court "and her place in history."

He said he did not name a woman "merely to do so," but because Mrs. O'Connor meets the standards he set for an appointment he called one of the most awesome a president can make.

He said to have made the choice on the basis of her sex would have been unfair to women, to the nation, and to the future generations that will be affected by high court decisions.

O'CONNOR WAS graduated from Stanford University law school in 1952, with the Order of the Coif. Among her law school classmates was Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist.

Reagan announced the appointment at the White House, then yielded to Smith, who answered reporters' questions about the nomination and the political hurdles O'Connor will face before her confirmation.



Sandra O'Connor  
At today's news conference

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Then, at her own news conference in Phoenix, the 51-year-old Mrs. O'Connor pledged to "simply try to do as good a job as I think I can."

She said Reagan had interviewed her last week for 15 minutes and called her at 4 p.m. Monday to tell her of her selection.

"This is a momentous day in my life, in the life of my family," the beaming nominee declared.

"I can't believe it, I still can't believe it," Mrs. O'Connor said as she slipped out of the jammed appeals court room in

which her news conference was held.

Poised but looking a bit weary, Mrs. O'Connor answered only routine questions during the 15-minute conference, turning aside queries about her views on abortion, her judicial approach and other legal issues.

"I'm sorry, I cannot address myself to substantive questions," she said with a

smile. "It would be getting into the confirmation process."

On hand to help her in handling such potential controversies was Peter Roussel, deputy press secretary to President Reagan.

She opened the news conference with a brief statement. "I am extremely happy and honored to have been

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"We're satisfied that she will have no problem as far as confirmation is concerned," said Atty. Gen. William French Smith.

Mrs. O'Connor's appointment won immediate praise from the National Organization for Women, whose president, Eleanor Smeal, said, "It's a victory for the women's movement." But there was a sharp blast of criticism from far-right conservative and right-to-life groups.

There remained the prospect that ardent conservatives would challenge Mrs. O'Connor for past support of a constitutional amendment on the rights of women, and on abortion. Smith said he was confident that no single issue would dominate the confirmation proceedings.

Strong opposition came immediately from the National Right to Life Committee, the nation's largest anti-abortion group.

"We feel this is directly contrary to the Republican platform and to

Mr. Reagan's previously stated position," said Dr. J.C. Wilkie, president of the organization.

Conservative leader Richard Viguerie said "the White House recognized she is not going to be acceptable to conservatives, so they rushed this thing. It's a good example of why people are so cynical about politicians."

Reagan said he was completely satisfied with Judge O'Connor's record on right to life issues.

As majority leader of the Arizona Senate, Mrs. O'Connor backed the Equal Rights Amendment resolution introduced in 1972. But she backed away from the resolution after learning that Arizona's two Republican senators at that time, Barry Goldwater and Paul Fannin, were among eight U.S. senators who voted against it.

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