

# Cane is first black to represent Shore in House of Delegates

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- Cane says there should have been others before him

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the first black Eastern Shoreman to serve in the Maryland House of Delegates.

Cane and the other 140 members of the state House of Delegates were sworn into office Wednesday, the opening of the 1999 legislative session.

While he said his election to the state legislature was significant, Cane also said by the late 20th century, there "should have been many (black lawmakers from the Eastern Shore) ahead of me."

Family members and friends were in the capitol for Cane's first day as a delegate. His son and daughter came from Arizona; his sisters from Massachusetts; and many friends and church members arrived from Salisbury.

A Somerset County native, Cane has lived in Wicomico County since 1968. The 64-year-old

Hebron resident is administrator of Shore Inc., a community action agency which provides job training, housing, and senior citizen programs in Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties, and Head Start programs in eight Eastern Shore counties. He retired in the mid-1980s after 31 years as an evaluation engineer with the State Highway Administration.

Issues involving the poultry industry and watermen concern Cane, who will serve on the House Environmental Matters Committee.

District 37A includes the western half of Wicomico County and eastern Dorchester County. Hurluck, Vienna and part of Cambridge are in the district.

Cane previously served on the Wicomico County Council. He lost by only 21 votes when he ran for delegate in 1994, but came back a winner in 1998.

"Rudy's going to do a great job. ... He already has a great grasp of the issues," said Sen. Richard Colburn, R-Mid-Shore.

In his opening speech to the delegates, House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. emphasized tolerance and the need to help regions in the state overcome economic hardships. Those views were welcomed by Cane.

"The vision of 'one Maryland' I think is great," said Cane.

Cane is also a strong advocate of public education. He said four members of his family, including two of his children, all benefited from a public school education. Three became physicians, and one a dentist.

"You can do it if you apply yourself," said Cane.