

Tucker to resign

Governor, guilty on 2 counts, will vacate office by July 15; Susan and James McDougal convicted on 22 of 23 counts

Resignation is intended to lift burden

BY JOE STUMPE
AND ELIZABETH CALDWELL
Democrat-Gazette Staff Writers

Saying he can't abuse the trust Arkansans placed in him, Gov. Jim Guy Tucker announced Tuesday that he will resign as governor on or before July 15.

The announcement came less than three hours after a jury convicted him of two felonies.

"Although I know I am innocent of all charges made, I must accept the verdict of the jury while I appeal," Tucker said. "But I cannot, and should not, allow our people or our state to bear any part of that burden."

Tucker, a Democrat, will be succeeded by Lt. Gov. Mike Huckabee of Texarkana. Huckabee will be only the third Republican governor since Reconstruction.

Tucker, 52, said the July 15 date will allow him and his staff time to prepare an orderly transition to a Republican administration.

Tucker became governor Dec. 12, 1992, after Bill Clinton was elected president. At the time, Tucker was in the middle of a four-year term as lieutenant governor. In November 1994, Tucker was elected to a full four-year term, receiving 60 percent of the vote against Republican lawyer Sheffield Nelson of Little Rock.

Tucker announced his resignation during a news conference at the Capitol that was broadcast live by television and radio stations statewide.

Dozens of high-level state officials and Tucker supporters packed the sweltering Governor's See **RESIGN**, Page 8A



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/RICK McFARLAND
Gov. Jim Guy Tucker, accompanied by (clockwise, from left) daughter Sarah; press secretary Max Parker; daughter Anna; and wife, Betty, leaves the federal courthouse Tuesday after a jury convicted him of conspiracy and mail fraud. Two and a half hours later, he announced he will leave office by July 15.

Defendants respectful of verdict

BY PATRICIA MANSON
AND JOE STUMPE
Democrat-Gazette Staff Writers

A federal jury Tuesday convicted Gov. Jim Guy Tucker and President Clinton's former business partners of charges pursued by Whitewater prosecutors.

Tucker, the only Arkansas governor to be tried on criminal charges, shocked observers 2½ hours after the verdict was read by announcing he will resign from office.

At a news conference at the Capitol, Tucker said he wouldn't remain in office while he appeals the conviction.

"The people of the state should not be put through this," Tucker said.

Attorneys for Tucker's co-defendants — James McDougal and McDougal's former wife, Susan — also vowed to fight the convictions. Tucker and the McDougals remain free on their own recognizance.

Jurors convicted Tucker of two felony counts and acquitted him of five. Jurors also convicted James McDougal of 18 felony counts and Susan McDougal of four.

The two counts on which Tucker was convicted carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and \$500,000 in fines. It is unclear whether federal sentencing guidelines will apply to Tucker's sentence.

At the time of the transactions cited in the indictment, Tucker was in private business and the McDougals controlled the now-defunct Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Association.

The McDougals also were partners with then-Gov. Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the northern Arkansas land venture that spawned the far-reaching Whitewater investigation.

The verdict was seen as a victory for independent counsel Kenneth Starr, whose office sought the 21-count indictment against Tucker and his co-defen- See **VERDICT**, Page 12A

Soon to be governor, Huckabee faces tough decision on Senate race

BY RACHEL O'NEAL
Democrat-Gazette Capitol Bureau



Lt. Gov. Mike Huckabee said Gov. Jim Guy Tucker's conviction came as a shock. Arkansans "have suffered a very deep wound," Huckabee said.

Lt. Gov. Mike Huckabee said Tuesday that Arkansas "has suffered a very deep wound" and now is not the time for him to say whether he will drop out of the race for the U.S. Senate.

Huckabee was unopposed for the Republican nomination for the seat being given up by Sen. David Pryor, D-Ark.

Huckabee is scheduled to face the winner of a June 11 Demo-

cratic primary runoff between Attorney General Winston Bryant and state Sen. Lu Hardin of Russellville.

After being convicted of two felonies Tuesday, Gov. Jim Guy Tucker announced he will resign from office on or before July 15.

Tucker announced his impending resignation during a 6 p.m. news conference at the state Capitol. Huckabee held a news conference minutes later just outside his Capitol office.

Huckabee, 40, said Tucker's conviction came as a shock. He said he has not had time to consider what is in the best interest of the state.

"The people of this state have suffered a very deep wound," said Huckabee, a Southern Baptist minister and professional speaker. "The pain is, and it will continue to be, quite intense."

Huckabee will be the state's third Republican governor since See **HUCKABEE**, Page 10A

On the inside

WHITWATER independent counsel Kenneth Starr hails the convictions as a "vindication of the justice system." Page 8A.

TEXT OF Gov. Jim Guy Tucker's statement. Page 8A.

TUCKER'S political career has spanned 26 years. Page 8A.

TIMELINE of the Whitewater case, starting in 1992. Page 9A.

LOCAL LAWYERS said they suspected the jury would convict all three defendants. Page 10A.

THERE WAS no crying or shouting as the verdicts were announced. Page 11A.

LOCAL STATIONS broke into regular programming. Page 11A.

SUMMARY of the charges and the jury's verdicts on each count. Page 12A.

WEATHER

Little Rock The warm weather will continue today, and skies will be partly cloudy. Highs will be in the upper 80s. Clear to partly cloudy and mild tonight. Lows will be in the low to mid-60s.

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Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/KAREN VANDONGE
James McDougal talks with reporters Tuesday afternoon after being convicted of 18 felony counts.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STEVE KEESEE
Convictions on four felony counts didn't stop Susan McDougal from smiling Tuesday as she left court.

President 'very sorry,' says 'it's time to go back to work'

BY KATHY KIELY
Democrat-Gazette Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The effect of the Little Rock jury's verdict is "more of a personal thing," President Clinton said Tuesday, and he's "very sorry" for Jim Guy Tucker and James and Susan McDougal but, as for himself, "it's time to go back to work."

Shortly after the verdicts had been made public, a visibly downcast Clinton took the unusual step of striding over to reporters and photographers camped on the driveway of the White House to tell them he wanted to "make a brief statement about the jury verdict in Arkansas."

While expressing sympathy for his former associates, the president said that "we should all accept" the jury's decision. But he tried to de-

flect speculation that it might have any effect on him. He portrayed himself as a minor player in the proceedings.

"I was asked to give testimony; I did that," the president said. "And for me, it's time to go back to work. That's what I intend to do."

Asked whether he felt the verdicts meant the jurors did not believe his videotaped testimony, which defense lawyers felt was so favorable to their clients that they rested their case after



President Clinton

See **CLINTON**, Page 12A

Clinton's testimony didn't count for much with jury, foreman says

BY JULIAN E. BARNES
Democrat-Gazette Staff Writer

While many observers saw the Whitewater trial as a battle between prosecution witness David Hale and President Bill Clinton, the jury foreman called the president's testimony irrelevant.

"We really used it very little and not because there was any credibility problem; it just wasn't

pertinent to decide the issues we were asked to decide," said Sandra Lynn Wood of Russellville.

Jurors carefully examined the conflicting statements by Hale, the prosecution's star witness, Wood said.

"We weighted David Hale's testimony like the judge instructed. We weighed out the conflicting statements," she said. "His testimony was

weighed like anyone else's."

But one juror, Tracy H. Pleasants of Conway, said she used Hale's testimony when she could corroborate it with that of other witnesses or documents.

"I personally didn't hold his testimony in high esteem," she said. "But no one can get up there and fib about everything."

Juror Risa Gayle Briggs of

North Little Rock said the jury took into account the testimony of prosecution witnesses primarily to support documents introduced into evidence.

"We didn't need to use David Hale's testimony," Briggs said.

Janice R. Greer of Traskwood agreed, saying, "The documents told me more than the testimony did," she said.

To some, it appeared the jury handed down a verdict Tuesday that amounted to a rebuke of President Clinton. But that's not how jurors saw things while they were deliberating.

"It wasn't an issue of David Hale vs. Bill Clinton for us," Wood said.

The defense was clearly hop- See **JURY**, Page 11A