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Smith To Leave the Education Department in January

By Joetta L. Sack

Washington

Acting Deputy Secretary of Education Marshall S. Smith announced his resignation last week, following months of rumors about his impending departure.

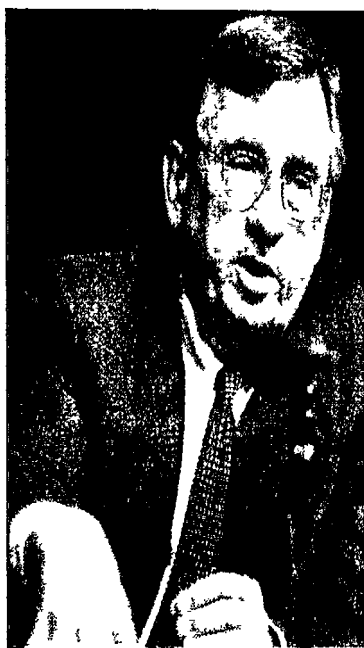
Mr. Smith, a key figure in the crafting of the Clinton education agenda since the beginning of the administration, is expected to remain at the Department of Education until January. He plans to return to Stanford University in California early next year to resume his academic career.

The day after Mr. Smith disclosed his plans, President Clinton announced his intention to nominate Frank S. Holleman III, a Greenville, S.C., lawyer, to fill the vacancy. Mr. Holleman also served as the chief of staff to Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley from 1994 to 1997.

In his nearly seven years at the Education Department, Mr. Smith, 62, has earned a reputation as a detail-oriented negotiator and solid day-to-day manager of the agency's affairs. "Mike Smith exemplifies the best in public service, and I am proud to have had him in my administration," Mr. Clinton said in a written statement.

Mr. Smith, who began his service in the Clinton administration in 1993 as the undersecretary of education, was promoted to acting deputy secretary more

than three years ago. But during his tenure as the department's second-in-command, Mr. Smith has never been able to shed the word "acting" from his title. Sen-



Benjamin Tice Smith

Acting Deputy Education Secretary Marshall S. Smith will return to Stanford University.

ate Republicans vehemently opposed his nomination to the deputy's post on a permanent basis, in large part because of his support for national academic standards and testing. The Senate declined to vote on his nomination for nearly 2½ years.

In an interview last week, Mr. Smith said his service as deputy secretary was not affected by lack of a Senate confirmation. "It would have been nice to have been confirmed. I would have liked to have had a hearing to

confront whatever issues there were ... but the Senate decided not to," he said. "As a matter of day-to-day operations, I didn't think about it very much."

The question never seemed to be where he would go after his term at the Education Department, but when he would leave. For instance, in 1996, it was rumored that his name appeared in Stanford University's schedule of classes.

Now, as President Clinton's second term winds down, Mr. Smith's return to academe has seemed inevitable, education lobbyists here say.

After the Education Department's announcement on Nov. 9, some education groups praised Mr. Smith's work in such areas as standards, technology, and accountability.

"The guy left his mark," said Bruce Hunter, the chief lobbyist for the American Association of School Administrators. "He came to town to promote standards and assessment, and he did just that."

A 'Lightning Rod'

But many Republicans opposed his plans to mandate standards and accountability from the federal level. Mr. Smith was a chief architect of the much-maligned White House proposal to create voluntary new national tests of student achievement and drafted the Goals 2000 law that provided fi-

nancial incentives for states to create standards and assessments. He took much of the heat for those controversial plans while his boss, Mr. Riley, remained friendly with many congressional Republicans.

The GOP leaders of both congressional education committees, James M. Jeffords of Vermont and Rep. Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania, declined to comment on his departure.

"He was clearly the chief strategist for the Education Department, in terms of both formulating the agenda and strategy," said Diane Ravitch, a prominent education scholar and a former assistant secretary of education under President Bush. "That would tend to make him a lightning rod, but he did his job superbly."

The Senate—then controlled by Democrats—did confirm Smith to serve as undersecretary in 1993, allowing him to fill what was then the number three spot at the Education Department. When Deputy Secretary Madeleine M. Kunin left in 1996, he took her job in increasing capacity.

Before his Education Department service, Mr. Smith was dean of the school of education at Stanford. He also served as a adviser to the National Education Goals Panel and was chief of the Department of Education in the Carter administration.

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