**Notes from Steve Bosquet**

TALLAHASSEE -- Under overcast skies Tuesday morning, a military honor guard lifted the flag-draped casket carrying former Gov. Reubin Askew's body up the steep steps of the historic Old Capitol in Tallahassee.

Gov. Rick Scott, First Lady Ann Scott, Cabinet members, legislative leaders and Supreme Court justices formed a procession behind the casket, as Askew lay in state in the building where he first took the oath as governor on Jan. 5, 1971. Note cards printed for the occasion called the ceremony "the final tribute from a grateful state."

Askew died last Thursday (March 13) at age 85.

Florida's political past reappeared as dozens of political leaders, former aides and associates and friends filed through the building, most pausing at the casket to pay final respects to Florida's 37th governor.

Askew's official portrait was displayed nearby as his widow, Donna Lou, children Kevin and Angela and grandchildren accepted condolences in a short receiving line.

Three former governors -- Bob Graham, Wayne Mixson and Bob Martinez -- were there. Also on hand were former aides Jim Apthorp, Jim Bacchus, Doug Sessions and Guy Spearman; former state treasurer Bill Gunter; former FDLE Commissioner Jim York; and former Secretary of State Bruce Smathers.

"It's good to see Florida giving the tribute that they're giving," said a teary-eyed George Sheldon, who got his start in politics as a young aide to then-state Sen. Askew.

Former four-term state attorney general Bob Butterworth said it was appropriate that Askew was being remembered in the Old Capitol, an enduring link to the days of florid rhetoric, spittoons in the Senate and the dominance of the rural clique of lawmakers known as the pork choppers.

"Walking in here, you have the feeling that he's still here," Butterworth said. "It's so symbolic because he's sort of between the old and new Florida. He's the bridge."

"I miss him so much," said Bacchus, a former congressman from Orlando who worked as a young speechwriter for Askew who will be one of three speakers at Wednesday afternoon's memorial service.

Former FSU President Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, who served in the Legislature when Askew was governor, recalled his friend as someone who didn't like to get up early but liked to stay up late, when he would plot political strategy.

"If you were at home and had a couple of drinks, and the phone rang, your dread was it was going to be Gov. Askew, giving you an assignment," D'Alemberte said.

Smathers recalled Askew's tough side and his willingness to play political hardball to get his way on an issue.

"He was humble before God, but not before the rest of us," Smathers said. "He was tough when he needed to be tough. The guy was a very formidable opponent."