

## 2 More Brown Associates Get Well-Paid Posts : Government: The Speaker appoints his frequent companion and a longtime friend to state boards as his hold on his own powerful position wanes.

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Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, continuing his rush to hand out patronage jobs while he retains his powerful post, has given high-paying appointments to his former law associate and a former Alameda County prosecutor who is Brown's frequent companion.

Brown, exercising his power even as his speakership seems near an end, named attorney Kamala Harris to the California Medical Assistance Commission, a job that pays \$72,000 a year.

Harris, a former deputy district attorney in Alameda County, was described by several people at the Capitol as Brown's girlfriend. In March, San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen called her "the Speaker's new steady." Harris declined to be interviewed Monday and Brown's spokeswoman did not return phone calls.

Harris accepted the appointment last week after serving six months as Brown's appointee to the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, which pays \$97,088 a year. After Harris resigned from the unemployment board last week, Brown replaced her with Philip S. Ryan, a lawyer and longtime friend and business associate.

Last week, Brown also appointed Janet Gotch, wife of retiring Assemblyman Mike Gotch of San Diego, to the \$95,000-a-year Integrated Waste Management Board, which oversees garbage disposal in California.



"It's politics as usual," said Robert M. Stern, co-director of the Center for Governmental Studies, a nonprofit group in Los Angeles. "Governors have done this in the past. This is a tradition the Speaker is carrying on. There are always outcries. People say it is wrong, and when they get in power they do the same thing."

Brown is making the appointments at a time when his 14-year hold on the speakership is tenuous at best. The Assembly will reconvene Monday with Republicans holding 41 seats to the Democrats' 39, making it likely the GOP will oust Democrat Brown as Speaker and replace him with a Republican.

"It's safe to say that these are not appointments we would necessarily make," said Phil Perry, spokesman for Assembly Republican Leader Jim Brulte, the front-runner to replace Brown as Speaker.

Assembly Republicans were muted in their criticism of Brown--perhaps because Assemblyman Bill Morrow (R-Oceanside) acknowledged Monday that he hired Faye Hill, wife of imprisoned former state Sen. Frank Hill, as a \$60,000-a-year aide.



Hill, a longtime lawmaker from Whittier, resigned from the Senate earlier this year after being convicted of taking a \$2,500 payoff from an undercover FBI agent.

Morrow hired Faye Hill in October and said she will work in his San Juan Capistrano office as well as in his offices in Oceanside and Sacramento.

"We haven't been keeping it a secret," Morrow said, adding that he has received "nothing but complimentary" comments about her work. Morrow called her "amply qualified," but also said he "can't divorce the fact that" she gained much of her experience in politics as a result of her marriage to Hill.

The Brown appointments of Harris and Ryan fill vacant slots once held by other Brown appointees, whose terms have not expired.

Harris' term on the medical board continues until Jan. 1, 1998.

Salary for the California Medical Assistance Commission is tied to legislators' pay. A government commission earlier this year voted to grant legislators a 37% pay increase, from the current \$52,500 a year, to \$72,000, effective when the new Legislature takes office Monday.

In the Alameda County district attorney's office, where Harris worked for three years, she was viewed as an able prosecutor on the way up. She took a leave earlier this year, and Brown named her to the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board in May.

The California Medical Assistance Commission, established during Gov. Jerry Brown's tenure, meets monthly and is not seen as a full-time post. It is responsible for negotiating contracts on behalf of the state with hospitals to limit Medi-Cal costs.

Harris replaces former Assemblywoman Sunny Mojonier, a San Diego Republican. Brown appointed Mojonier in January, 1993.

Ryan replaces Harris on the unemployment appeals board. But his stay probably will be brief. His term expires on Jan. 1, so he may sit for only five weeks. For that service, he stands to be paid \$9,300.

The seven-member Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board hears appeals by workers who are denied unemployment insurance benefits, and by employers who believe that benefits are awarded wrongly. The board meets once a week, and board members are expected to be on the job daily.

Brown and Ryan have been friends and business associates for years. Brown was "of counsel" to a Los Angeles law firm in which Ryan was a partner. Ryan left that firm in 1992, and Brown split from it this summer. Ryan also acted as Brown's spokesman when the Speaker's name surfaced in a criminal investigation three years ago. Ryan lives in Mendocino.

The governor and Senate Rules Committee appoint other members to the two boards. Both the governor and Senate Rules Committee have appointed former legislators or relatives of legislators to the boards.

Times staff writer Jerry Gillam contributed to this story.