

1990 House Leaders

Majority and Minority Leaders

Politics 'all in the family' for Long, Schreiber

House Majority Leader

Politics has always been a family affair for Rep. Dee Long (DFL-Mpls), who was recently elected majority leader of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

"My father always made politics seem like fun," she says. "He took me down to the train station to see Harry Truman campaign from the back of a train."

And she recalls going to the old Curtis and Leamington hotels in Minneapolis on election night to watch election returns trickle in to the respective Republican and Democratic-Farmer-Labor headquarters.

She says her parents were both active in politics, although not in the same party. Her father knew many of the early DFL leaders in Minneapolis, and her mother was active in grass-roots Republican politics.

She says the growing civil rights and anti-war movements intensified her interest in politics, but it wasn't until Long was in her mid-20s that she became active.

She was elected a precinct delegate, became active at the local level, and participated in some local campaigns in Minneapolis. She says she never really considered running for public office until her district's House seat was vacated in 1978.

She received encouragement to run, was elected, and has been re-elected ever since. Likewise, she says she never initially sought out the job as majority leader.

She didn't think about the post until former Majority Leader Ann Wynia resigned in 1989 to become commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

This is her first regular session as majority leader, and she says she looks forward to leading the DFL caucus on the House floor. Long has been involved with environmental issues for several years. She was named the environmentalist of the year by the local chapter of the Sierra Club, conservationist of the year by the local chapter of the National Audubon Society, and is a member of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

She says her working relationship with the speaker is a "cooperative" one, and hopes she and Minority Leader Bill Schreiber (IR-Brooklyn Park) can work together to limit partisan problems.

House Minority Leader

Like most politicians, Minority Leader Bill Schreiber (IR-Brooklyn Park) says his political interests were sparked within his family.

His mother was a school board member, and his father was a member of the planning commission and city council.

Schreiber's public service began in 1967 as a member of the Brooklyn Park City Council, where he served for five years. He decided to run for the Legislature in 1972 when redistricting put him in a new district without an incumbent.

Schreiber says his rather unique position of being a farmer in the metro area has helped him a lot. He can just as easily talk about farming as he can metropolitan issues, and that helps him communicate with all members.

Despite the high pressure of being the minority leader, Schreiber has served in that job since 1986. "The tenure as the minority leader is not that long, because there is a burnout factor that occurs," he says.

He says the job can be frustrating because of the inherently weak position of the minority party. A big role he plays within the House, he says, is offering alternatives to the majority party's initiatives and improving on the majority's legislation. He also says the minority party usually doesn't receive the credit it deserves for its initiatives.

He says he enjoys the diversity of

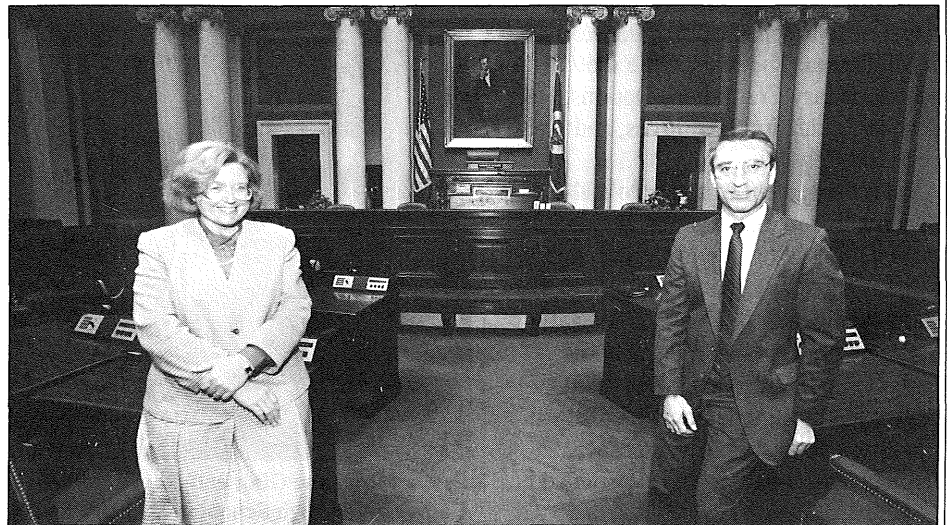
issues he faces as minority leader. While a typical member is usually assigned to three or four committees, party leaders have to be aware of all the issues before the House. That gives him the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of subjects.

For this session, he says he wants to promote an effective drug and alcohol program, a health care proposal, and programs that are tailored for local communities to operate. Local control is an important issue for Schreiber.

"The Legislature has so overkilled with state mandates and state requirements that we are losing our effectiveness at the local level," he says.

He says the state's centralized authority isn't working and that local governments are oftentimes better suited to provide needed services.

He studied business at St. Cloud State University and is a member of his local chamber of commerce. In 1974, he was honored as Brooklyn Park's Outstanding Young Man and as one of Minnesota's Ten Outstanding Young Men. In 1984, he received the Excellence in County Government Award from the Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Business Public Service Award for Citizen Association of Commerce and Industry. His family was recognized as the Hennepin County Farm Family of the Year in 1980.



Majority leader Dee Long and Minority leader Bill Schreiber