

Running the show

Sviggum re-elected House speaker, Olson joins Abrams and Boudreau as speaker pro tempore

For the third straight biennium, Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) will preside over the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Sviggum was elected Speaker of the House when members convened for the 83rd session Jan. 7, defeating House Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) 81 to 51.



Rep. Steve Sviggum

Considered by some to be the second most-powerful position in state government behind the governor, the speaker appoints House committee chairs, vice chairs, and names members of both parties to committees. The speaker also refers proposed legislation to standing committees and appoints conference committee members, and designates a person to fulfill the duties of the legislative office until members elect a successor.

In the chamber, the speaker controls floor debates, preserves order and decorum and can order the House lobby or galleries cleared due to improper conduct or other disturbances.



Rep. Ron Abrams

speaker, Sviggum was the House Minority Leader for three biennial sessions

Reps. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault), and Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) have each been appointed speaker pro tempore to preside over the House in the speaker's absence.

Abrams and Boudreau have served as speakers pro tempore since 1999.

Now in his eighth term, Abrams is chair of the House Taxes Committee. The attorney is also a member of the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs

Sviggum, a farmer, educator, and coach, was first elected to the House in 1978. He is a member of the Ways and Means and Rules and Legislative Administration committees. Prior to being elected

and the Rules and Legislative Administration committees.

Boudreau, a realtor, is serving her fifth term. She chairs the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee and is also a member of the Health and Human Services Finance, Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy, and Rules and Legislative Administration committees.



Rep. Mark Olson

Appointed speaker pro tempore for the first time, Olson, a carpenter and homebuilder, is serving his sixth term. He's vice chair of the House Education Policy Committee and serves on the Capital Investment, Environment and Natural Resources Policy, and Transportation Policy committees. He also co-chaired a task force examining joint procedures governing both the House and Senate with new Senate Majority Leader John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) during the 2001-2002 session.

(T. LONERGAN)

Editor's Note: Watch for profiles of new House majority and minority leadership in the upcoming issues of *Session Weekly*.



Rep. Lynda Boudreau

Ventura's interim Senate appointment not first instance in Minnesota

When a small plane went down near Eveleth on Oct. 25, 2002 killing U.S. Sen. Paul Wellstone and seven others, it set off a chain reaction that did not stop until U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman was sworn into office Jan. 7.

During that time then Gov. Jesse Ventura named Dean Barkley, director of Minnesota Planning, as the interim replacement for the late senator.

Legally, it is up to the governor to determine whether he or she will appoint a replacement when a member of Congress dies while in office or is otherwise unable to complete his or her term. Though it is the governor's responsibility, there is no requirement that the governor make an interim appointment. When the late-Congressman Bruce Vento died a few weeks before the end of his term in 2000, Ventura left the seat unfilled until a new member of Congress was elected that November.

Wellstone's death occurred so closely to a general election which complicated the

situation, but it's not the first time a governor's appointment has stirred a little controversy.

After six years of leading the state, DFL Gov. Wendell Anderson was named to the U.S. Senate in late 1976 to replace Walter Mondale, who was elected vice president under Jimmy Carter. Anderson technically resigned as governor, thereby promoting Lt. Gov. Rudy Perpich to Minnesota's top post.

"Wendell made a gallant display of searching border to border for the most qualified and gifted Democrat to succeed Mondale. He then concluded that it was Wendell Anderson," columnist Jim Klobuchar wrote in the Feb. 1, 1990 *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. "To no one's shock, Rudy's first conscious act as governor was to put Wendell Anderson in the Senate."

Anderson served two years in Washington D.C., losing his 1978 re-election bid to Rudy Boschwitz. Six years later he failed to garner his party's endorsement for the seat.

Ken Rudin, National Public Radio's political editor, wrote in a 1999 *Washington Post* column that Anderson was the ninth governor since 1933 to resign and then be appointed to the U.S. Senate, and that "only one was able to win a subsequent election on his own." He reasoned that in Anderson's case "voters resented his self-appointment to the Senate and dumped him at the first opportunity."

Conversely, Anderson reportedly thought his popularity would be stronger than the antipathy voters had with his appointment.

In their 1999 book, *Minnesota Politics and Government*, authors Daniel Elezar, Virginia Gray, and Wy Spano wrote that "Anderson's self-appointment to the U.S. Senate and his subsequent rejection by Minnesota voters represents one of the tragic miscalculations in Minnesota political history."

(M. Cook)