

# No regrets

## Bradley steps down to focus on family

**Editor's Note: As the 2006 session winds down, several members have announced their intentions to leave the Minnesota House of Representatives for new adventures. They leave a legacy of service that will remain part of legislative history.**

By Nick Busse

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) admits that his area of focus as a legislator doesn't match his vocation.

"I'm an engineer by training, and that's not necessarily where you might see someone in health and human services," he said.

Nevertheless, he has spent most of his six terms in the House working on health care and welfare reform initiatives — with considerable

home and of whom Bradley is guardian.

"The job here is taking so much of me that some of the very special family needs that have developed are just not getting the time that I feel I should be giving them," he said.

Bradley, a retired IBM computer engineer, said that he has always tried to maintain a balance between what he calls the "four cornerstones" of his life: faith, family, career and community. That balance, he said, is currently lacking.

"It's a matter of family priorities. It's also a matter of when I joined I never expected to make it sort of a lifetime career. Twelve years is a pretty significant amount of time," he said.

But after all that time, he can at least look back and feel satisfied about his accomplishments.

"I have no regrets," he said. "I don't look back with anything but a sense of awe and pride and gratitude for the opportunity. But it's just time for me and my wife, Mary, and our family to move on."

### A legacy of reform

Much of Bradley's career in the House has been devoted to

helping improve the lives of Minnesota's elderly and disabled. In his own words, he has tried to be a "champion of vulnerable people."

Among his favorite pieces of legislation, Bradley is proud to have sponsored and successfully passed a bill known as "Unlock the Waiting List," which helped developmentally disabled people get services for which they might have otherwise had to wait eight to 10 years to access.

"I think, at last count, there were something like 5,000 more people who were able to get access waiver services because of that bill," he said.

Bradley, who chairs the House Health Policy and Finance Committee, and has chaired a health and human services committee since 1999, said his approach to reforming health care has been to try to help the disabled become independent and self-sufficient, thereby benefiting both health care consumers and taxpayers. He believes that his engineering background helped him to instill a sense of rigor and discipline to the programs and legislation he has worked on.

"There does need to be more than just that it 'feels good.' There's got to be really a focus on spending our precious taxpayer dollars wisely on programs that help people move out of dependence and into independence.

"Of course, I've had the pleasure of being part of significant welfare reform during my career. And I feel good not only for the taxpayers but also for the people we're helping that we're focused really on helping people get on their feet — not keeping them multi-generational dependent."

His efforts have not gone without recognition. He said he is especially proud to have twice earned the title of "Legislator of the Year" from Arc Minnesota, a support and advocacy group for the developmentally disabled. He added that he has always viewed his work with groups like Arc Minnesota as a "partnership."


"I really feel good when I go to a rally or go to a meeting and there are consumers with disabilities expressing appreciation. So, I think I will long remember and cherish and probably will continue to be actively involved, as a matter of fact, in issues for those great people." 



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

**After 12 years of service, Rep. Fran Bradley is stepping down to spend more time caring for family members.**

success, in his opinion. Perhaps it's fitting, then, that he's stepping down to focus on caring for his own family members.

Bradley and his wife of 37 years, Mary, have four children and three grandchildren. Three of their family members currently have deteriorating health conditions: their eldest grandson, who suffers from muscular dystrophy; Bradley's mother, who is in adult foster care; and his brother, who lives in a group

## STEPPING DOWN

**Rep. Fran Bradley**  
**Republican**  
**District 29B — Rochester**  
**Terms: 6 (elected 1994)**

**Advice to successor: "If there's anything that's important in this legislative process, it's honesty and integrity. If your word is not good, no matter how good your intentions, it's very hard to get things done."**