

# Ex-senator guilty of interfering with arrest

By Eric Black  
Staff Writer

Former state Sen. Baldy Hansen of Austin has been found guilty of obstructing legal process for grappling with a state patrolman who was trying to arrest another former state senator on suspicion of drunken driving.

A jury convicted Hansen Tuesday night in Walker, Minn. County Judge Keith Kraft gave Hansen a choice of a \$500 fine or 30-day jail sentence, but the sentence was stayed for 10 days to allow an opportunity for an appeal.

Hansen, 74, president of two southern Minnesota banks, said Thursday he hasn't decided whether to appeal.

"There comes a time when you have to stand up for your rights and you have to protest the Gestapo-like actions and the denying of your rights as an American citizen," Hansen said in a telephone interview yesterday. "The question I'm weighing is whether I've accomplished that protest already by my actions at the scene and by standing trial or whether I can accomplish anything by appealing."

Hansen and former Sen. Gordon Rosenmeier of Little Falls were on a fishing outing June 9 at a resort on Leech Lake and Rosenmeier was driving with Hansen as a passenger near Whipholt, Minn., when State Patrolman Arthur May pulled the car over because of alleged traffic driving.

May said that while he was questioning Rosenmeier, Hansen started verbally abusing the officer, then refused to produce his driver's license, insisted on being handcuffed, grappled with May and had to be put forcibly in the patrol car. He was originally charged with disorderly conduct but that charge was dropped before the trial. May testified against Hansen at the trial.

"I'm not guilty of anything except protesting the actions of a man who gets his jollies out of manhandling people that are half his size and twice his age," Hansen said, and compared himself to protesters who risk jail to demonstrate against government policies.

Hansen said he would probably not choose the jail term over the fine. If he decides to pay the fine rather than appeal, he said, "that is a comparatively small cost to preserve our rights compared to people who have given up a lot more than that to preserve our rights as American citizens like everyone who ever went to war to preserve our rights."

Hansen was mayor of Austin in 1950s and '60s and a senator from 1966 to 1976, when he was defeated in a DFL primary.

Drunken-driving charges are pending against Rosenmeier, 76, once the most powerful member of the Legislature.



Baldy Hansen  
-1975 photo