

NEWS OBITUARIES

Howard Knutson was a veteran legislator

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● The Burnsville resident served for 24 years

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When Howard Knutson left the Legislature in 1990, he urged his colleagues to do something about the way things work at the State Capitol.

"It doesn't need a study commission," Knutson said then. "It simply needs some self-discipline, and it needs an attitudinal change that says we value quality over quantity."

Knutson, 77, who died Sunday at his home in Burnsville, served 24 years in the Legislature, was the unsuccessful Republican nominee for attorney general in 1978 and had been a candidate for endorsement for governor in 1978 and for Congress in 1974.

He never had huge name

« HE REPRESENTED THE GOLD STANDARD OF PUBLIC SERVICE. »

Chuck Slocum, a former state Republican chairman

recognition and never "tooted his own horn," said Chuck Slocum, a former state Republican chairman, but he was influential in legislation affecting his Burnsville-area district and the metropolitan region.

"He represented the gold standard of public service," Slocum said.

At various times, Knutson served as chairman of the House Ethics Committee and as an assistant Senate minority leader.

Jerry Knutson, his wife of 48 years, recalled that he worked for establishment of Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville, the Minnesota Zoo and a Cedar Ave-

nue bridge over the Minnesota River. At one time he was president of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville.

Al Quie, the Republican who won the governorship in 1978, said Knutson was thoughtful and respected, "clear in what he believed and not afraid to say what he believed."

But he could change his mind on occasion. In 1973 he voted to lower Minnesota's drinking age from 21 to 18. Later he called it "a drastic mistake," and sponsored a bill to restore the 21-year-old limit, despite opposition from two of his children, Douglas, then 19, and David, 20, now a Dako-

ta County district judge.

Howard and Jerry Knutson had five children. Once, at a high school forum on interracial adoptions, he was asked why they adopted two black children.

"Very simply, because we had three boys and wanted a girl," he replied. "And then we decided that Amy needed a sister."

Knutson was born in Grand Forks, N.D., and grew up in Glencoe, Minn. He had Alzheimer's disease for the past several years and multiple myeloma.

Survivors include his wife and children David, Doug, Eric, Annette and Amy, all of the Twin Cities area.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 13801 Fairview Dr., Burnsville, with visitation there from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday.

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