

TO: CB

Harold Krieger, judge and state senator

By David Chanen

Staff Writer

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Judge Harold Krieger, 68, chief judge of the Third Judicial District and former state Senate minority leader, died of cancer Saturday at his home in Rochester.

He had been an Olmsted County district judge in Rochester since he was elected in 1975 and was chief judge for the past two years. Although he was involved in many noteworthy cases, he believed that those that received less attention often had more impact on the community, said his wife, M. Pauline.

In 1991 he presided over the case of a West Concord school superintendent who was acquitted on charges of failing to report the sexual abuse of a student by a teacher. In another case, he sentenced a Pine Island man to three months in jail and ordered him to pay funeral costs for an 18-year-old woman who died in a car accident after drinking beer at a party at the man's house.

Fellow judges said he had a great understanding of people and a marvelous sense of humor, which he needed once when a complainant tried to bring a horse into the court as a witness. He was an officer with the Minnesota District Trial Lawyers Association and was a member of the planning committee that structured

the creation of the Minnesota Court of Appeals in 1983, one of the most satisfying things he did as a judge, said his wife.

"He was always highly thought of and well respected with lawyers and people he worked with," said Olmsted County District Judge Gerard Ring. "He handled all cases with an even hand and really liked what he was doing."

From 1963 to 1975, Krieger was an Independent-Republican senator from Rochester, and was minority leader his last three years. He was chairman of the Education Committee and often sponsored bills to reform the Legislature.

"He could articulate most of the issues very well and was a strong leader," said former state Sen. Jerome Blatz of Bloomington. "He was against the expanding of government and was called 'the Barracuda' because he went after bills that he believed weren't very important."

Blatz added that he really had to work hard because, as the minority leader in the early 1970s, "we really were a minority, and the odds were against us."

Krieger was born in New Ulm, Minn., and was in the Navy during World War II. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Macalester

College and graduated from what is now the William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul.

He practiced in Albert Lea, Minn., where he was an assistant municipal judge, and had a practice with Joe Dingle in Rochester for many years until he started his own practice in 1972.

He helped develop Riverland Technical College in Rochester, and received a distinguished alumna award from Macalester College in 1970.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two sons, Westscot of Appleton, Wis., and Harold of Atlanta; two daughters, Lisa Anne Jones of Longmont, Colo., and Jean Krieger of Pine Island, Minn.; two brothers,

Henry of Elmhurst, Ill., and Harley of St. Louis, and a sister, Harriet Burgstahler of Colorado Springs, Colo.

A memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, May 13, at First Presbyterian Church, 512 SW. 3rd St., Rochester. Memorials to the Krieger Memorial Fund at the Olmsted County Courthouse are suggested. Arrangements are by the Cremation Society of Minnesota.