

State Sen. Kubly dies after struggle with ALS

● The Lutheran pastor and voice for rural Minnesota had been in the hospital since a medical emergency last week. He was 68.

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Minnesota Sen. Gary Kubly, DFL-Granite Falls, who had suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease), died Friday, according to a message sent to legislators Saturday afternoon.

Kubly, 68, had undergone a medical crisis Wednesday morning and was being treated at Regions Hospital in St. Paul.

"Gary was a dedicated public



Kubly

servant and an outstanding leader," Gov. Mark Dayton said Saturday in a statement. "He lived his life with quiet strength and principled dignity, as evidenced by the remarkable courage with which he faced his final illness. He is an inspiration to all of us who knew and worked with him."

Kubly, a Lutheran pastor, was first diagnosed with the neurological disease in 2010. At the start of this year's legislative session, Kubly had programmed his iPad to speak a message of thanks for him.

"Senator Kubly was a man who embodied every ideal as a person

and in public service," said Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk, DFL-Cook, in a message to lawmakers. "He worked hard. He was honest. He shared credit even when he was the one who did the heavy lifting. To Gary Kubly, it simply did not matter where you came from, only where you ended up. He got a lot of things done that way, and everyone in Minnesota is better for it."

For the past 15 years, as a state representative and then state senator, Kubly had been known as a voice for rural Minnesota issues and agriculture.

Kubly grew up on a farm in Iowa. He served in the Air Force before meeting Pat, his wife of 42 years, while they both were teaching in

Texas. The Kublys, who have three children, moved to Minnesota, where Gary attended Luther Seminary in St. Paul. He served as pastor at two churches in his rural district before he first won office in 1996.

When asked in January what he was most proud of from his legislative service, Kubly told the Star Tribune, "the work I have done to reach out to both sides." He added, "You treat people with respect because you might need them later."

According to the Minnesota Farmers Union, services for Kubly will be held in Granite Falls at 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Staff writer Jon Tevlin contributed to this report. Nicole Norfleet • 612-673-4495