

NEWS OBITUARIES

STAR TRIBUNE JUN 8 '08

Jim Lord, attorney and former treasurer, dies

● The son of Miles Lord, he had suffered from diabetes.

By RANDY FURST
and DAVID SHAFFER
Star Tribune staff writers

Jim Lord, who served two terms as Minnesota state treasurer before becoming a successful personal injury attorney, died Friday night of a heart attack. He was 59.

Lord suffered from diabetes and was recovering from kidney and pancreas transplants performed in April. A DFLer, Lord was elected to the state Senate from Chanhassen in 1973. He was elected treasurer in 1975, serving until 1983. The treasurer's office was abolished in 1998.

"For all of his political activities, he was a sweet, mild-mannered guy with a strong backbone and tremendous sense of humor and a big heart," said his father, former

Minnesota Chief U.S. District Judge Miles Lord. They practiced law together after Miles Lord retired from the bench.

Jim Lord also did extensive pro-bono, or unpaid, work on behalf of clients, said Sharon Guthrie, a legal assistant with the firm. "We have clients who I talk to who think he was an angel," she said.

In his most famous pro-bono case, he squared off against the University of Minnesota on behalf of Jan Gangelhoff, a university office manager who revealed in 1999 that she had done course work for 20 players on the Gophers basketball team. Coach Clem Haskins was forced to resign. Gangelhoff later died.

"Jim's argument was she was being made a scapegoat for illegal recruiting and retention practices at the University of Minnesota," his father said.

In 1995, he was co-counsel in an auto-accident case in

which a Ramsey County jury awarded \$9 million to his client. He got a \$6.7 million settlement in 1997 from a trucking company on behalf of a woman who became a quadriplegic after her car was struck by a semitrailer truck.

He was a graduate of the University of Minnesota and the William Mitchell College of Law. As a teenager in the late 1960s, he served as a U.S. Senate page. One of his buddies was Al Gore, another page.

Bob Mattson, former state auditor and state treasurer and a good friend of Jim's, said that Jim and Gore made an agreement that when either got elected president, he would appoint the other as attorney general. Mattson said that Jim reminded Gore of that agreement in 2000 when Gore was running for president. Both had a good laugh over it, said Mattson.

Mattson said that Jim Lord suffered from diabetes, which sapped his energy, a major

reason he declined to run for a third term as state treasurer or seek higher office. "He was a most talented political leader," Mattson said. "Had it not been for his disease, he'd have been governor or U.S. senator."

Virginia Lord, a sister, said Jim had a good sense of humor. After his transplant surgery, she said he called a number of friends, telling them, "Hi, just wanted you to know I recently received new body parts."

Besides his father and sister, he is survived by his mother, Maxine Lord; another sister, Priscilla Faris, and a brother, Mick, who also works at the family's law firm in Chanhassen.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 301 County Road 19, Excelsior. Visitation will take place one hour prior to the service at the church.

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