short takes....

Former legislator McMillan, 74, dies

Austin, Minn.

Former Rep. Helen McMillan of Austin, who served six terms in the Minnesota House, died Sunday at St. Mark's Lutheran Home, where she had lived for several years. She was 74.

McMillan, who was elected to the House in 1962, once said her most significant contributions were her work for the equal rights amendment and the liberalized abortion law during her final term.

For much of the 1960s, she was the only woman in the House. In 1972 she became the second woman in Minnesota history to head a legislative committee when Speaker Martin Sabo appointed her chairman of the Crime Prevention and Corrections Committee. During her 12 years in office, McMillan, a DFLer, served on all but one House committee.

"As a legacy to the Legislature, I have left five new women legislators who are already showing their merit. I hope the time has come to elect and retain more women in Minnesota government," McMillan said when she left the Legislature in 1974.

Before being elected to the Legislature, McMillan served as state president of the League of Women Voters. She was preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth. They had no children.