

Friends, colleagues honor Munger

A collection of Minnesota political figures, including congressmen, former governors, high-ranking state officials, and members of the Legislature gathered in the House chamber Jan. 18 to celebrate Rep. Willard Munger's 85th birthday.

Munger, a Duluth DFLer serving his 40th year in the House, was praised for his legislative record, which shows him to be a leader in environmental protection.

"Willard Munger is certainly a Minnesota original, a natural resource himself," said U.S. Rep. Bruce Vento. ". . . He reminds us again and again of our stewardship responsibilities."

Munger was first elected to the House in 1954 and has been re-elected 19 times since then. His only absence came for two years after he lost a bid for the state Senate in the 1960s.

For 21 years he has served as chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, and he has played a major role in the development of landmark environmental legislation.

Vento, Sen. Paul Wellstone, Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe, and House Speaker Irv Anderson were among the DFLers who recalled Munger's accomplishments and feisty character.

House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum and Senate Minority Leader Dean Johnson offered praise from the other side of the aisle.

"When all is said and done, it is not how we cast our votes but how our colleagues respect us," Johnson said. ". . . We respect you greatly."

Lt. Gov. Joanne Benson read a proclamation from Gov. Arne Carlson declaring Jan. 18 Willard Munger Day in the state and announced that the Minnesota Natural Resources Coalition has created a new honor called the Willard M. Munger Environmentalist of the Year Award.

Munger accepted the honors with characteristic wit.

"I feel a little bit guilty for receiving all this praise for what little I've done," he said humbly. "But let me tell you something — I like it."

Under the bill, an individual would have to:

- file a petition under oath and pay the regular civil filing fee;
- provide not only their full legal name but aliases as well;

- provide all addresses from the date of the offense or alleged offense to the date of the petition;
- explain why they want their records expunged and specifically if it is to help them obtain a job or a license. Many professions