

Obituaries

Walter Perlt, 2-term state legislator, dies

The Woodbury DFLer, who was 75, was proud that people called him "cheap" because he was tight with taxpayers' money and of his role in the passage of caller ID.

By **Trudi Hahn**
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Walter Perlt believed that the best thing he ever did was to serve in the Minnesota Legislature.

"He was very proud that he could be in such a situation," said his wife, Louise (Dodie) Perlt of Woodbury.

The DFLer, who served two terms as a state representative in the 1990s, died of a heart attack Monday. He was 75.

Sen. Leonard Price, DFL-Woodbury, a neighbor, said Perlt was "first and foremost a fiscal watchdog. He did not want taxpayers' money spent foolishly."

Said his wife: "Some people called him cheap, which he loved. He used it on his campaign literature."

Perlt had been chief of enforcement for the Minnesota Liquor Control Division, for which he worked for 37 years. When Woodbury was redistricted and his residence ended up in an area with no incumbent in 1992, he was elected to his first term after friends convinced him to run.

As a state employee, he had been

involved in budget hearings and other legislative business, so he had probably more experience than most freshman legislators, his wife said.

Among his other legislative activities, "he was very proud that he authored and assisted in passage of a bill allowing caller ID," she said.

Pizza restaurants and taxi companies wanted it, and the phone company originally opposed it, she said, when the bill passed in 1993 allowing caller ID to be offered to commercial passenger carriers, including bus, taxi and limousine services.

"If something goes wrong, like a robbery, they can trace back the number," Perlt said at the time.

He also supported campaign finance reform and found agreement for his position while knocking on doors during the '94 campaign.

"People really want this system changed," he said.

Because of worsening arthritis, he chose in 1996 not to run again.

In addition to his wife, survivors include a daughter, Lisa Farley of Indianapolis; four grandchildren; a brother, Ron of Stillwater, and a sister, Mahala Thoele of State College, Pa.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. today at King of Kings Lutheran Church, 1583 Radio Dr., Woodbury.

— *Trudi Hahn is at*
thahn@startribune.com.



Walter Perlt was elected to his first term after friends convinced him to run in 1992.