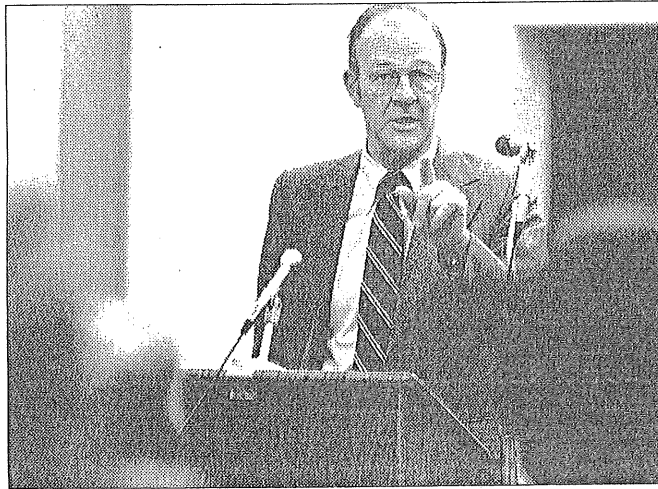


Former Minnesota House Speaker Rod Searle dies at 93



Star Tribune file

Republican Rep. Rod Searle had been assistant minority leader but became speaker after each party won 67 seats in 1978 elections.

- Republican led the House through rare '78 power split.

By RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER
rachel.stassen-berger@startribune.com

Former Minnesota House Speaker Rod Searle of Waseca, a Republican who led the House when it was evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, died Sunday.

He was 93.

Searle, who had been an assistant minority leader, became speaker when the two parties were forced to share power because both won 67 seats in the 1978 elections.

"Lengthy negotiations between the two parties resulted in the adoption of temporary rules for the first session of the 71st Legislature. Searle served as Speaker of the House under those rules, while Irv Anderson chaired the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration," the Minnesota Historical Society said.

Gov. Mark Dayton remembered Searle as "a principled leader, a dedicated public ser-

vant and a true gentleman. He was elected speaker of the House in 1979 because he held the respect and trust of both Republican and DFL members in that deadlocked chamber."

Searle, who led the Minnesota State University Board and the Minnesota Higher Education Board after he left the Legislature in 1980, was among Republicans who backed Independence Party gubernatorial candidate Tom Horner in 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth of Alton Township; daughter, Linda Grant of Waseca; sons, R. Newell of Minnetonka and Alan of Toledo, Oregon; stepdaughter, Elaine VanDeest; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday at the McRaith Funeral Home and Crematory of Waseca and at 10 a.m. Friday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Owatonna, where services will be at 11 a.m.

Rachel E. Stassen-Berger • 651-952-5046