Former state Rep. Steve Smith found dead; cause pending

Former state Rep. Steve Smith, who was the longest serving Republican in the House before a 2012 primary defeat, was found dead Monday. He was 64.

Smith's son, Ryan Smith, said in a statement Monday that the cause of Smith's death is pending, but that his father had battled alcoholism and become "increasingly despondent and unresponsive to calls from family and friends."

Smith, an attorney from Mound who was first elected in 1990, chaired the Civil Law, Judiciary, Ethics and Public Safety committees.

Rep. Mary Liz Holberg, R-Lakeville, announced Smith's death to the House floor Monday afternoon before a moment of silence.

Holberg said her former colleague worked tirelessly on child support issues. When reform passed, "It was a big accomplishment."

"I don't think we've seen reform in that area to that degree since then." Holberg said.

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