

House loses member . . .

Wickerman's legislative post topped a varied career

Rep. Barb Vickerman (R-Redwood Falls) died Dec. 22, 1997, at her home after a battle with liver cancer. She was 64.

Vickerman was serving her third term in the House as the representative of District 23A. The longtime Republican Party activist was first elected in 1992 after years of involvement in community affairs.

"Barb was a very kind and dedicated public servant who enjoyed the opportunity to serve the citizens of Brown and Redwood counties," said House Minority Leader Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon). "Her fellow members of the House are saddened by her death."

In the House, Vickerman was selected to be the lead Republican on the General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee, and she was noted for her work on the Health and Human Services Committee and its finance division.

"In the Legislature, her efforts in the areas of health and human services, welfare reform, and veterans concerns were well known and well respected," Sviggum said.

Vickerman was Republican Party chair for the 2nd Congressional District and she worked on numerous campaigns before she sought a seat in the Legislature.

Though trained as a medical laboratory technician, Vickerman listed retail sales as her occupation, and she worked in various other jobs before coming to the House. She and her husband, Gerald, ran a bowling alley for several years, and she opened a card and gift shop in Redwood Falls, Minn. Vickerman operated the shop for 18 years and sold the business two



Rep. Barb Vickerman speaks on the House floor during the 1997 session.

years before she was first elected to office. She also was an avid reader and book collector.

Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) got to know Vickerman well during their time together in the Legislature. Serving bordering southern Minnesota districts, Harder and Vickerman often ran into each other at county fairs and other local events, and they were roommates while in St. Paul for legislative sessions.

"She was really my mentor and role model, and she set an excellent example for me," Harder said. "She was not flashy. She was a soft-spoken person, and she was very succinct in her communication. When she spoke, her words commanded attention."

Harder said she learned of Vickerman's ill-

ness when the two were at the Capitol for a June special session. Vickerman received cancer treatment during the summer, and she was able to attend an August special session on flood relief. However, Vickerman's illness prevented her from attending a fall special session on stadium financing.

Gov. Arne Carlson praised Vickerman's legislative work and expressed condolences following her death.

"Her unique blend of a strong commitment to family and community and good old-fashioned common sense made her an effective legislator," Carlson said.

Vickerman is survived by her husband, four children, and five grandchildren. ❀

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University figures put the total of day students and full-time staff and faculty at roughly 51,000.

Considering the cost of parking ramp construction, the committee lauded the university's controlled approach.

Mike Monahan, director of transportation for the city of Minneapolis, told the committee that underground ramp construction costs about \$22,000 to \$26,000 per stall. Above grade, the cost falls to about \$13,000 to \$14,000 per stall, he said.

Annual maintenance runs about another \$750 to \$900 per stall.

Monahan said Minneapolis develops parking "only as we see the need." Typically, the

city plans three to five years ahead. Currently, the 62,000 downtown Minneapolis parking spots are at 98 percent occupancy at 1 p.m. each weekday, he said.

Chuck Armstrong, assistant to the mayor of St. Paul, said his city has 4,000 new spots in the development stage. However, he said, we "can't build our way out of this problem." He said a good transit system that people use is vital.

To that end, Baker's "U-Pass Program" generated interest among committee members. The program would provide U of M students, staff and faculty with a bus pass that offers unlimited rides anywhere, anytime on any route on the Twin Cities metropolitan bus system.

Baker said the program's goal would be to

ease traffic congestion and university parking congestion, enhance the air quality, and create lifetime public transit riders.

The university also has begun to encourage bicycle riders by offering bike racks on many of its Campus Connector buses.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls), who chairs the committee, asked Mike Christensen of the Department of Transportation how the Twin Cities compares to other metropolitan areas in availability and usage of park-and-ride services.

Christensen said the metro area has 210 park-and-ride areas with 10,000 spaces, and there is 75 percent usage. He did not have comparable figures from other metro areas.