

NEWS OBITUARIES

# Linda Wejcman looked out for Minneapolis

● The five-time DFL House member was also a community activist in south Minneapolis.

By TIM HARLOW  
harlow@startribune.com

Linda Wejcman was once chided for eating ice cream on the floor of the Minnesota House. It was totally out of character for the five-time DFL legislator from south Minneapolis; she took her job seriously and only broke the



Linda Wejcman

no-eating-on-the-floor rule when a friend put her up to it.

That friend, former state Rep. Edwina Garcia, recalled the incident this week because it was in stark contrast to the "seriously and intensely focused" Wejcman who doggedly looked out for the constituents in Districts 60B and 61B, which she served from 1991 to 2000.

"Her bills were always people-focused," said Gar-

cia, a DFLer who served from 1991 to 1998. "She was proud of helping people who didn't know they were being helped. All of her contributions on bills had to do with folks who didn't have a voice. She was their voice."

Wejcman died of acute leukemia Monday at her south Minneapolis home. She was 70.

Born in Spencer, Iowa, she graduated from high school there and attended Iowa State University. She moved to south Minneapolis with her husband, Jim, in 1972. One of her first activities was teaming with her neighbors to get an adult bookstore out of their neighborhood. She was an activist with the Central Neighborhood Association and the Southside Neighborhood Improvement Association for more than a decade before she decided to run for office, her husband said.

During her time at the

State Capitol, she authored or co-authored several bills focused on health and human services, including one that led to a 1994 law banning female circumcision in Minnesota. She also authored a bill that expanded the Safe Housing program to include homeless-youth transitional housing and 1997 legislation that created a registry for men who believe they may be fathers of children who could be placed for adoption. She was speaker pro tempore during the 1997-98 session and served as the head of the Minneapolis delegation.

"Linda was a dedicated and faithful public servant who gave 100 percent in representing her district at the State Capitol," said former state legislator Wes Skoglund in a posting on her online guest book page at [www.startribune.com/obituaries](http://www.startribune.com/obituaries).

She represented District 60B from 1991 to 1992 and District 61B from 1993 to 2000, and she was extreme-

ly popular with her constituents. In 1994, she received 81 percent of the vote, the highest percentage of the general election vote in a contested race. Many attended her annual holiday open house.

"It's amazing how much affinity she had from the people she served," husband Jim said.

She returned to community activist work in 2001.

Along with reading and traveling, Wejcman enjoyed buying stuffed animals at estate and garage sales and taking them to the former Free Store in the Phillips neighborhood so they could be distributed to children, her husband said.

In addition to her husband, Wejcman is survived by two brothers, Keith Emrich of Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., and Jerry Emrich of Arlington, Va.

Services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Thomson-Dougherty Funeral Home, 2535 Park Av. S., Minneapolis. Visitation begins at 1:30 p.m.