

STARTRIBUNE - M APR 24 '98

## Former state legislator Richard Wigley, 76; served in House from 1971 to '85

Former state Rep. Richard Wigley died Wednesday at his farm near Lake Crystal. He was 79.

Relatives said he died of a heart attack or a stroke while he was on his tractor in the fields. They said Wigley had suffered a stroke in February but couldn't wait to get back to doing what he loved best — working on the farm.

Wigley, a seed farmer, was born in Blue Earth County. He

graduated from Mankato High School in 1937 and attended the University of Minnesota Agriculture School in St. Paul. He returned to Judson Township, near Lake Crystal, where he got involved in local politics. He served on the Lake Crystal school board for 13 years and worked on several local political campaigns.

He headed many local and state agricultural associations and received the Premier Seed Grow-

ers Award one year.

Wigley served 14 years in the Minnesota House, from 1971 to 1985. As one of only 31 Republicans in the Legislature during his first year in office, he joined his colleagues in wearing buttons that said, "31 Ain't Fun." He went on to become a senior legislator and chair the House Energy and Utilities Committee in 1979. In 1984 he was honored for his legislative service. At that time he

said he was proud that he avoided formal fund-raisers and ran penny-pinching campaigns in his seven successful races. In retirement, Wigley enjoyed watching the Minnesota Twins and the Gophers basketball team. He spent the winters in Florida and always looked forward to getting back to the farm, his family said.

He is survived by his wife, Francys of Lake Crystal; sons Owen Wigley of Lake Crystal, and

Paul Wigley of Algona, Iowa; a brother, Edward Wigley of Lake Crystal; a sister, Miriam Jones of Lake Crystal, and a granddaughter. Services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Crystal. Visitation will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. today at the Lake Crystal Mortuary and from 1 to 2 p.m. Saturday at the church.

— *Allie Shah*