



Star Tribune file photo

Sen. Frank Adams at work at his Senate chamber desk in January 1963, where he served for one term. During his career, he was also a member of the Minneapolis school board and was appointed to several state offices.

## State senator, public servant and teacher Frank Adams dies

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As a freshman state senator in 1963, Frank E. Adams didn't mind bucking tradition. His first week on the job, when most newcomers were just learning their way around, he stunned veteran politicians by making a speech on the Senate floor.

It was a passionate appeal for a special committee to deal with urban problems, like parking and pollution. And though it went nowhere, he got a nice note from the presiding officer of the Senate. "A fine discussion," he was told.

Adams, who died Thursday at 90, was a champion of fine discussions, always eager to speak his mind during more than 30 years as a politician and public servant.

A onetime high school history teacher, he served 16 years on the Minneapolis school board and became a special assistant to Gov. Rudy Perpich in the 1970s.

He was a peace activist who fought in World War II because "that was

worth fighting for," said his wife of 64 years, Helen Adams of New Hope. And he served as president of the Minneapolis school board, even though he had no children of his own, because he "believed that children deserved a good education," she said.

Adams, a 1933 graduate of Hopkins High School, spent most of his working life as a veterans affairs officer for Hennepin County. But in his spare time, he was drawn to politics: He was elected to the school board for the first time in 1953, and stepped down only after his wife persuaded him to run for the Senate in 1962.

He lost his bid for a second Senate term in 1966 but won back his seat on the Minneapolis school board in 1967. After retiring in 1973, he was appointed to several state offices, including special assistant to the governor. He also was Minnesota director of the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, which planned the 1976 celebration of the nation's 200th anniversary. At one point, Adams worried openly that the bicentennial would become "one big bonanza" for crass

commercialism. "Frankly, these are not the best of times for a celebration," he wrote in a 1974 critique, "unless we wish to shrug our shoulders and burn out our last days as a civilization in an orgy of consumption and violence." He wanted a bicentennial celebration, he wrote, that would prompt Americans to contemplate their shortcomings and pay tribute to the original revolutionary ideals.

He was a natural teacher, said a niece, Bonnie Tomczyk of Minnetonka. "Every holiday we'd all sit around and listen to him talk about what was going on in the world," she recalled. "I learned more from that than ever going to history class."

In addition to his wife, Adams is survived by a sister, Jean Loseff, of California, and many nieces and nephews. A memorial service will be held Tuesday from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Cremation Society of Minnesota chapel in Brooklyn Park.

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