

Fay George Child (1908-1965)

State Senator

Senator Fay George Child passed away Friday, April 2, 1965, in St. Paul, at the age of 56 years. Death came as a result of a heart attack, the last of a series of three extending over a period of ten years. In spite of his known disability, he worked to the very end doing what he loved for the people he loved.

He never took his responsibilities lightly. He was unselfish in his service—his last moment was spent in a Senate committee, speaking on an issue of fundamental importance defining his position and taking his stand. He collapsed before his speech was completed and he was dead before he arrived at the hospital.

The state he has served has shown him great honor. The Governor ordered all flags to be flown at half staff in memory of Senator Child. The state of Minnesota paid special tribute to him by having his body lie in state in the rotunda of the Capitol while officials, dignitaries and friends passed in review.

Fay George Child was born in Wabasha, Minnesota, September 17, 1908, to Fred and Lutie Child. He attended grade school and high school at Maynard, graduating in 1927. His early training in the newspaper business was acquired from his father who was for many years the owner and publisher of the Maynard News. In 1930 he married Sylvia Haugen. At the age of 21 he purchased his first newspaper, the Russell Anchor. His second newspaper, the Eden Valley Journal, was sold in 1939 to begin a new enterprise in Albert Lea. He opened a lithographing plant, one of the first in the state of Minnesota.

In 1943 Congressman Harold Hagen asked him to become his administrative assistant in Washington, D. C., a post he held for five years. He returned to Minnesota with his wife and daughter Sandra and purchased the Maynard News. He was a member of the Maynard School Board and Mayor of Maynard. In 1950 he was elected to the State Senate, re-elected in 1954, 1958 and 1962.

While in the Senate his leadership and abilities led to many important responsibilities. He was named chairman of the Commerce Committee; chairman of the finance subcommittee on welfare; and chairman of the interim commission on public retirement. He earned the reputation of being honest, forthright, sincere and dedicated. He had a quick wit and a sense of humor which he used effectively. He could not be idle. His mind and intellect had to be constantly searching for new answers and new solutions. He refused to be despondent. His smile was a trademark. Even after his heart attack a year and a half ago, he would not give up. He knew his disability was serious and still he forged ahead.

Senator Child is gone today, but even in death his wish has been fulfilled. No words better describe his life and death than these:

*Let me die working
Still tackling plans unfinished, tasks undone
Clean to its end, swift may my race be run
No laggard steps, no faltering, no shrinking;
Let me die working.*

*State of Minnesota Legislative Manual
1965-1966. St. Paul, Minnesota: Secretary
of State, 1965.*