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# Ex-congressman Victor Christgau

By Dan Freeborn  
Staff Writer

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ST MPLS

Victor A. Christgau, 97, a former Minnesota state senator, U.S. congressman and top-level Washington official, died of pneumonia Thursday at George Washington Hospital in Washington D.C.

Christgau, who had lived in Washington for some time, was born on a farm in Dexter Township in Mower County and served with the Army in France during World War I.

He graduated from the University of Minnesota and in 1926 was elected to the Minnesota Senate.

Two years later, Christgau was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the then-First Congressional District in southern Minnesota. After the state redrew district boundaries in 1932, Christgau ran again and was defeated.

Even though Democrat Franklin Roosevelt was elected to his first term as president that year, Christgau, a Republican, had strong political connections in Washington and was appointed by Roosevelt to head the commodities division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

In 1935 Christgau moved back to

Minnesota to head the state office of the newly created Works Progress Administration. But that political plum left a sour taste in the mouths of the state's Democrats, and they pressured Roosevelt to fire Christgau in 1938, according to his nephew, Douglas Christgau of Roseville.

The next year, Christgau became director of Minnesota Employment Security, overseeing the state's unemployment insurance.

He held that job until 1954, when President Dwight Eisenhower appointed him to head the Old Age and Survivors Insurance bureau of the Social Security Administration.

In 1963, President John Kennedy named Christgau to head the Social Security Administration. He was its commissioner until he retired in 1967.

"He worked until he was 73 years old, and throughout his life he just loved to work and serve people," said Douglas Christgau.

Christgau is survived by seven nephews, including Douglas Christgau, and five nieces. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Monday at Mueller Mortuary Parkway Chapel, 835 Johnson Pkwy., St. Paul.