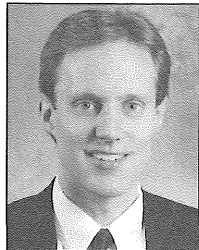


Importance of tradition

New member resolves to make a difference

By **MATT WETZEL**

Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) ran for his legislative seat because he believed the state had gotten away from its tradition of good government.



Rep. Steve Simon

“I was worried the state was getting off on the wrong track, and I felt I could help move it back in the right direction. I didn’t think we were going to get the kind of changes that we needed by changing the minds

of the people at the Legislature. We had to change the bodies.” He defeated six-term Republican Rep. Jim Rhodes by 11.3 percent.

After earning an undergraduate degree in political science, Simon, in 1992, went to work on the campaign staff of former

President Clinton. He said the experience was invaluable. Viewers of the movie, “The War Room,” a documentary about the Clinton presidential campaign, might have caught a 2-second glimpse of Simon.

After the campaign, Simon earned his law degree. He then worked on consumer, tax and education issues in the Attorney General’s office under Hubert “Skip” Humphrey III, and also Mike Hatch. He joined the Minneapolis law firm of Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi LLP, where he represents businesses.

Simon believes quality public education is important to his constituents and that it might be compromised because of “flat state funding.”

If he could have introduced the first bill of the session, it would have provided more financial help for schools. “I think the schools in our area have really felt the pinch of the cuts in the last two years,” he said.

DISTRICT 44A

2002 Population: 36,849

Largest city: St. Louis Park

County: Hennepin

Top concerns: Education, health care and transportation

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— Rep. Steve Simon

Other key issues are health care and transportation.

“Sickness doesn’t discriminate, whether you’re rich or poor or black or white. I saw, firsthand, how families can get kicked around by the system. It didn’t just make me mad, I resolved to try to do something about it,” he said. He serves on the House Transportation, and Civil Law and Elections committees.