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## Roy E. Dunn and Donald O. Wright

Among the names once to be reckoned with in Minnesota politics, none rank higher than Roy E. Dunn and Donald O. Wright. Both died last week — Dunn at 99 and Wright at 92. Even at those ages, each spent almost half his life in the Minnesota Legislature — Dunn, 40 years in the House; Wright, 43 years in the House and Senate.

To say that they don't make legislators with that kind of stamina anymore is to tell only part of the story. They no longer make legislators with their kind of authority and control over the lawmaking process either. "Autocrat" and "dictator" were some of the epithets thrown their way. But legislators don't win reelection as often as Dunn and Wright did without the affection of their constituents and they don't rise to the leadership positions they held without the respect of their colleagues. Wright, a Minneapolis Conservative, was president

pro tempore of the Senate and headed its Tax Committee for 19 years. Dunn, of Pelican Rapids, led the House Conservative Caucus for many years and was also a member of the Republican National Committee.

Dunn left office in 1966 and Wright in 1970, and much has changed in the years since — including the way the Legislature operates. Minnesota's current political system wouldn't allow anyone to gain the degree of power these two men wielded in their primes. Still, they — and other leaders like them — imposed a discipline sometimes lacking in today's legislative deliberations. And they left lasting marks on state government — including civil-service reform and the taconite amendment to the Minnesota Constitution. Their legislative legacies survive.