

Obituaries

Former state Sen. Raymond Higgins dies

Raymond Higgins, 72, a former state senator and businessman from Duluth, died Sunday in Hospice by the Sea, Boca Raton, Fla. He died of kidney failure after a long bout with cancer.

Higgins was elected to the Minnesota Senate in 1964 and 1966 as a Conservative. He focused on conservation and forestry issues and tourism promotion. A member of a pioneering mining family, he sponsored legislation to enable development of copper-nickel mining in the state.

In January 1970, he came out in favor of allowing exploratory drilling for minerals in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Two weeks later, conservation leaders called for his resignation from the Minnesota Senate Pub-

lic Domain Committee after he said he'd just learned that through a purchase by his grandmother in 1902 he owned a one-sixth interest in mineral rights for 117 acres of the Boundary Waters. Later that year he donated his interest in those rights to the U.S. Forest Service.

Higgins sponsored a bill that led to creation of Split Rock State Park, and also sponsored the Mineland Reclamation Act, which created the Duluth Airport Authority. He sponsored a bill funding the medical school at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. He also served on the Great Lakes Commission, which worked to rid the lakes of the lamprey.

An avid outdoorsman, Higgins was

founding vice president of the Ruffed Grouse Society. He won the Cloquet invitational golf tournament twice and the Northland invitational tournament once. In 1972, he survived a collision of two airplanes on a runway at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport that killed 10 people.

Higgins, who was born in Duluth, earned a degree in chemistry from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and worked for DuPont until World War II. He was an Army captain during the war. After the war, he worked for a wholesale hardware firm in Duluth, established an oil company in Texas with his brother Robert and was involved in real estate development in southern California.

Survivors include his wife, Mary; sons Raymond, of Alexandria, Va., and Thomas, of Vail, Colo.; daughters Elizabeth Little, of Triburon, Calif., Andrea Bierce, of Upper Saddle River, N.J., and Wendy Hayes, of Convent Station, N.J., and brothers Bardon, of Duluth, and Robert, of Dallas.

Visitation will begin at 4 p.m. Wednesday, with a rosary at 7 p.m. at Dougherty Mortuary, Duluth. Private services will be held Thursday in Cathedral of Our Lady, Duluth, with burial in Calvary Cemetery. The family suggests memorials to the Raymond J. Higgins Scholarship Endowment Fund, Holy Rosary School, 2802 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812.