

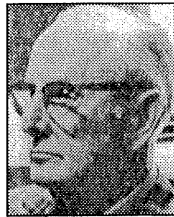
Obituaries

L.J. Lee, former state legislator, dies at 92

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By Lucy P. Her
Star Tribune Staff Writer

L.J. Lee, who served 12 years in the Minnesota House of Representatives in the 1960s and '70s, died Sunday of heart failure at Clearwater County Memorial Hospital in Bagley, Minn. He was 92.

He was elected in 1960 to represent Pennington, Red Lake and Clearwater counties.



L.J. Lee

After 12 years, Lee announced that he would not seek reelection. During his last term he served as assistant minority leader.

After leaving office, he was appointed to a one-year term by Gov. Wendell Anderson to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota. The Legislature then elected him to a six-year term.

According to a September 1972 article in the Minneapolis Tribune, Lee's experience as a legislator was "sure to be valuable in helping the university develop its funding requests to legislators in their terms."

Bob Falk, a former state representative, said Lee was a "person whom everyone had a lot of respect for. He was a staunch Democrat. He had just as many Republican friends as Democrat."

He said Lee, who had a "log-cabin education," was regarded as a father figure by other legislators.

"He was very fair," Falk said. "He never said anything behind your back. If he had something to tell you, he told you in your face."

Roger Moe, the current Senate majority leader, said Lee was a "dear friend" and "wonderful mentor."

"He loved politics and he was a tough fighter for working people," Moe said. "He called me a lot and gave me a lot of counsel on what I should be doing. He's a guy who did a lot for his community, state and nation."

"We never had a conversation that somehow didn't start or end with political issues. That was his life."

Lee's daughter, Catherine Pezdirtz of Chicago, said he was caring and compassionate.

"Along with my mother, he taught me to care about others, and he let me make my own decisions," she said. "He also taught me to respect others who were different from me."

In addition to his daughter, Lee is survived by a son, John, of Bagley; four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be held from 3 to 8 p.m. today at the Cease Family Funeral Home in Bagley and an hour before the 1 p.m. Thursday service at Faith Lutheran Church in Bagley.