

Metro/State news

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THE MONDAY BRIEFING / Govern

Ex-legislators / Where are they now?

By Laurie Blake
Staff Writer

Once they leave the Capitol in St. Paul, most former Minnesota House and Senate members drop out of public view. Here's a summary of what some of the better-known former lawmakers are doing now.

Howard Albertson — House member representing Stillwater from 1960-66. He was chairman of the first Metropolitan Affairs Committee in the House and played a key role in creating the Metropolitan Council. Albertson, 60, is a Washington County district judge.

Robert Ashbach — An IR senator from Arden Hills from 1966-82 and a former Senate minority leader. He sought but did not get the IR Party endorsement for governor in 1982. At 71, Ashbach is chairman of Rose Holding Co., which owns the Roseville Bank.

Jerome Blatz — An IR senator representing Richfield and Bloomington from 1962-76. He served as Senate tax chairman. Since leaving the Legislature he has practiced law in Bloomington. For many years he was president of the Minnesota Thoroughbred Association and is now on its board of directors. He has devoted time to the association and horse racing, he said, because "I think it's one of the greatest industries to come to the state in many years." Blatz, 65, is the father of state Rep. Kathleen Blatz, IR-Bloomington.

Connie Burchette — DFL House member representing Coon Rapids, Fridley, Blaine and other communities of Anoka County from 1962-66. After leaving the Legislature, she worked as a freelance writer. She moved to Bella Vista, Ark., in 1979 and lived there until 1987. Last fall she moved to Port Hueneme, Calif., to be near her daughter. Burchette, 76, was influential in the passage of a bill that allowed communities to take a census



Alpha Smaby



C.R. (Baldy) Hansen



Howard Albertson

every five years for purposes of qualifying for state cigarette- and liquor-tax distributions to local governments.

Karl Grittner — A DFLer representing districts in St. Paul first in the House and later in the Senate from 1952-70. During his last four years he was Senate minority leader. Grittner was a teacher and later a principal in the St. Paul public school system for 37 years before retiring in 1983. Grittner was known as the author of a bill that permitted school districts to give teachers sabbatical leaves of absence. He also was behind legislation that funded the first day-activity center for mentally retarded adults. "Now every county in the state has day-activity centers for adult mentally retarded," said Grittner, 66.

C.R. (Baldy) Hansen — DFL Senator from Austin from 1966-76. As chairman of the Senate's Labor and Commerce Committee from 1973-76, he killed so many bills backed by organized labor that the committee was nicknamed "Forest Lawn" after the California cemetery. After leaving office Hansen was convicted of obstructing legal procedures after grappling with a state patrolman who was arresting another former legislator for drunken driving. Hansen, 78, is president of the Austin

branch of the Rose Creek Bank and of the Farmer's State Bank of Lyle.

John Salchert — A DFL House member representing Minneapolis from 1966-74. Salchert said the biggest regret of his legislative career is that the Legislature did not pass a bill to upgrade mass transit in the Twin Cities and take advantage of major federal funding then available. Salchert supported a system like the light rail transit system Hennepin County is considering now. Salchert, 51, left the House to devote full time to his medical practice. He has since retired from that practice and works as a medical consultant.

Alpha Smaby — A House member and liberal DFLer representing Minneapolis from 1964-68. Smaby, 78, lives in a log cabin on Lake Vermillion near Cook, Minn., where she wrote her recently published book, "Political Upheaval." It's about the anti-war movement in Minnesota and the split in the DFL Party between Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy. She is the mother of Jan Smaby, host of the KTCA's public affairs program "Almanac."