

New members . . .

# Swenson pledges 'Honesty, Integrity, Common Sense'

When Howard Swenson (IR-Nicollet) says his family has had a long-time interest and involvement in politics, he means it.



Rep. Howard Swenson

Great-grandfather Swen Swenson was elected to the Legislature from Nicollet County in 1886. Grandfather Oscar Swenson was elected to a House seat in 1913, and after serving 18 years, elected speaker in 1931 (in 1937, he was elected to a Senate seat and served until 1950).

Swen's brother, Lars Swenson, and Swen's son, Carl, also served in Senate.

So when Howard Swenson won the seat formerly held by Darrel Mosel (DFL-Gaylord) and joined his brother, Rep. Doug Swenson (IR-Forest Lake), it brought to six the number of Swensons who have served in the Legislature in the past 107 years

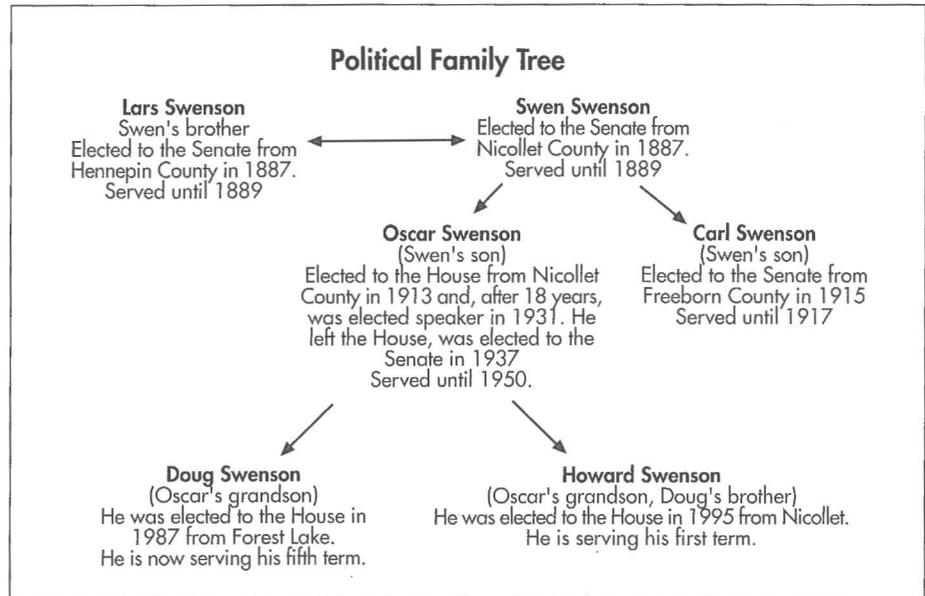
And not only does Swenson's family have a long political history, he has been very active himself. He spent 12 years on the Nicollet Board of Education, 11 years on the Minnesota Holstein Breeders Association Board, and five years on the Purebred Dairy Cattle Association Board.

Swenson has been a dairy farmer all his life and said his lifelong love has been raising dairy cattle. He lives on the homestead farm which has been in the family since Swen Swenson emigrated from Norway to Nicollet County in 1857. Howard Swenson's son, Paul, now does the bulk of the farm work while his father spends weekdays at the Capitol. His son is responsible for the dairy herd, but Swenson keeps his hand in the business when he's home on weekends.

He's always been involved in the livestock and dairy industries. The former 4-H leader says having registered cattle and taking part in showing and selling them has made his family business more interesting and enjoyable.

Swenson's local political involvements paid off when it came time to put an IR candidate against incumbent Mosel.

"I knew other people who had been in the Legislature and I had some idea about how it worked. The opportunity seemed to be there, so I declared," he said.



When Swen Swenson, who immigrated from Norway in 1857 and settled in Nicollet County, was elected to the Legislature in 1887, he started a family trend that continues today.

Swenson wants to hold down state taxes and slow down what he calls the "ever increasing growth in government." He also would like to have a hand in restructuring a workers' compensation system he says encourages business to move to neighboring states due to prohibitive insurance prices.

Swenson's campaign brochures boast in bright red the slogan "Honesty, Integrity, Common Sense." Those are the values he pledged to maintain if elected. The words are now carved in wooden block letters which sit on his desk. His office is also well stocked with photographs of his family: wife, Jane; daughters Julie, Janet, Nancy and Ruth; and son, Paul. He also proudly displays many photos of his farm.

Swenson does not intend to forget he represents rural interests. One of his priorities is to improve farm-to-market roads so agricultural products may be easily moved.

Legislators from the metropolitan area need to be reminded farming and agribusiness are vital to Minnesota's economy, Swenson said.

"I've been a farmer all my life. That's who I am and that's who I represent," Swenson said.

In addition to a spot on the House Agriculture Committee, he serves on the Commerce, Tourism and Consumer Affairs Committee and on the committee's Business Regulation

Division, and the Education Committee.

His school board experience gives him a good background on educational issues.

So far, he's found his legislative duties much as he anticipated, though even busier.

"It seems like even this early in the session, I keep going morning until night," he said.

— Jean Thilmany

**District 23B**

**Population:** 32,258  
**Distribution:** 14.41 percent urban; 85.59 percent rural  
**Counties:** Blue Earth, Brown, McLeod, Nicollet, Sibley  
**Largest city:** Glencoe  
**Location:** southcentral Minnesota  
**Unemployment rate:** 3.59 percent  
**Residents living below poverty level:** 9.06 percent  
**1992 presidential election results:**  
 Bush/Quayle ..... 33.06 percent  
 Clinton/Gore ..... 32.68 percent  
 Perot/Stockdale ..... 32.77 percent  
 Other: ..... 1.49 percent