

NEWS OBITUARIES

# Howard Nelson, legislator and civic leader

● When Nelson joined an organization, said his son, he joined to make it better. He was a veteran member of the Legislature, mayor of Lindstrom and a businessman.

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Former Minnesota legislator Howard Nelson of Lindstrom was instrumental in writing agricultural legislation and in the establishment of the sales tax in 1967.



**Howard Nelson**

Nelson, who until recently worked at the frozen meat locker and retail foods store in Lindstrom that he started in the 1930s, died on March 31 in Chisago City. He was 95.

He served in the state House of Representatives in 1959-60 and in the state Senate from 1963 to 1970.

Nelson was a member of the conservative caucus when the Legislature's members were not elected by political party. He was among

those who overrode Gov. Harold LeVander's veto of a state sales tax.

The Legislature also turned property tax collection over to the counties, provided property tax relief and uniform property evaluation.

Former U.S. Sen. Dave Durenberger, who was LeVander's chief of staff, said Nelson worked well with people.

"You could always count on him," said Durenberger. "He was a solid conservative" and found the "middle ground" on issues.

Nelson's son, Peter of Lindstrom, also a former member of the state House, said his father's work on the tax bill led to his appointment as chairman of the Senate Elections and Reapportionment Committee in 1969.

He served on many committees, such as the Senate Agriculture Committee. And

conference committees of both houses of the Legislature depended on Nelson to write agricultural legislation, said his son.

Nelson was key in getting the Andrew Boss Laboratory-Meat Science building constructed at the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus.

"He supported quality education," and helped lead many civic groups, said his son. "When he joined an organization, he joined to make a difference."

In 1942, a fire at a nearby business was threatening his store, the Community Market. Firefighters couldn't hook up the hoses, because the fittings between the hoses and hydrants didn't match.

Soon after, Nelson joined the volunteer fire department, eventually becoming chief.

He also worked on national firefighting equipment standards, ensuring hoses and hydrants became compatible, said his son.

In 1931, the elder Nelson graduated from high school in Milltown, Wis. For several

years during the 1930s, he followed the harvests to the West Coast. In 1936, he was among Minnesota's first operator of a meat-locker business. He even designed and built the refrigeration system, said his son, having learned mechanical skills growing up on a farm.

When Nelson was defeated in the 1970 election, he enjoyed many other civic roles, such as with the Osman Shriners, and in the 1970s, he served as mayor of Lindstrom.

In addition to Peter, he is survived by his wife of 68 years, Dorothy of Lindstrom; daughters Carol Peterson of Chisago City, Marcia Smith of Lindstrom and Kristine Henley of Reno, Nev.; another son, George of Stillwater; sisters Alma Sands of Minneapolis and Ardis McAfee of Eau Claire, Wis.; nine grandchildren, and 12 great grandchildren.

Services will be held at 3 p.m. today at Trinity Lutheran Church, 13025 Newell Av., Lindstrom. Visitation will be held at 2 p.m. at the church.