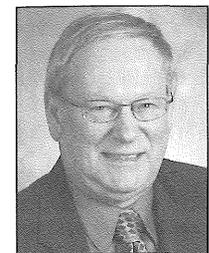


Making a move

After 32 years in one role, Olin moves to House

By CRAIG GREEN

After Rep. Dave Olin (DFL-Thief River Falls) graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School, he moved to Thief River Falls to work as an attorney.



Rep. Dave Olin

When he was elected Pennington County attorney two years later, Olin thought he would hold the position four to eight years, at the most, before building his private practice.

“Lo and behold, I started to enjoy public service,” said Olin. “I enjoy doing things for the public. I never got the itch to leave the job.” He stayed for the next 32 years.

When Olin finally left his position, he again thought that he would return to his private law practice. But when former Rep. Maxine

Penas decided not to run for re-election, Olin saw this as another opportunity to use his experience to serve his constituents.

“I had been concerned about what had been going on in the public sector and local government aid, and the fact that property taxes have been going up significantly and costing citizens in my district money,” said Olin. “I thought that maybe by running for the Legislature, I could [work to] reverse the trend of local property taxes going up.”

Education, another central point for Olin, is a common theme in his family. His mother and his sister taught, and one of his daughters is a teacher.

Olin is concerned “that there hasn’t been enough emphasis put on things like early education.”

Reflecting on his years of experience dealing with youth as a county attorney, Olin believes that there is a need for after-school programs,

DISTRICT 1A
2002 population: 36,485 Largest city: Thief River Falls Counties: Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Roseau Top concerns: Property taxes and education

and programs that give youth positive and nurturing role models.

Olin’s district is also home to many parks and forests, and residents who love to ride snowmobiles and ATVs. Olin will not only work to protect the environment, but also to ensure that his constituents are free to fully enjoy their environment, without unnecessary government restrictions, he said.

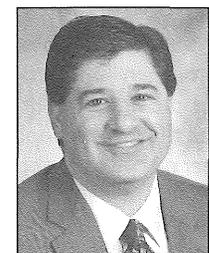
Continuing his years of service in his new role at the House, Olin said, “I represent all the constituents in my district. Whether they are Republican, Democrat, independent, or whatever party they may be, I am their legislator.”

Passion for education

Tillberry goes from school board to statehouse

By MIA SIMPSON

Rep. Tom Tillberry (DFL-Fridley) knows the issues he wants to affect, and they all have something to do with young people.



Rep. Tom Tillberry

As a high school counselor, he’s seen and helped treat many problems facing youth: drugs, academics, mental illness, homelessness, college and career. He’s also been a school board member and a teacher’s union organizer.

“I think the times, the way they are right now, I have to get involved,” he said. “I’m just asking for fairness. Life is hard enough. Can’t we help each other?”

His first stint in public service was 2005, when he was elected as a write-in candidate for the Fridley School Board. For a half-decade prior, he was a negotiator and representative for Education Minnesota in Roseville, the city where he’s worked as a school counselor for 11 years.

He decided to run for state office after he was approached by former Rep. Connie Bernardy, who announced last July that she would not seek re-election.

“She asked me if I would do it,” he said. “I’ve always been a supporter of hers. The support that I got from her campaign was wonderful.”

He remembers nights during the campaign when dozens of students gathered in his family’s basement to stuff literature and prepare other campaign materials. He has deep respect for his young supporters, and a concern for making sure they get the best from their schools.

“I can talk education all over the place,” he said.

Tillberry has traveled to several South American countries on medical missions and music tours – he plays trumpet in his church orchestra – and to visit foreign classrooms.

“I’ve seen students there eager to learn,” he said. “A lot of them don’t even have a fair opportunity.”

DISTRICT 51B
2002 population: 36,686 Largest city: Blaine Counties: Anoka, Ramsey Top concerns: Education, health care and property taxes

He simulated the political process for students at Roseville Area High School in an attempt to engage them in politics. In one case, Tillberry showed video of floor debate on a bill, and asked students whether they thought it deserved passage. They didn’t.

Tillberry said it’s important to make issues and governmental process real for young people, especially as education funding drops.

“Eventually, our pride in our state is falling apart,” he said. “I’m seeing it in student apathy.”

Tillberry sits on the House Commerce and Labor, E-12 Education and Taxes committees, and the House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Division of the House Finance Committee.