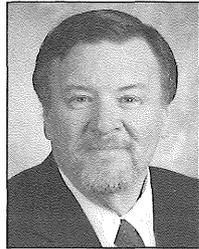


# Not slowing down

## Ward continues his public service in St. Paul

By MIKE COOK

As they tearfully drove away from their hometown of Proctor 20 years ago, Rep. John Ward (DFL-Brainerd) was asked by his



Rep. John Ward

wife, Sally, not to get so involved in the teachers' union and never run for office again.

He agreed, but not for long.

"She has always allowed John Ward to be John Ward," he said. "I've always been so actively involved in my community, in my church, but I've never been this busy and this active. But it's really exciting, it's a great opportunity."

A class president in high school, he spent two years on the Proctor City Council and three more as mayor, before a career opportunity necessitated his move to the Central Lakes Area.

Now, as a House member, he serves on the House E-12 Education Committee and two education divisions of the House Finance Committee.

"I taught for 33 years and coached for 25 of those years," he said. "I worked in many different educational areas, everything from an elementary school to a middle school to a junior high to a senior high. I started an alternative education program and directed that, and I even worked in a prison. I also have a broad base of curricula that I taught: phy. ed, driver's ed, health and I coached. For most of my career I was a special ed teacher with learning disabled children and emotional behavior disorder children."

Ward, who retired last May, received many awards during his education and coaching careers, culminating with being named the Wal-Mart State Teacher of the Year in 2006.

Proud of the \$10,000 to his district that came with the award, Ward said the best part

DISTRICT 12A
2002 population: 36,813
Largest city: Brainerd
County: Crow Wing
Top concerns: Education, health care access and equitable property taxes

was knowing it was students and parents that nominated him.

His work ethic is something that was ingrained early in life.

"Being taught lessons about hard work, caring about people and giving back are all really important lessons," he said. "I did that as a mayor and an educator, now I'm hoping to do that as a state legislator. I'm just a plain, ordinary person that wants to do what's best for everybody."

Other areas he hopes to work on include access to quality health care and property tax reform.

# Keepin' it together

## Wollschlager brings work ethic to State Capitol

By PATTY OSTBERG

The office of Rep. Sandy Wollschlager (DFL-Cannon Falls) feels like a nature hike through her district. Local artists' works line the walls with framed sketches, watercolors, and mixed media of local creeks and dams.



Rep. Sandy Wollschlager

The colorful landscapes will "remind me of the people, the things I love," and the land her constituents want her to protect, she said. They will also remind her of why she ran for office during late night meetings, she added with a laugh.

Wollschlager said she hopes to have the opportunity to use her House committee assignments to foster outdoor funding for habitats, but other issues in her district will be her focus as well.

Property tax increases are a frequent concern voiced by her constituents. As vice chairwoman of the House Taxes Committee, she will have firsthand knowledge of ways to reduce these rates, which she said is her top priority on the committee. When "property taxes go up \$100, it hurts," particularly for the working class, she said.

Observing and collecting those constituent concerns are her responsibility as a legislator, Wollschlager said. "If you're in the working class ... you don't have time for politics."

After graduating from high school, Wollschlager worked as a boxer at a turkey factory. Adding up the turkey-weight per box was not something she saw as a lifelong career.

Instead, Wollschlager, a senior regulatory affairs specialist at 3M, earned a chemistry degree from Augsburg College and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, both while raising two children with her husband.

DISTRICT 28A
2002 population: 36,636
Largest city: Red Wing
Counties: Wabasha, Goodhue
Top concern: Property tax reform

At Harvard, she met several former Minnesota legislators who told her, "business is easy for you, we need people to do public service," she said. A run for the local school board upon her return set her on course to the Legislature.

She is proud of being able to keep her family intact while driving forward in her career. "Sometimes it's not about outright brilliance, it's about keeping it all together," she said.

Wollschlager also serves on the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee, and the Veterans Affairs Division of the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.