

Sen. Risser: To retire after 64 years

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MADISON – State Senator Fred A. Risser (D-Madison) announced today that he would not be a candidate for re-election to the Wisconsin State Senate.

Risser, 92, is in his 64th year as a Wisconsin legislator. He is the longest serving state or national legislator in the nation's history. He is also the last World War II veteran still remaining in either the state or nation's legislatures.

Risser was elected to the Wisconsin Assembly in 1956, moving to the State Senate in 1962, where he has served in many leadership roles including Senate Minority Leader and 25 years as Senate President.

During his tenure Risser has worked with 13 different governors (7 Democrats and 6 Republicans) and has never missed a legislative roll call.

He spent over 50 years as a member of the State Building Commission. Risser is the main author of many bills, including the state's Clean Indoor Act. He made it possible for seniors over 60 to audit, at no cost, courses at the University of Wisconsin. Risser said that he considers a major accomplishment to be his work on drafting the Capitol Master Plan and following through over 10 years of work on the Capitol restoration. Risser has received many awards for his work on environmental and women's issues, including a Lifetime Achievement Award for his support of Planned Parenthood.

Risser is the fourth generation in his family to represent the Madison area in the Wisconsin Legislature. His father, Fred E. Risser, was the last Progressive member of the State Senate. His grandfather, Ernest N. Warner, was a Progressive Republican and served in the Assembly, and his great-grandfather, Colonel Clement E. Warner, once elected as a Unionist, served in both the State Senate and

Assembly. Senator Risser is the only Democrat legislator in the family. But, as he says, “the political parties keep changing their ideas, while our family has remained committed to progressive values.”

In deciding not to seek re-election, Risser said he was honored to have had the opportunity to represent the Madison area in the Wisconsin Legislature.