

Sen. Shilling: Reacts to Sen. Risser retirement

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MADISON, WI – Following Senator Fred Risser’s (D-Madison) announcement that he will not seek re-election, Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse) released the following statement:

“As the longest serving state legislator in American history, Senator Risser is a gentleman, scholar and statesmen in Wisconsin politics. I want to thank him for his lifetime commitment to public service, he is truly one of a kind. I have appreciated and respected his knowledge of the Senate Rules and Procedures, and his firm commitment to the process and integrity of the institution. One of his many accomplishments is the creation of the Senate President as the presiding officer of the State Senate. He remains today the only Democrat who has served as Senate President, presiding over the Chamber and its 33 members.

“Fred has been a clear and consistent voice for environmental issues, public education, the UW System, and public health. His push for smoking bans in Wisconsin led to the smoke free laws now in place. Fred leaves behind a lasting legacy and has served the state of Wisconsin and his community well during his 64 years of public service. He and his wife Nancy live across the street from the Capitol, and I have no doubt he will continue to keep an eye on Wisconsin politics, just from a different vantage point.”

Senator Risser is the fourth generation in his family to serve Dane County, following his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1956, and then to the State Senate in 1962 and has served in various leadership roles, including Senate President, Senate President Pro Tempore, Co-Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and Assistant Minority Leader. He is also the last remaining World War II veteran serving in the legislature in the United States.

During his time in the legislature he has had 244 bills signed into law. In addition to his role as a Senator, Fred is a practicing attorney and is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin and Dane County Bar Associations. He is also an active member of the Historical Society of Wisconsin, Board of Curators, and the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board.