

House profile . . .

More women, fewer farmers mark 78th Session

The Minnesota House began its 78th Session with a record high of 34 women and a record low of 16 farmers, and the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) has extended its majority as a result of November's general election.

The DFL Party controls the House by an 86-47 majority over Independent-Republicans, with one open seat after Rep. Gloria Segal (DFL-St. Louis Park) announced her resignation in December. At the close of the 1992 session, DFLers controlled the House by a 78-56 margin.

Party Affiliation	
DFL	IR
86	47

A record number of women (35, later reduced to 34 due to one resignation) were elected to the House as well, surpassing the previous high of 29 elected in 1991. After declining during the early and mid-1980s, the number of women has increased steadily since 1987. In 1963, only three women were sworn in as representatives.

The Legislature also convened Jan. 5 with what is believed to be the fewest number of farmers in Minnesota history. Members listing farmer as their primary occupation slipped to 16 — down from 20 in 1991. That's a significant drop from just five years ago, when 27 House members called themselves farmers. The previous low for farmers was 18 in 1977.

Gender	
Women	Men
34	99

While declining in actual numbers, farmers are still tied with attorneys for the third most common profession among representatives. Topping the list with 20 are educators, who ranked third in 1991.

The current number of business professionals dropped to 14 (from 20 in 1991), knocking the occupation from a first-place tie to fifth place. Ranking second this year is legislator (17), down from 19 in 1991, when legislators ranked fourth among all occupations.

While the top five — educator, legisla-

Occupation	
Type	Number
Educator	20
Legislator	17
Farmer	16
Attorney	16
Business	14
Consultant	8
Homemaker	3
Retired	3
Trades	3
Accountant	3
Insurance	3
Auctioneer	2
Program Director (non-profit)	2
Retail	2
Real Estate	2

tor, farmer, attorney, and business — swapped places, they remain a hefty distance from sixth place.

Among other occupations listed were correctional officer, activist, fire captain, engineer, property manager, and journalist.

In cases where members listed more than one occupation, the first was taken to be the primary one.

The educational level of representatives continues its upward trend, with 47 members holding a four-year undergraduate degree. That's up from 45 in 1991, and from 31 in 1990. Those with "some graduate work," declined to 16 from 17 in 1991, but those with graduate level degrees rose to 32 this year from 29 in 1991.

At 47.7, the average age of House members has risen almost a year from the 1991 average of 47 years. Since 1975, when the average age of House members stood at 40.8, the average has steadily climbed to its present level. In 1975, half the House members were age 38 or younger. Today,

Education	
Level	Number
High School	6
Technical College	6
Some College	20
4-year Undergraduate Degree	47
Graduate Work	16
Graduate Degree	32
No Listing	6

an even 100 members are over 40. At present, the youngest House member is 26, and the oldest is 81.

Currently, the largest class of legislators is the group of first-termers just elected (33). That's 10 more first-termers than were elected in 1991, a result that can be partially attributed to redistricting. High turnovers were also seen in 1963, 1973, and 1983 — all years following the re-drawing of legislative districts.

The next largest group is the 25 members serving their fourth term. There are 16 second-term members, 13 sixth-term members, and 11 third-term members. Just over 30 percent of the members — or 41 — are beginning their second decade of legislative service.

Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth) continues as Minnesota's elder statesman, now

Age	
Years	Number
21-30	5
31-40	28
41-50	50
51-60	34
61-70	15
over 70	1
Average Age: 47.7 years	

Terms	
Term number	Number of Members
1st	33
2nd	16
3rd	11
4th	25
5th	8
6th	13
7th	3
8th	6
9th	6
10th	3
11th	7
12th	1
19th	1

serving his 19th term. He will celebrate his 82nd birthday later this month.

Editor's note: These statistics were based on a survey of 133 members — one shy of the 134 House districts. A special election is scheduled for Jan. 12 for the seat previously held by Rep. Segal.