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Stan Holmquist

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A leader devoted to education

Consciousness of the turning of history's pages was heightened at the Capitol Friday by the passing of a legislative giant from a previous era. ~~Stanley Holmquist~~, legislator for a quarter century, Senate majority leader from 1967 to 1972, died in Bloomington at age 93.

Holmquist was a Republican when Republicans were called Conservatives, and a senator when senators looked to themselves, not the governor, to lead state policy. In those years, policy arguments were more often about means than ends. Legislators divided less along party lines and more along lines of geography and conscience.

The policy that Holmquist was passionate about was education. A former teacher and school super-

intendent in Grove City, he came to the Legislature in 1947 determined to increase state funding for schools. He stayed until he succeeded in enacting the big infusion of state money into K-12 districts that became known as the Minnesota Miracle. He locked arms with a DFL governor, Wendell Anderson, to do it.

Four years earlier, he opposed his own party's governor, Harold LeVander, to put the state's first sales tax on the books. Holmquist wasn't exaggerating in 2000 when he said that tax "absolutely saved Minnesota."

Holmquist was a gentle, genial man who practiced a nobler politics than Minnesota sees today. It served the state well, as did he.