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PROFILE OF THE 2009 WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

January 5, 2009

This brief profiles the members of the 2009 Wisconsin Legislature at the time of their inauguration on January 5, 2009. It includes information about party affiliation, marital status, legislative experience, occupation, gender, age, educational background, and military service.

A summary table that offers comparable data for the last six legislatures is included. Similar information, dating back to the 1943 Legislature, has appeared in the *Wisconsin Blue Book* since 1956.

THE SENATE PROFILE

The senate has 33 members, including 18 Democrats and 15 Republicans. Of the total, seven senators are women and two are African-American (including one woman). Twenty-four senators are married.

Legislative Experience. Of the 16 seats up for election in 2008, 14 members from the 2007 Senate were reelected and two were elected from open seats. Seventeen members were holdover senators in the middle of their terms.

A total of 23 senators have previous service in the assembly. In terms of combined prior service in both the senate and the assembly, 10 senators have served in 10 or more biennial sessions; 15 served in 5-9 sessions; and the remaining eight have served in fewer than 5 sessions. Most notable is Senator Fred Risser (D-26th District), currently the longest-serving legislator in the United States. Risser also has the distinction of the longest legislative tenure in Wisconsin state history, with 23 prior sessions in the senate and three in the assembly for a total of 52 years of service.

Five senators had previous experience in a legislative staff position. One served on the staff of a member of Congress and three worked for

either a state senator or representative. One was a legislative analyst for the assembly.

Local Government Experience. Fifteen senators have had experience in local government as elected public officials. Four served as county board supervisors and, of these, one was also an alderman. Five additional senators served on city councils, two were on school boards, and four were on a town board.

Age. As of January 5, 2009, the average age of a senator was 55, the highest since 1967, with an age range from 38 to 81 years. The age ranges for the senators were: two senators in the 30-39 range, nine in the 40-49 range, 11 in the 50-59 range, and 11 senators over 60 years of age.

Occupation. Eleven senators list themselves as full-time legislators. One of these also lists the additional occupation of journeyman bricklayer. Three senators are currently practicing attorneys. Other current occupations include newspaper publisher, farm management, raising exotic animals, owner of a baseball team, and nursing.

Education. Of the 32 senators who continued their formal education beyond high school, 29 have academic degrees and three attended either a technical school or a college or university. Four senators hold law degrees, seven have master's degrees, and 18 others hold bachelor's degrees. One has a Ph.D.

Military Service. Seven senators have served in the nation's armed forces: one in the Army, one in the Navy, two in the U.S. Army Reserve, one in the U.S. Naval Reserve, one in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and one in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. One senator is a veteran of World War II and one is a Vietnam veteran.

THE ASSEMBLY PROFILE

There are 99 representatives to the assembly, including 52 Democrats, 46 Republicans, and one Independent. Twenty-two members are women, the same number as during the 2007 session. Six representatives are African-American (including three women), and one is Hispanic. Seventy-one representatives are married.

Legislative Experience. Eighty-five representatives were reelected in 2008, while 13 are serving their first term in the assembly. One new representative, Peter W. Barca (D-64th District), returns to the assembly having previously served from 1985-1993. Three incumbents were defeated in 2008, all in the general election. The other 11 new members did not face an incumbent. The longest-serving representative is Representative Marlin Schneider (D-72nd District), who has served in 19 prior sessions, for a total of 38 years. Representative Schneider is the longest-serving representative in the history of the assembly. Other representatives with 10 or more prior sessions include one with 14, one with 13, two with 12, one with 11, and one with 10. Other returning representatives include 25 with 5-9 sessions, six with 4 sessions, 14 with 3 sessions, 17 with 2 sessions, and 17 with one session.

Eleven representatives have had previous experience in a legislative staff position. Three worked for a member of the U.S. Congress, six worked in the state legislature, and two worked for a member of Congress and a legislator.

Local Government Experience. Of the 47 representatives who have had experience in local elected office, four held office at both the county and municipal level, 15 others held county office, and an additional 28 had municipal service.

Fifteen representatives have served as county board supervisors, 14 as city council members, eight as town board members, and three others were village trustees. Five have served as school board members. Three have served as city mayors and two as village presi-

dents. One is a former county sheriff, one is a former circuit court judge, one a former clerk of courts, and one a former county clerk. One is a current county executive.

Age. As of January 5, 2009, the average age of a representative was 50, with an age range from 29 to 80 years. The age ranges for the representatives were: one in the 20-29 range, 18 in the 30-39 range, 24 in the 40-49 range, 40 in the 50-59 range, 12 in the 60-69 range, and four over 70 years of age.

Occupation. Thirty-nine representatives list themselves as full-time legislators (including one member who lists an additional occupation as attorney). Five representatives are currently farmers, and 12 are currently practicing attorneys. Among the other representatives, 16 list themselves as business owners. Other current occupations include civil engineer, labor arbitrator, assembly line operator, registered nurse, forester, press operator, and police officer. Former occupations listed include 14 teachers, five farmers, and two restaurant owners.

Education. Of the 92 representatives who have continued their formal education beyond high school, 69 hold academic degrees and 23 attended a college, university, or agricultural, business, technical, or trade school after high school graduation. Listed by their highest degree, one has a Ph.D., one has an M.D., and 15 hold law degrees. Eighteen hold master's degrees, 32 have bachelor's degrees, and two hold an associate degree.

Military Service. Twenty-two representatives have served in the armed forces. Six served in the Army, three in the Air Force, and six in the Navy. Seven were members of the the Wisconsin Air National Guard, the U.S. Army Reserve, or the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. Four of the Navy veterans later served in the U.S. Naval Reserve. Ten representatives are Vietnam veterans. Three representatives served in the Persian Gulf War, and three have served in the current Iraq War.

PERSONAL DATA ON WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS, 1999 – 2009 SESSIONS

	1999		2001		2003		2005		2007		2009	
	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.*
Party Affiliation												
Democrat	17	44	18	43	15	41	14	39	18	47	18	52
Republican	16	55	15	56	18	58	19	60	15	52	15	46
Number with previous legislative service												
In senate	30	0	30	0	27	0	28	0	29	0	31	0
In assembly	23	78	24	89	22	84	23	81	23	82	23	86
Highest number of prior sessions in same house	18	14	19	15	20	16	21	17	22	18	23	19
Occupations												
Full-time legislator	14	38	15	40	13	39	11	39	12	38	11	39
Attorney	5	10	5	10	3	8	2	11	3	11	3	12
Farmer	1	12	1	13	3	9	3	9	3	5	3	5
Other	13	39	12	36	14	43	17	40	15	45	16	43
Education												
High school only	2	12	2	13	4	12	4	9	2	7	1	7
Beyond high school	31	87	31	86	29	87	29	90	31	92	32	92
Bachelor's or associate degree	26	67	28	67	25	67	26	70	28	69	29	69
Advanced degree	8	29	8	31	7	32	8	34	10	35	11	35
Number with experience on local government body												
County board	4	19	4	18	4	19	4	18	4	17	4	15
Municipal board	6	31	5	36	8	35	10	28	12	25	12	30
Age												
Oldest	71	69	73	71	75	75	77	77	79	79	81	80
Youngest	35	27	37	26	33	27	34	28	36	28	38	29
Average	50	46	52	47	51	49	52	50	54	50	55	50
Veterans	4	14	4	15	4	13	4	13	2	16	2	16
Marital status												
Single	6	23	5	23	5	17	10	25	8	25	9	24
Married	27	74	28	76	28	80	23	70	25	69	24	71
Widowed	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	5	0	4
Number of women	11	19	11	22	8	27	8	26	8	22	7	22

*Includes one Independent.

Sen. - Senators; Rep. - Representatives.

Note: Most data are recorded as of the date on which the legislature first convened; ages are determined as of January 1.