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PROFILE OF THE 2003 WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

January 6, 2003

This brief profiles the members of the 2003 Wisconsin Legislature at the time of their inauguration on January 6, 2003. It includes information about their 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. When the 2003 Legislature convened on January 6, 2003, there were 18 Republicans and 15 Democrats. Of the total, eight senators were women and two were African-American. Twenty-eight senators were married.

Legislative Experience. Of the 17 seats up for election in 2002, 11 members from the 2001 Senate were reelected, three incumbent senators were defeated, and three ran for open seats. Sixteen members were holdover senators in the middle of their terms.

A total of 22 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; 13 served in 5-9 sessions; and the remaining 10 have served in less than 5 sessions. Most notable is Senator Fred Risser (D-26th District), who has the distinction of the longest legislative tenure in Wisconsin state history with 20 prior sessions in the senate and three in the assembly for a total of 46 years of service.

Four senators had previous experience in a legislative staff position. One served on the staff of a member of Congress and the other three

worked for either a state senator or representative.

Local Government Experience. Eleven 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. Four additional senators served on city councils, two were on school boards, one was on a town board, and one was both a town official and a school board member.

Age. As of January 6, 2003, the average age of a senator was 51 with an age range from 33 to 75 years. The age ranges for the senators were: 4 senators in the 30-39 range; 12 in the 40-49 range; 12 in the 50-59 range; and 5 senators over 60 years of age.

Occupation. Thirteen 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, home builder, printer, farm management, raising exotic animals, land surveying, and nursing. Four senators list teaching as a former occupation. One senator is a former fire chief.

Education. Of the 29 senators who continued their formal education beyond high school, 25 have academic degrees and four attended either a technical school or a college or university. Three senators hold law degrees, four have master's degrees, and 18 others hold bachelor's degrees.

Military Service. Seven senators have served in the nation's armed forces: one in each of the four major branches of service, two in the Army Reserve, and one in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. One senator is a veteran of World War II and four are Vietnam War veterans.

THE ASSEMBLY PROFILE

There are 99 representatives to the assembly. When the 2003 Legislature convened on January 6, 2003, there were 58 Republicans and 41 Democrats. Twenty-seven members were women, an increase of five from the 2001 session. Six representatives were African-American and one was Hispanic. Eighty representatives were married.

Legislative Experience. Eighty-four representatives were reelected in 2002, while 15 are serving their first term in the assembly. Three incumbents were defeated in 2002: two in the general election and one in the primary, in a district that paired two incumbents of the same party. The other 12 new members did not face an incumbent. The longest-serving representative is Representative Marlin Schneider (D-72nd District), who has served in 16 prior sessions, for a total of 32 years. Other representatives with 10 or more prior sessions include one with 14, one with 12, one with 11, and four with 10. Other returning representatives include 32 with 5-9 sessions, 7 with 4 sessions, 8 with 3 sessions, 19 with 2 sessions, and 10 with one session.

Fifteen representatives have had previous experience in a legislative staff position. Three worked for a member of the U.S. Congress, 13 worked in the state legislature, and one worked for a member of Congress and a legislator.

Local Government Experience. Of the 48 representatives who have had experience in local elected office, five held office at both the county and municipal level, 13 others held county office, and an additional 30 had municipal service.

Nineteen representatives have served as county board supervisors, 16 as city council members, five as town board members, and three others were village trustees. Ten have served as school board members. Two were city mayors.

Age. As of January 6, 2003, the average age of a representative was 49 with an age range

from 27 to 75 years. The age ranges for the representatives were: 2 in the 20-29 range; 16 in the 30-39 range; 32 in the 40-49 range; 34 in the 50-59 range; 9 in the 60-69 range; and 6 over 70 years of age.

Occupation. Thirty-nine representatives list themselves as full-time legislators (including two members who list additional occupations as attorney and veterinarian). Nine representatives are currently farmers. Eight representatives are currently practicing attorneys and two describe themselves as nonpracticing attorneys. Among the other representatives, eight list themselves as small business owners and three as public affairs executive or consultant. Four are in the restaurant business. Other current occupations include: realtor or real estate broker; farm manager; civil engineer; and feed, seed, and fertilizer dealer. Former occupations listed include 16 teachers, two farmers, and two restaurant owners.

Education. Of the 87 representatives who have continued their formal education beyond high school, 65 hold academic degrees, and 21 attended a college or university or an agricultural, business, technical, or trade school after high school graduation. Listed by their highest degree, one has an M.D. degree and 10 hold law degrees. Twenty-one others hold master's degrees. An additional 33 have bachelor's degrees. One holds an associate degree.

Military Service. Eighteen representatives have served in the armed forces. Eight served in the Army, two in the Air Force, and five in the Navy. Two were members of the Wisconsin National Guard, the Wisconsin Air National Guard, or the U.S. Army Reserve. Three of the Navy veterans later served in the U.S. Naval Reserve, and one of the Army veterans later served in the Wisconsin National Guard. One representative is a veteran of World War II and 11 are Vietnam War veterans. One representative served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

PERSONAL DATA ON WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS, 1993 – 2003 SESSIONS

	1993		1995		1997		1999		2001		2003 ²	
	Sen. ¹	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.
Party Affiliation												
Democrat	15	52	16	48	17	47	17	44	18	43	15	41
Republican	15	47	17	51	16	52	16	55	15	56	18	58
Number with previous legislative service												
In senate	26	0	32	0	32	0	30	0	30	0	27	0
In assembly	19	76	21	87	23	89	23	78	24	89	22	84
Highest number of prior sessions in same house	15	11	16	12	17	13	18	14	19	15	20	16
Occupations												
Full-time legislator	13	50	12	40	14	38	14	38	15	40	13	39
Attorney	7	9	6	10	6	11	5	10	5	10	3	8
Farmer	3	13	1	14	0	15	1	12	1	13	3	9
Other	7	27	14	35	13	35	13	39	12	36	15	45
Education												
High school only	2	13	2	15	2	15	2	12	2	13	4	12
Beyond high school	28	86	31	84	31	84	31	87	31	86	29	87
Bachelor's or associate degree	23	68	27	66	28	66	26	67	28	67	25	65
Advanced degree	9	27	8	26	9	30	8	29	8	31	8	32
Number with experience on local government body												
County board	2	17	2	22	3	21	4	19	4	18	4	19
Municipal board	4	22	8	24	6	29	6	31	5	36	6	35
Age												
Oldest	65	70	67	69	69	71	71	69	73	71	75	75
Youngest	34	24	31	26	33	28	35	27	37	26	33	27
Average	47	46	48	45	48	46	50	46	52	47	51	49
Veterans	4	16	6	14	5	14	4	14	4	15	4	13
Marital status												
Single	3	27	5	28	4	25	6	23	5	23	5	17
Married	27	71	28	70	29	73	27	74	28	76	28	80
Widowed	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2
Number of women ³	7	29	8	24	9	22	11	19	11	22	8	27

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.

¹In 1993 there were three vacancies when the senate began its session because three incumbent senators resigned to become members of the U.S. Congress.

²Includes two senators who have resigned since inauguration day.

³The largest number of women to serve in one session was 36 in the 1993 Legislature.