

Fred Risser, 93, is the longest serving state or national legislator in the country's history, leaves office January 4.

MADISON – State Senator Fred A. Risser (D-Madison) will be leaving the State Senate January 4, 2021 after finishing 64 years in the Wisconsin Legislature.

Risser, 93, is the longest serving state or national legislator in the country's history. He is also the last World War II veteran to serve in either the state or nation's legislatures.

Risser was elected to the Wisconsin Assembly in 1956, moving to the State Senate in 1962, where he has served in many leadership roles including 8 years as Senate Minority Leader and 25 years as Senate President.

During his tenure Risser has worked with 13 different governors (7 Democrats and 6 Republicans) and has never missed a legislative roll call.

He spent over 50 years as a member of the State Building Commission where he led the effort to develop state offices in downtown Madison and expand University of Wisconsin facilities.

Risser is the main author of many bills, including the state's Clean Indoor Act. He made it possible for seniors over 60 to audit, at no cost, courses at the University of Wisconsin.

Risser said that he considers a major accomplishment to be his work on drafting the Capitol Master Plan and following through over 10 years of work on the Capitol restoration. Risser has received many awards for his work on environmental and women's issues, including a Lifetime Achievement Award for his support of Planned Parenthood.

Risser is the fourth generation in his family to represent the Madison area in the Wisconsin Legislature. His father, Fred E. Risser, was the last Progressive member of the State Senate. His grandfather, Ernest N. Warner, was a Progressive Republican and served in the Assembly, and his great-grandfather, Colonel Clement E. Warner, once elected as a Unionist, served in both the State Senate and Assembly. Senator Risser is the only Democrat legislator in the family.

Risser said he was honored to have had the opportunity to represent the Madison area in the Wisconsin Legislature.