

# Wisconsin State Journal

## WARREN *KNOWLES* IS DEAD

### EX-GOVERNOR, 84, SERVED 3 TERMS

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Byline: By Joel Broadway Wisconsin State Journal

**Memo:** A similar version ran on page 1C of the first edition. The headline read: Gov. Knowles dead at 84.

Former Gov. *Warren P. Knowles*, who took great steps to protect Wisconsin's environment in the late 1960s, died Saturday at the age of 84.

Knowles was governor from 1965 to 1971, and led the way in protecting wetlands, fighting water pollution and expanding state parks and forests. An avid outdoorsman, he suffered a heart attack Saturday while participating in the annual Governor's Fishing Opener that he helped start in 1968.

Knowles had been fishing for several hours on Lake Arbutus with a friend and a guide, and collapsed after weighing in a fish about 2:30 p.m., said organizer Jim Sterchy.

"If he has to go, I'm sure this is the way he would want to go," said Gov. Tommy Thompson, who also attended the fishing event at Black River Falls in western Wisconsin.

Thompson, who was elected to the legislature in 1967, praised Knowles for his leadership of the state, especially on environmental issues.

"He was an outstanding governor and a perfect gentleman," Thompson said.

Knowles guided the state through a number of crises, including riots and civil rights marches. In his first six months, Monroe was hit by a massive tornado and the Mississippi River flooded.

In the 1960s, Knowles had served as a chairman of the Upper Great Lakes Commission and, after leaving office, chaired the Wisconsin Land Resources Committee, which called for stronger state controls on development. State leaders named a state forest along the St. Croix River after Knowles several years ago.

Knowles, a Republican from River Falls, started his political career by serving four years on the St. Croix County Board. He served 14 years in the

state Senate before being elected lieutenant governor in 1954, 1956 and 1960.

Knowles was known for his grace and his sense of humor and was widely liked by Democrats and Republicans. He was not immune to personal and political problems, however.

In 1968, while Knowles was seeking his third two-year term, Wisconsin residents were shocked to learn that his wife, Dorothy, had gotten a divorce in Mexico.

Knowles won a third term but did not seek re-election in 1970. Instead, he became chairman of the board of Heritage Wisconsin Corp. a Milwaukee bank holding company.

Knowles had started the Governor's Fishing Opener to promote fishing and tourism. He had only missed two of the events, which kick off the state's inland fishing season, and was customarily honored by a dinner on Friday nights, said organizer Jim Sterchy.

``He just loved the outdoors," Sterchy said. ``He believed in fishing and he believed in tourism."

Knowles attended Carleton College in Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin Law School.

He was elected to the state Senate in 1941, then served as a Navy lieutenant aboard the USS Nevada in World War II.

**Illustration:** Warren Knowles

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