

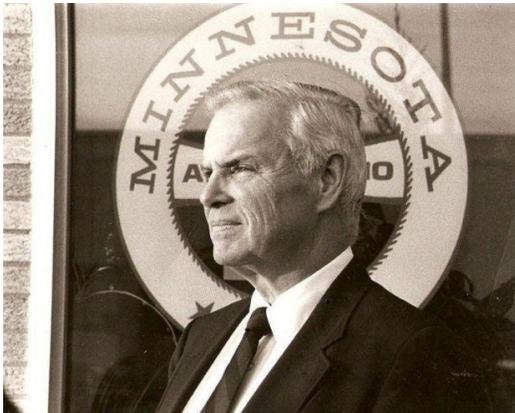
# David Roe, a past president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, dies at 92

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David Roe, a local labor leader who served as president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO from 1966 to 1984, has died. He was 92.

Roe, a longtime leader of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades, loomed large in Minnesota labor, said Bill McCarthy, the current Minnesota AFL-CIO president.



David Roe (Courtesy photo)

Roe as AFL-CIO president was key in securing collective-bargaining rights for public sector workers and pushing to have Minnesota's first minimum wage enacted, among other achievements, McCarthy noted.

“Under David’s leadership, the Minnesota AFL-CIO became a strong voice both at the State Capitol and the voting booth,” he said. “David understood how vital it was for union members and all working people to be involved in the political process, and his record proves it.”

Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton issued a statement noting Roe’s contributions to the state’s labor movement: “Dave Roe was a giant of a man and one of the most influential Minnesotans of his generation. His lifelong commitment to better wages and working conditions greatly improved the lives of thousands of hard-working Minnesotans. I extend my deepest condolences to his family.”

Sen. Amy Klobuchar said in a statement, “I was saddened to hear of the passing of David Roe, who for decades was one of Minnesota’s greatest advocates for working men and women ... His lifelong commitment to workers improved the lives of countless Minnesota families.”

Roe, who kept a public profile after his AFL-CIO stint, is largely responsible for a Minnesota Workers Memorial on the Minnesota state Capitol grounds.

The gently curving limestone wall near Cedar Street and Columbus Avenue was originally dedicated in 2010, in spite of its incomplete state, after a decades-long effort by labor leaders to establish a tribute to the state's ordinary workers. The monument was finished last year.

The roots of the project date to 1985 when Roe was appointed by Gov. Rudy Perpich to develop a Labor Interpretive Center, an interactive museum devoted to labor history, in downtown St. Paul. That project went nowhere, but Roe and others came up with the idea of a permanent workers memorial on the Capitol Mall.

“After a remarkable career advocating for working people, nobody would have faulted him for enjoying a well-deserved quiet retirement,” McCarthy said. “Instead, David threw himself into creating (this) memorial. ... I am heartened that David was able to see (it) to its completion last year.”

Roe served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

His involvement in Minnesota labor dates back to 1946, when he joined the Railway Clerks Local 1324. He was first elected to union office in 1951 as a vice president of Lathers Local 190.

He was a Minnesota delegate to Democratic national conventions seven times between 1960 and 1984, made a grassroots run for Minneapolis mayor in 1961 and served six terms on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents from 1981 to 1993.

He traveled widely, accompanying Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey to Vietnam in 1968, and Vice President Walter Mondale to Panama in 1978.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO is a labor federation made up of more than 1,000 affiliate unions, representing more than 300,000 working people throughout the state.