

# Ex-Rep. Younglund dies

Apparent stroke fatal to factious lawmaker

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Rocky Mountain News Staff Writers

Walter A. Younglund, former controversial Republican legislator and longtime chairman of the Colorado House Agriculture Committee, died of an apparent stroke at his New Raymer ranch. He was 65.

Mr. Younglund, who had suffered a mild stroke six months ago, apparently died Sunday. His body was found Monday in his home by neighbors.

"He died peacefully in his sleep sometime Sunday night," said his daughter, Marleen Oakes. "We're guessing he probably had another stroke."

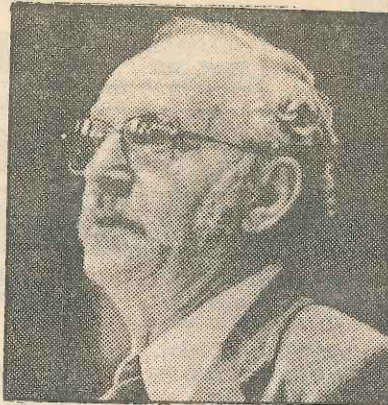
Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Friday in the Evangelical Free Church, Eaton. Private burial will follow.

Mr. Younglund served in the Colorado House from 1968 to 1986. A colorful man who wore western-cut suits and cowboy hats, he was the unofficial chairman of the "cowboy caucus," the dozen rural legislators at the capitol.

Although he never went to college, Mr. Younglund had a solid grasp of state water laws. "He knew them word for word," said Rep. Danny Williams, R-Edwards. "He was a great agriculture committee chairman."

Mr. Younglund often directed barbed remarks at environmentalists and backers of liberal programs, whom he described as "the plague of women vipers."

Rep. Ruth Wright, D-Boulder,



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Walt Younglund, 65, "died peacefully in his sleep."

among the state's leading environmentalists and a frequent adviser to Mr. Younglund on water law, said, "I worked with him for six years, even though we were on opposite ends of the spectrum. I'm really saddened by his death."

Wright said some of Mr. Younglund's remarks were meant to be outrageous, such as his suggestion that the last of the whooping cranes be strangled so they would not have to be considered when planning water projects.

Another controversial remark made in 1986 probably ended Mr. Younglund's political career.

During a committee hearing on a bill to require farmers to provide toilet facilities for migrant farm workers, Mr. Younglund said most migrant workers were uneducated and wouldn't know how to use such facilities.

The comments brought a storm of criticism from Hispanics and

fellow lawmakers, death threats and demonstrations at the capitol. That fall, he lost his re-election bid for District 51 to Democrat Leo Berger.

Beset by financial and family problems in recent years, Mr. Younglund nearly lost his 5,500-acre ranch in 1986 to foreclosure. He blamed his financial problems on his time in public office.

Born Dec. 20, 1923, in Koffman, he was a third-generation Colorado rancher. He attended schools in Rockaway, and served in the Navy in the Pacific during World War II.

He was given the 1976 Honorary State Farmer Award and the 1982 Outstanding Citizen Award by Gamma Sigma Delta fraternity at Colorado State University.

John Donley, a former Republican senator from Greeley, said, "Walter gave 100% to the people he served. He had some rough edges and a style that probably didn't suit the metropolitan area, but he represented the people he served."

Survivors include two sons, Monty Younglund of Yampa and Marshal Younglund of Bellevue; six daughters, Louetta Schulze of Omaha, Ladonna Lee, Marshia Younglund and Fairy Lee Cogswell, all of Arlington, Va., Marleen Oakes of LaSalle and Frankie Younglund of Westminster; four sisters, Julia Hasenkamp and Alice Thomson of Cheyenne, Bella Jensen of Houston and Viola Stidham of Lynwood, Wash.; three brothers, Dennis Younglund of Kinsey, Mont., Ross Younglund of Carpenter, Wyo., and Kenneth Younglund of Miles City, Mont.; and 11 grandchildren.