

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Varley, Andrew Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Represented Adair, Adams, Taylor, Dallas, Linn and Madison Counties, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 2 Dec 1934 Stuart, Iowa

2. Marriage (s) date place

Marilyn Souder 1959

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business He was president of Pine View Angus Farms, Inc. from 1962

B. Civic responsibilities Term Bureau; Iowa State University Foundation Farms

C. Profession Farmer

4. Church membership Lutheran

5. Sessions served 62<sup>nd</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup>, 67<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies 1967, 1968-1970,

6. Public Offices 1971-1972, 1973-1974, 1975-1976, 1977-1978

A. Local \_\_\_\_\_

B. State Speaker of the House 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 1973-1974

C. National \_\_\_\_\_

7. Death \_\_\_\_\_

8. Children Warren; Thomas; John

9. Names of parents Preston and Esther E. Varley

Varley, Andrew

10. Education

11. Degrees *B.S. from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 1957; M.S.  
from North Carolina State College, 1961*

12. Other applicable information

*Republican*  
- *Military service - Iowa Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves*  
- *He worked on the staff at North Carolina State College 1960, 1961  
in full time research*





Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

# 'The best brand of realist'

REGISTER PHOTO BY LARRY MAY



Andrew Varley wears two hats — he's Iowa's newest commerce commissioner and continues to farm.

## Varley

By RICHARD PAXSON

Register Staff Writer

STUART, Ia. Iowa's newest commerce commissioner, Andrew Varley, dropped out of politics a year

to raise corn and cows, soybeans and sons.

"This last year had really been a lot of fun," he said a little wistfully. "We did things on our own."

As Varley sits at the kitchen table in the comfortable frame farmhouse that's home to his wife and to four sons ages 5 to 19, the fun of being a private citizen again is o

Gov. Robert Ray has and fellow Republican Varley, 44, on the farm

how much electricity, natural gas and telephone service will cost in the state.

### Hot Seat

With Iowans already surly about skyrocketing utility rates, the commission seat could be even hotter than the one he occupied for a dozen years in the Iowa House, including two years as speaker.

When his eldest son was in kindergarten, Varley ran for the Legislature

auto accident. By the time Varley decided not to run for re-election in 1978, son Warren was a high school senior.

But as soon as this year's crops are harvested and the farm just south of Interstate 80 is ready for winter, Varley will be a daily commuter on the 80-mile round trip to Des Moines. The sons still at home will care for the Charolais and Sirental cattle. Neighbors will lease a family's 1,100 acres of land and farm

Iowa Big - Varley, Andrew  
Clipping File 2

Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection, compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

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(Just before he took the job, Varley added 240 acres to the farm, which he said is evidence that he wasn't a candidate until the end of Ray's four-month search.)

His years in the Legislature were the second time Varley left home. After getting a bachelor's degree in economics from Iowa State University, he got a master's degree and taught at North Carolina State University. His father had died and his mother was running the farm.

"I decided I really didn't want to spend the rest of my life in the academic world and it was time to come back to the farm," he said.

In the impossible job of setting utility rates that are fair to everyone, Varley, a farmer for most of his adult life, will use what he learned in the classroom.

"Rate regulation has to be very interesting to someone with an economics background," he said. "It can be a direct application of basic economic theory."

Varley's moderate politics, his experience with energy issues in the Legislature and as a member of the Iowa Energy Policy Council, and his calm approach to problem-solving earn good marks from all sides.

"I don't think there's anybody with a bad word for Andy Varley," said Senator James Gallagher (Dem., Jesup), a former chairman of the Senate Energy Committee. "He's quiet but forward-minded. It isn't his fault he was born a Republican."

Few expect Varley's forward-mindedness to carry the commission — and Iowans' utility bills — in a bold new direction any time soon. "Andy is the best brand of idealist, that's a realist, but he can be conservative at times," said one who worked with Varley in the Legislature.

#### Listens

"He won't signal a major shift but he will add another ingredient — a willingness to listen to the ideas we've been proposing," said Skip Laitner of Community Action Research Group, the commission's most persistent critic. "At least he will counterbalance Fred and Mary [commissioners Moore and Holstad]."

But already recognizable is the contrast between Varley's soft-spoken style and the fiery pronouncements of his predecessor, Maurice Van Nostrand. Before he resigned in June, Van Nostrand led the commis-

sion's regulation of utilities for eight years.

"I'm much less flamboyant than he is," said Varley, and adds that he has much respect for Van Nostrand.

Even that may be an understatement. Varley, with tall sandy-haired good looks, equally at home in a seed corn jacket on a combine as in a three-piece suit at a conference table, speaks slowly in carefully cushioned opinions without sharp corners likely to offend anyone.

While he stresses his respect for Van Nostrand, Varley doesn't use Van Nostrand's shoot-from-the-hip attack, and there are no booming flashes of thunder-and-lightning temper.

Register political writer James Flansburg once called then-speaker Varley "maybe the most unflappable person in public life in Iowa." And now unflappable Andrew Varley is back.

#### Natural Caution

His natural caution, and advice from commission staffers against public statements that could prejudice future cases, make Varley wary of speculating on decisions he may have to make some day. But what he will say tells something about where he stands on:

• **Lifeline utility rates.** One scheme, now under study, would guarantee the poor a minimum amount of utility service at reduced cost. Varley is undecided. Something must be done, he said, because "there's talk about people having to chose between heating their homes and buying food."

But putting the added burden on commercial customers "is a little bit like asking grocers to supply

groceries to low-income people and then make up their income from other sales."

• **Winter shutoff rules.** Although the rules are opposed by some utilities, Varley said the current ban on cutting off service when bitterly cold temperatures are looming makes sense. "With the kind of climate we have in Iowa, we have to be careful," he said.

• **Rates which give price breaks to big industrial energy consumers.** A target of utility company foes, the rates have at times been "too rewarding for high-level users," he said. "Times have changed. The block rates need to be reviewed."

His economics background tells him that utility rates should be related to how much it costs to provide the service, "but that doesn't mean the people in the town should subsidize the business."

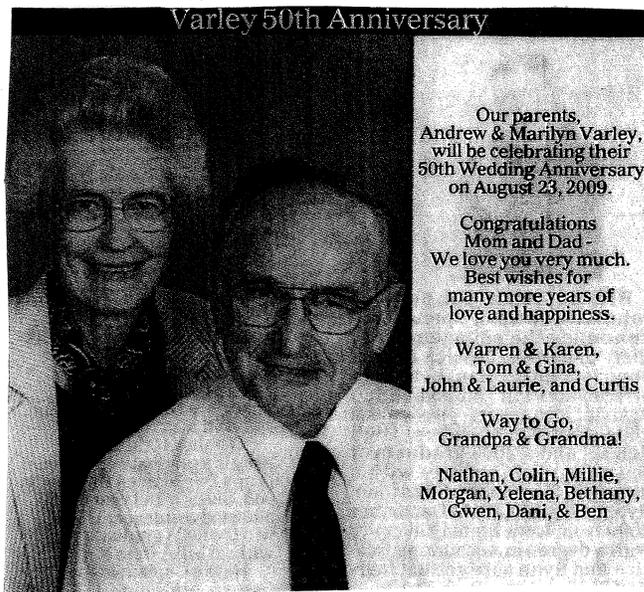
• **Rate increases imposed by utilities before commission approval.** Iowa law allows it, subject to refunds when the commission rejects part of the rate increase request. "I think it irritates the public when rates go up and then they get a [refund] check back," Varley said. "Then they feel justified in their opinion that they were being overcharged. The present system hasn't discouraged that."

If the commission could keep current with its workload of rate change requests, Varley said he would favor doing away with the refund system supported by utility companies.

• **Nuclear power.** The high cost of a nuclear power plant makes construction of a second one in Iowa unlikely, he said. "But I question whether the vast majority of Iowans would be opposed to it, if you're talking about an immediate savings in your power bill and no real threat to your safety."

Continuing nuclear development while there still is no agreed solution to disposing of atomic wastes "seems a little shortsighted."

• **Energy conservation.** "Conservation is the only source of cheap energy we have left, but I'm not sure whether it's appropriate to force people to conserve," Varley said.



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