

'Happiest lawyer in Kansas City' closes long Senate chapter

By STEVE KRASKE
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The conventional wisdom on Harry Wiggins was unanimous:

On Jan. 8, the day he officially retires from the Missouri Senate after seven terms and 28 years, Wiggins will become one miserable man.

"Everybody thought that Harry could not live without Jefferson City," said longtime state Rep. Hen-

ry Rizzo of Kansas City.

Just look at how he campaigned, Democratic insiders said. When Wiggins, whose district changed over the years but generally stretched from the Country Club Plaza to Grandview, ran for reelection, he stumped as if winning were the only thing in the world that mattered.

And look at how he worked in the Capitol, they said. He loved the his-

tory and all the arcane rules and the chaos and the ability of the place to do good. The lights burned in his fourth-floor corner suite until 10 or 11 p.m.

He's a lifelong bachelor, they said. The General Assembly is his family. What will he do?

Well, he fooled them. Fooled them big time. Wiggins pulled a switcheroo — a happy, and by all accounts, successful, career change

at age 70.

Jefferson City and that gleaming Capitol dome? Already in Wiggins' rearview mirror.

In March, Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin LLP came calling. Kansas City's second-largest law firm announced that Harry Wiggins, esquire, would begin work for the firm in June.

Wiggins couldn't believe his good fortune. "They want me?" he said

once. "Imagine that."

It's really not so hard to imagine. Wiggins knows lots of people. Important people. And he knows Jefferson City, a valuable asset in the legal world.

So Wiggins went back to work, this time as a lawyer. And these days he is one happy guy.

"Look at me," Wiggins said re-

See WIGGINS, A-6

