

**Tom Wiesner**

**February 23, 1939—June 25, 2002**

**Elected 1970, 1974**

Tom Wiesner came to Las Vegas in 1963 as part owner of a tire store. He appeared in the store's television commercials and built up a reputation around the city; in 1970, he used his fame to win election to the Clark County Commission. Wiesner was dedicated to education and helped raise fund for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' football program.



Wiesner was born in 1939 in Wasau, Wisconsin. In 1944, he and his family moved to Neenah, Wisconsin where he graduated from high school in 1957. He went attended the University of Wisconsin where he played football as a fullback and linebacker. The University of Wisconsin football team that he played on won the Big 10 award in 1959 and played in the Rose Bowl in 1960. Wiesner was also a heavyweight-boxing champion in college. Following college, Wiesner was recruited in the National Football League, but never played a regular season game. In 1963, Wiesner and his wife, a schoolteacher, moved to Las Vegas. He was part owner of Holmes Tires West.

In 1970, Wiesner won a seat on the Clark County Commission when he defeated Darwin Lamb. At the time, Wiesner at 31 years old was the youngest person ever elected to the County Commission. He was elected again in 1974. He lost his reelection bid in 1978 after two of his votes led to accusations of conflict of interest.

Wiesner sought to return to public office in 1987 when he ran for mayor of Las Vegas on a platform of city-county consolidation. He lost in the primary. In 1996, he ran unopposed to the Nevada State Higher Education System Board of Regents. He served on the board until his health forced him to resign in 2002.

Wiesner was an entrepreneurial businessman. He sold off his interest in the tire company in 1971. He used his investment income to found the Las Vegas Athletic Club. In 1977, he bought the land where the MGM Grand was built, netting a large profit when he sold it to Kirk Kerkorian. Wiesner also founded the Big Dogs Hospitality Group in 1990 that consisted of a number of bars and restaurants.

Wiesner was dedicated to his adopted home. He was active in a number of civic groups including the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. He helped raise money for education, including scholarships at UNLV, for the football programs, and for buildings on campus. In 2002, the Board of Regents honored his commitment by naming him a Distinguished Nevadan. Wiesner died in 2002 of leukemia.