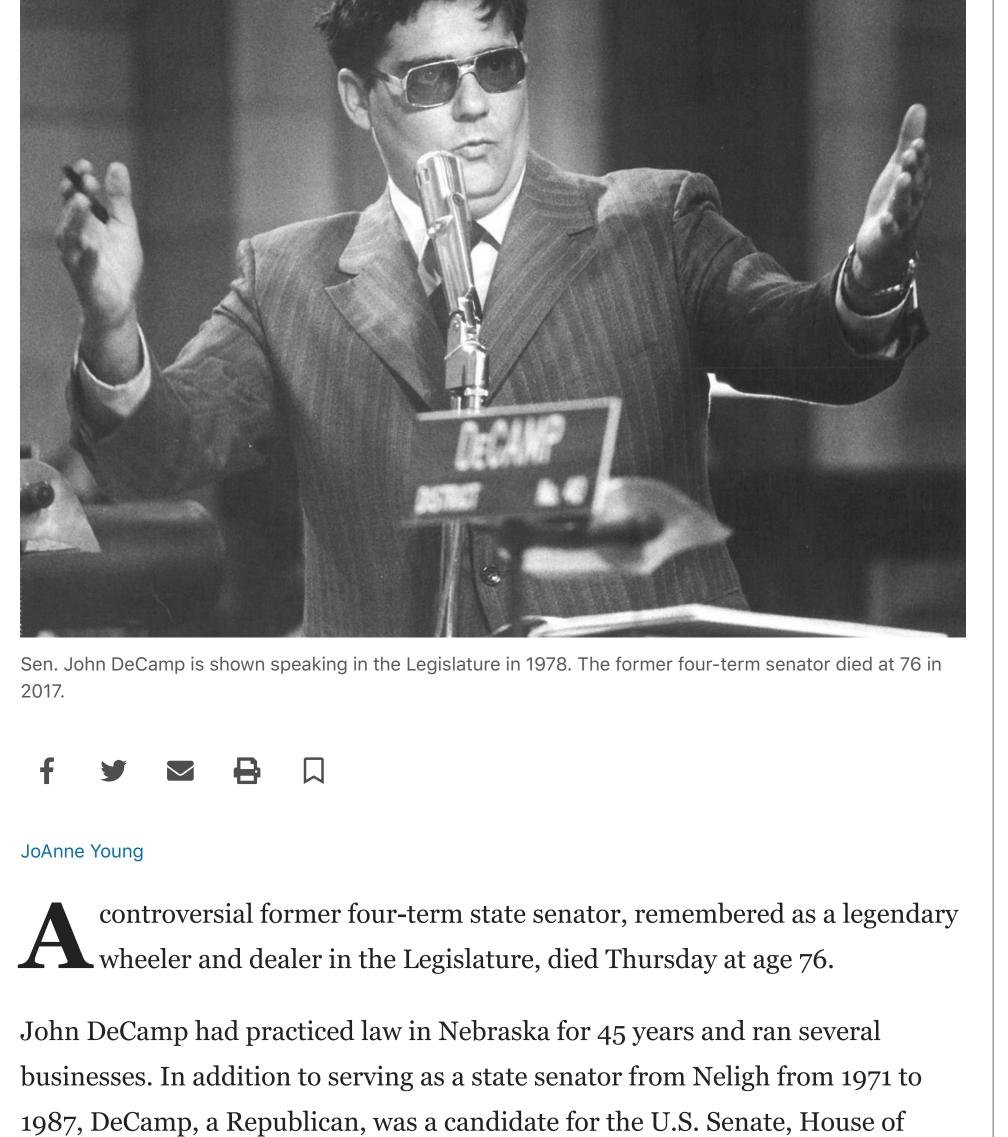


JOURNAL STAR

Controversial former senator John DeCamp dies

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DeCamp wrote a book first published in 1992 about what he believed was a cover-up of the reasons behind the failure of the Omaha Franklin Federal Credit Union. The book, "The Franklin Cover-Up — Child Abuse, Satanism, and Murder in Nebraska," had a second edition published in 1996.

The book tells DeCamp's version of the alleged scandal of sexual exploitation of

children and drug trafficking that grew out of the shutdown of the credit union

Nebraska Legislature, and ultimately a ruling by a Douglas County grand jury

in 1988. That led to numerous other allegations, an investigation by the

Representatives, governor and state attorney general.

time I couldn't get a sign of recognition," Schmit said.

that the allegations were a "carefully crafted hoax."

In the Legislature, Schmit said DeCamp was a force.

friend and often — but not always — legislative ally.

recalled Monday.

DeCamp also had Alzheimer's disease.

there was no change of expression."

DeCamp died at the state Veterans Home in Norfolk. He suffered from

Parkinson's disease and other illnesses, according to his obituary. Former Sen.

"The last time I talked with him was 10 days before he died and it was the first

"Before that we would talk about the Legislature and he would smile. This time

Loran Schmit, a friend of DeCamp's who served with him in the Legislature, said

In the middle of the investigation, DeCamp wrote a memo to newspaper reporters in which he named five people he said were central figures in the investigation. He was criticized by other lawmakers for writing the memo, and those involved in the investigation refused to confirm or deny any of the names.

DeCamp later filed a lawsuit against the grand jury over its final report.

"He had a lot of legislation and he stopped a lot of it," Schmit, of Bellwood,

"Johnny did a lot of good," said Schmit, who was DeCamp's closest legislative

"A lot of people come down there and sit there for eight years and not do a damn

thing. Not John. He made his mark.

"I'm going to miss him," Schmit said during a telephone interview.

cold, snowy day to visit District 40, which at that time included Neligh, to visit farms and "large cattle." DeCamp then visited Chambers' north Omaha district. "Our intent at that time was to try to show people that there has to be an

Sen. Ernie Chambers also knew DeCamp well. He went with the senator on a

understanding between people from different areas if they're going to seek a

common goal, and at that time the common goal was whatever was best for the state and the people," Chambers said. "So we got along pretty well."

DeCamp wanted to make a big splash and as a politician became flamboyant, Chambers said. "He wanted to be part of everything of consequence that was going on," he said. He wanted to win so badly, Chambers said, that whatever principles he had, he

"And he would go wherever he had to go to be on the winning side," he said.

He did play a dominant role, and was someone to be reckoned with, Chambers

said, because he was the type that would say or do anything to win, would find

out where the ball would settle when it stopped moving and be there to catch it

They sometimes worked together on issues they agreed on, including

Scottsbluff also worked with them on, and which eventually passed.

was willing to check them at the door of the legislative chamber.

establishing district elections to replace at-large elections for the Omaha city

council, school board and county board, which the late Sen. Terry Carpenter of

or help maneuver it to that position. Schmit said DeCamp "got involved in everything that happened" in the

Legislature and even "claimed to be involved in things he wasn't involved in."

They first became acquainted, Schmit said, when he briefed DeCamp on an

ethanol bill Schmit was sponsoring.

against me."

"Later on, if you listened to Johnny, he was the originator of it," Schmit said with a laugh. "He would work with anybody," Schmit said, "and he wasn't averse to working

DeCamp was a former U.S. Army infantry captain in Vietnam and was a strong

Vietnam. His legislative photo in the 1972 Nebraska Blue Book depicts him in

In 1975, he initiated Operation Baby Lift, which evacuated more than 2,800

DeCamp and his wife Nga were married more than 38 years and raised four

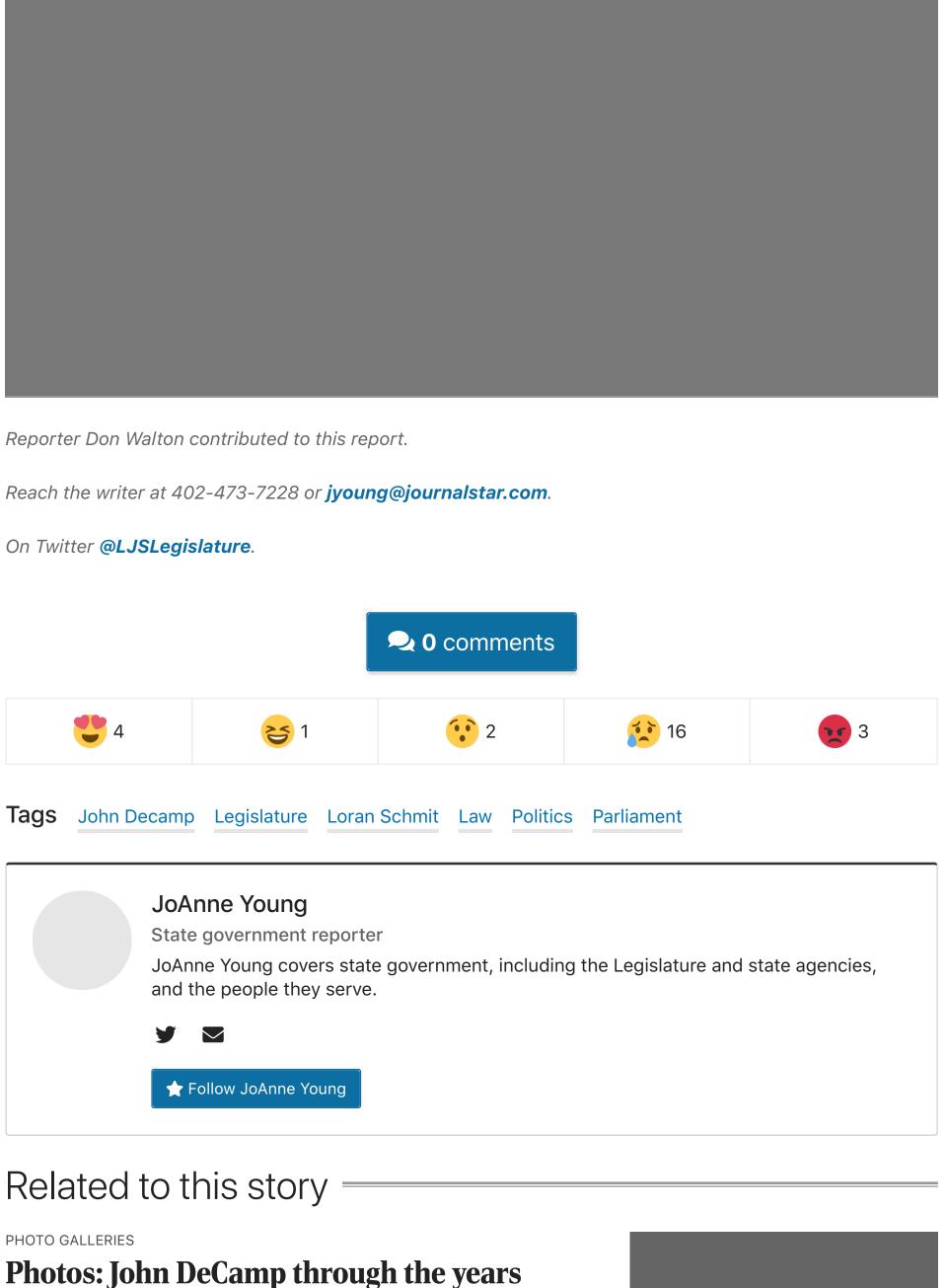
advocate for veterans. He launched his first successful legislative bid from

his Army uniform. He was decorated for his service in Vietnam.

orphaned Vietnamese children to safety.

"John did a lot of good," Schmit said.

children: Jennifer Lecher (Jeff); Shanda Erb (Nathan); Tara DeCamp (fiance Andrew) and Johnny DeCamp. Details of his memorial service will be provided later.



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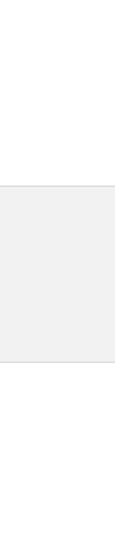
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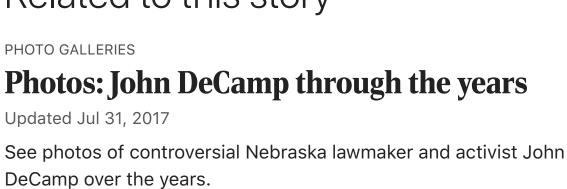












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