



ILLINOIS PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

204 West Cook Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
Ph: 217-522-7300 Fax: 217-522-7349
ipha@ipha.org

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Marilyn Doherty
Phone: (217) 522-7300 (mdoherty@ipha.org)

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Senator Frank Watson, RPh, is the recipient of the Illinois Pharmacists Association's (IPhA) 2009 Honorary President Award, presented recently at the Illinois Pharmacists Annual Conference in Peoria, Illinois. The award recognizes a commitment of service to the profession and the Association.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy from Purdue University, Frank Watson became a registered pharmacist in Illinois and took over his family's business, Watson's Drugstore, in Greenville. In 2006, the Watsons sold the store that had been in operation in Greenville for over 100 years.

Frank's second career began when he was elected to the office of Bond County Central Township Supervisor and Trustee. He moved to the Illinois House in 1979, serving until 1983 when he became the 55th District Senator. He served that district from 1983 through 2003. Then legislative redistricting gave Senator Watson new district territory, the 51st District. He served as the Senate Republican Leader from 2003 until late last year, stepping down for health reasons. He officially stepped down February 15th from his position as Illinois State Senator, having the distinction of being the longest serving and one of the most accomplished State Senators in Illinois. His public service career spanned more than three decades—quite a change for a young man that began a career in his family's drug store.

It was his pharmacy background, however, that put him at the forefront of the issue of affordable prescription drugs. From providing access to information about existing public and private drug discount programs to expansion of the state's Circuit Breaker Program, Senator Watson made health care a top priority for state government and was quoted as saying, "Being a pharmacist gives me a different perspective on the issue of health care." Watson's work on other health-care issues includes HMO reform, the Patient's Bill of Rights, expansion of prenatal testing, and new health-care options to improve access in medically underserved areas.

Senator Frank Watson never lost his pharmacy roots nor his support of IPhA. Over the years, his concern for his patients increased to encompass his constituents and eventually all of the people of Illinois.