



### **In Memoriam – Duane Benson, 1945 – 2019**

Duane Benson, a founding board member of the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, died in Lanesboro, Minnesota on January 26, 2019.

“Duane was a committed public servant,” stated Michael Vekich, MSFA chair. “I had the honor of serving with Duane on the Minnesota State Board of Trustees for many years, where his exceptional set of experiences as a legislator and businessman were a great asset.”

Governor Mark Dayton appointed Mr. Benson to the MSFA board in June of 2012, and served until August 2015. His experience as a professional football player as well as his experience in government made him uniquely qualified to serve on the MSFA’s board.

Following his college career at Hamline University, Duane was drafted into the NFL and played eleven seasons as a linebacker for the Oakland Raiders, Atlanta Falcons, and Houston Oilers. After retiring from the NFL, he served in the Minnesota Senate from 1980 to 1994, and was the Senate Minority Leader for a period during that time. Duane became Executive Director of the Minnesota Business Partnership from 1994 to 2003 and then went on to work as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation from 2005 through 2011. Duane was a 2009 laureate of the Junior Achievement Upper Midwest Business Hall of Fame.