

Supv. Dave de Felice (Dave day full-LEE-chay)

Dane County Board of Supervisors – Dist. 16

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“Golden Felice” (fleece) Award to be revived

Award spurred by lack of media coverage and need for public oversight

MADISON – The Golden Fleece, a creation of the late Wisconsin US Sen. William Proxmire that highlighted questionable public spending, policy and studies at taxpayer expense, will be revived under a new name, Dane County Supv. Dave de Felice said.

“It will be called, not too humbly, the ‘Golden Felice Award,’” de Felice said, tongue firmly in cheek. “Since my name is often mispronounced ‘fleece,’ and because local government needs closer scrutiny, I think Sen. Proxmire would be excited to see this.”

Proxmire, a popular maverick Democrat, was a member of the US Senate from 1957 to 1989. The first Golden Fleece Award was issued by Proxmire in 1975 to the National Science Foundation for spending \$84,000 to determine why people fall in love.

“I don’t think The Golden Felice Awards will be as outrageous. In my opinion, local government is a reasonably responsible steward of taxpayers’ dollars. But, questions need to be asked. And I hope the public participates. Let’s stir the pot,” de Felice said.

Another reason for the award is the lack of local government media coverage.

“We have none,” de Felice said. “The last reporters assigned to our meetings disappeared years ago. And the board is the last word on a half-billion dollars in public spending.

“Also, ever since the state Legislature passed the so-called ‘Cable Reform Bill,’ which, was essentially a multi-million dollar gift to cable companies, public access TV has been relegated to obscure channels rarely seen by local viewers.

“Before that bill became law, our best opportunity for TV coverage was when viewers accidentally stumbled on live cable channel broadcasts of local government. At that time, the public access channel was a low number on the dial. Now it’s somewhere in the 990’s. The Dog Channel has better visibility.”

The Golden Felice Awards will come out as needed and focus mainly on county government. The first Golden Felice Award focusing on county spending will be announced next week. “There will be no sacred cows,” de Felice said.

Although Dane County elects supervisors on a non-partisan basis, de Felice describes himself as a “proud liberal Democrat who hates taxes.”