

Ben Brancel

I, Ben Brancel (July 31, 1950) was a Wisconsin politician and former legislator who served as the Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture until my retirement in 2017.

I was born in Portage, Wisconsin and graduated from University of Wisconsin - Platteville. I served on the town board and the local school board for Portage Community Schools. I managed a dairy operation for 22 years and now run a 290 acre family beef farm with my wife, son, and daughter-in-law. From 1987 until 1997, I served in the Wisconsin State Assembly representing District 42, and eventually served as Speaker of the House. In 1997, I resigned from the Wisconsin Assembly to serve as Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection in Governor Tommy Thompson's administration. I served in that capacity until 2001. In 2001, I was appointed as director of Wisconsin Farm Service Agency of the United State Department of Agriculture by the Bush Administration, where I served until early 2009. Later that year, I served as the part-time state relations liaison for the University of Wisconsin- Madison's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In January 2011, I was appointed by Governor Scott Walker to serve as Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection Secretary once again.

My faith journey has been a varied path. Beyond participating in Bible studies and church activities at my home church, Briggsville United Methodist Church, I have served as chairman of the finance committee, chairman of SPRC twice, and administrative board chairman several times. At the conference level, I served on the Episcopacy committee and on the Wisconsin Methodist Foundation. When asked if I would consider serving as Associate Lay Leader, the Lord kept telling me "I have given you the opportunity to create skills which now you can use for my purpose".

At home Gail and I have five grandchildren which we take time to watch in their many activities: dance, sports, school, and 4-H events.