

**ATTENTION PLEASE GREAT RATES!!**  

**HOMEOWNERS - HURRY! RATES ARE GOING UP!**  
[\[click here\]](#)  
 Southern Mortgage Company  
 of Arkansas  
 1-870-802-3375 • 1-800-493-6671

**Ultimate Checking.**  
 Free checking that pays you interest and more.

 **First Community Bank**  
 Right at Home  
 870-802-1700 | www.fcb-online.com

**The Sun** you've **Gotta get it!**  
 SERVING JONESBORO AND NORTHEAST ARKANSAS

 **newroads**  
 telecom  
 Click Here To Sign Up For Newroads Internet

 **Hampton Inn**  
 Jonesboro Arkansas

**File your Taxes ONLINE**  
 and Contribute to Make a Wish!  
[\[click here\]](#)

Place your classified ad in the Jonesboro Sun  
**Click Here**

**MARSHALL GHANT**  
**CRYE-LEIKE, REALTORS**  
 870-919-0050 

**Jonesboro Flowers and Gifts**  
 ASU 10% DISCOUNT

**lairdstudios**  
 Photography  
 SENIORS • WEDDINGS

**The Sun**  
**BIG DEALS**

 **SHOOTERS**  
 Video Games Concessions  
 3120 Shelby Drive  
 Behind Front Page Cafe Next to Tool Box Plus  
 870-931-7529  
 Billiard Supplies and Sales

**MERLE NORMAN**  
 COSMETIC STUDIOS  
 Trumann • 870-483-1100  
[Click Here](#)

 **TOURS of HOMES.com**  
 OPEN HOUSES EVERYDAY  
[Click Here](#)

 **roadsideamerica.com**  
**HOTEL & MOTEL FINDER**

## Today's Stories

- News
- Sports
- General Interest
- Lifestyles
- Editorial
- Letters
- Events
- Police & Courts
- Obituaries

## Features

- Classifieds
- Photo Gallery
- Forms

## Information

- About The Sun
- Links
- Newsstands
- Subscriptions
- Ad Rates
- Policies
- Contact Us
- Archives
- Home

TV



MOVIES



The Jonesboro Sun

Thursday, February 23, 2006

## A lifetime of service

By Rick Fahr

sun staff writer

JONESBORO -- He seldom met a stranger, and he was at ease in conversations with family, friends and constituents. Not too often did he turn down a chance to talk with people, from informal remarks in a civic group setting to a speech on the floor of the General Assembly.



Sen. Jerry Bookout

But perhaps state Sen. Jerry Bookout's most thoughtful public words came last fall as he battled cancer. In an interview for one of many articles on his long life and career of public service, he spoke not as a veteran lawmaker or businessman or respected leader. He reflected on his life as a man at peace with his destiny.

"You value things differently -- your church, your family, friendships. ... You value every hour of every day. That's what I would tell somebody. Value every single day you have. Life is no dress rehearsal."

Bookout, 72, died at his home Wednesday morning. He had been suffering from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, cancer that attacks the lymph nodes.

He leaves behind a legacy of public service that spans more than three decades. His Senate biography reads like that of several lawmakers combined. In the last regular session he was chairman of several committees -- Health Insurance and Prescription Drugs, Higher Educational Services Oversight Subcommittee, Legislative Joint Auditing-Counties and Municipalities and Public Health-Senate Health Services. He served for two decades on the powerful Joint Budget Committee.

Gov. Mike Huckabee characterized Bookout as a statesman.

"Jerry was a wonderful and genuine public servant whom I considered a friend and will always respect as a statesman. He was kind and helpful to me in my early days as lieutenant governor when I first arrived to preside over

518 Carson  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

For Sun home delivery:  
Call 935-5525  
or 1-800-237-5341

MEMBER OF THE  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Associated Press is  
entitled exclusively to  
the use of republication  
of all the local news  
printed in this  
newspaper as well as  
AP news dispatches.

the Senate," the governor said. "I really will miss his steady influence, his wisdom, and the integrity he brought to the process. His faith in Christ was authentic and was the strength for him and his family during these difficult last days. I know that you join with me in praying for his family during their grief. His loss is not only theirs, but shared by all of Arkansas."

Education issues proved to be a hallmark of Bookout's public service. He helped lead efforts to elevate then-Arkansas State College to the status of university. Later he helped gain funding for the school's Convocation Center, which has become a drawing card for the region. Bookout championed the Academic Challenge Program, which helps children from low- and moderate-income families attend college.

Over the years he also supported measures that created the state's kindergarten program, provided free textbooks and improved working conditions for teachers, according to a Senate resolution honoring the senator. In announcing his last campaign for the Senate, Bookout's comments spoke volumes of his work on education issues.

"I've worked to secure funding for every classroom, library and administration facility built here in the last 30 years," he contended.

Arkansas State University was one of Bookout's favored institutions, and the university honored him and his family in 2004 by naming Bookout Plaza in their honor. In 1997 the school named Bookout a distinguished alumnus. President Dr. Les Wyatt said Wednesday that Bookout was a true champion of the school.

"Sen. Bookout has been more than a friend. He has been a great advocate and a great supporter of this university. His fingerprints and his influence are present all over the ASU campus," Wyatt said. "His advocacy and devotion to this institution has been lived out in the lives of many people in this region. He was always a candidate for the people, and we the people will miss him. Arkansas State University has always regarded him as our senator, and we will miss our senator."

First elected to the state House in 1966, Bookout served three terms before moving to the state Senate in 1972. His colleagues elected him president pro tempore in 1991, and he eventually served 28 years as the senator representing Jonesboro, with a break in service in the mid-1990s.

Matching his 32 years as a state lawmaker, Bookout served in the Army and then in the Arkansas Army National Guard, totaling 30 years in uniform and retiring as colonel. He earned the Arkansas Distinguished Service Medal and the U.S. Legion of Merit.

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) James A. Ryan, former adjutant general of Arkansas, remembered Bookout's service as chief of the state's selective service organization.

"He was extremely active. ... He was extremely active in helping. When he got to the Legislature, he helped the Guard to get the things that they needed, and the things I'm talking about were funding for armories," Ryan said from his home in Hot Springs Village. "He didn't just help his district. It was all over the state."

Ryan noted that Bookout traveled on many overseas missions to visit training or deployed troops.

"Jerry was always the one who went around to the troops to ask if anybody had a problem they needed help with before they could get home. Invariably someone did," the general explained. "He was extremely good like that. He was just the type of person anybody could talk to, and he was just a great help."

Bookout often worked on Guard issues on his own time, Ryan said.

"If we had to have something, a contract, we had to get to the National Guard Bureau and it needed a legal review. Jerry was the guy to do it, on his own time. He didn't come in to drill to do it. He was just a super person like that."

In addition to his public service, Bookout was a businessman, board chairman of Langford-Bookout Funeral Home of Jonesboro after he built a separate business, Bookout Monument Co.

Visitation will be today, 4-7 p.m., at Langford-Bookout Funeral Home. A memorial service will be at 11 a.m. Friday at First Baptist Church.

[rfahr@jonesborosun.com](mailto:rfahr@jonesborosun.com)

---

Copyright © 2006, Jonesboro Sun