



Thomas "Tommy" Gilbert Carter

November 26, 1934 - November 3, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Gilbert ("Tommy") Carter, Sr. passed away on November 3, 2024, at Limestone Health Facility in Athens, AL. He was born on November 26, 1934, to Marvin Guy and Bertha Mae Stanford Carter in Leggtown, AL.

Carter was preceded in death by his parents and his wife of 64 years JoAnn Barker Carter.

Carter is survived by his two children, Lisa Carter Payne (Cary) of Athens, AL and Thomas Gilbert ("Tom") Carter, Jr. (Liana) of Killen, AL, and three grandchildren, Dr. Thomas Gilbert ("Gil") Carter, III of Starkville, MS, Boone Carter (Brenna) of Florence, AL, and Adara Carter of Killen, AL.

Pallbearers include Jerry Bradford, Mike Brock, Sen. Tom Butler, Bill Carter, Eli Christopher, and John Morris.

Visitation will be Thursday, November 7 from 6-8 p.m. at Limestone Chapel. The funeral will be Friday at 11 a.m. at Limestone Chapel with burial at Roselawn Cemetery to follow. Boone Carter, Dr. Gil Carter, and Steve Ferguson will officiate.

Carter attended Auburn University on a football scholarship. At Auburn, he

played for the legendary Coach Ralph “Shug” Jordan, and he roomed with teammates Fob James, a future governor of Alabama, and Vince Dooley, a future national champion coach at the University of Georgia. Carter eventually transferred to Athens College, now Athens State University, and played basketball there. Carter was a member of the Limestone County Sports Hall of Fame, and he continues to hold the Clements High School record for the most points scored by a single player during a basketball game (55 points). Carter made this record before the institution of the three-point shot.

Carter retired after 38 years of loyal service to Monsanto Company in Decatur, AL in 1993. He was also a twelve-year veteran of the Alabama National Guard.

Carter is best known for his lifetime of public service. In 1964, he was elected to the Limestone County Board of Education for a six-year term. In 1970, Carter won his first election to the Alabama House of Representatives, and he was continually reelected to the House until he elected to retire from public office in 2006. He never lost a political race.

During his time in the House, Carter represented most of Limestone County and, during the 1970s, a portion of Lawrence County. Among his many accolades in the House, Carter chaired the powerful House Rules Committee, which set the agenda for the entire 105-member House of Representatives. Tommy thus had the ear of all six Alabama governors who served during his legislative tenure, including famed figures such as George Wallace and his old roommate Fob James.

In 1975, Carter saved the then-private Athens College from extinction by arranging for the state to take over the college. Carter’s negotiation for the state’s adoption of the college unfolded in a dramatic scene on the Alabama House floor in which Carter filibustered so late into the night that the official

clock of the House had to be unplugged, as House rules prevented the body from meeting after midnight. Carter's pivotal place in preserving Athens College resulted in the now-Athens State University calling him their "modern founder" and erecting his portrait among other university giants in the two-hundred-year-old Founders Hall.

Carter's leadership was also integral to the foundation of the Alabama Veterans Museum in Athens, the placement of the iconic rocket on the Alabama side of the Alabama-Tennessee state line on Interstate 65, and the recruitment of many employers to the Limestone area. In the legislature, various future governors and members of Congress were Carter's mentors, mentees, and peers.

Carter was a member of Elkmont Church of Christ.

The family thanks Patricia Beddingfield for her care and friendship during Carter's twilight years.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Athens State University Foundation's Representative Tommy Carter Scholarship, the Alabama Veterans Museum (114 Pryor St. W. Athens, AL 35611), or North Alabama Christian Children's Home (P.O. Box 2652 Florence, AL 35630).

Cemetery Details

Roselawn Cemetery

523 US Hwy 31 South
Athens, AL 35611

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 7. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Limestone Chapel Funeral Home
322 Hwy. 31 N.
Athens, AL 35611
(256) 232-1051
info@limestonechapel.com
<https://www.limestonechapel.com/>

Funeral Service

NOV 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Limestone Chapel Funeral Home
322 Hwy. 31 N.
Athens, AL 35611
(256) 232-1051
info@limestonechapel.com
<https://www.limestonechapel.com/>

Tribute Wall

JW

“ Tommy was a wonderful friend to our community and state. He made the DHR tent at Fiddlers Convention his own each year. When his buddies from ASU came over and sat down that was when all the wonderful stories were shared. Tommy will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Jennifer White

Jennifer C White - November 07, 2024 at 04:28 PM

AP

“ My Mama taught Tommy on Sunday school and always called him one of her boys

Ann Priddy - November 07, 2024 at 08:44 AM

MM

“ Tommy was a true statesman. The things he accomplished for Limestone County and the State of Alabama could likely fill a book, but his humanity and genuine concern for people is what defined him. He looked for ways to improve life for his district. Surely he was greeted with, "Well done, good and faithful servant !"

Mason & Margie McCary - November 06, 2024 at 10:54 PM

DM

“ Mr Tommy Carter was very good friend of buddy marlow and good friend to me. Sorry for your loss

Donnie marlow - November 05, 2024 at 06:31 PM

RA

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Tommy was our scout master when I was in my teens. He was a positive influence on me. He will be missed!

Ray Atkinson

Ray Atkinson - November 05, 2024 at 01:20 PM