



Speaker Donald L. Tucker

July 23, 1935 - September 24, 2019

Donald Legrand Tucker was born July 23, 1935 in Tallahassee, Florida. His middle name gave the world a preview into what would become his larger than life personality. Born to Luther and Grace Tucker, Donald's earliest memories were centered in and around Crawfordville, Florida, exploring the creeks, dirt roads and piney woods with his brother, Kit. A seventh generation Floridian, Donald was instilled with a sense of public service by his parents. His Father served in the State Senate from 1948 to 1952 and 1960 to 1964, and his Mother served in their Church as a missionary.

Imparted with a strong work ethic, Donald loved to tell stories of his entrepreneurial ventures as a child. From his shoe shine stand to selling peanuts, Donald was seldom idle. He and his brother awoke at 5:00 a.m., walked to the local fruit market, purchased peanuts, cooked and bagged them, then set out to sell them on the streets of Tallahassee, amassing what they considered a fortune. Serving as Captain of the football team, President of the Student Body, Senior Class President, and as Governor of Florida Boys State were all prelude to his life of leadership and community engagement. Donald attended college at Brigham Young University, served two years as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and received his law degree from the University of Florida. Donald started his practice of law in Tallahassee.

Donald was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1966, representing Leon, Franklin and Wakulla Counties. He was re-elected five times, and culminated his public service as the only Speaker of the Florida House serving two consecutive terms. He was known for his keen wit (and obvious humility), remarking to his colleagues at the end of his term as Speaker, "I don't need to be the Governor of the State to satisfy my ego. I satisfy it every day when I look in the mirror, fellas."

In 1977, his legislative colleagues honored him by passing legislation signed into law by Governor Reuben Askew, naming the Civic Center "The Donald L. Tucker Civic Center" in recognition of Donald's success in realizing a long-held dream in the community. He always believed that the Capital of the State of Florida should have a first-class facility for the public to enjoy. At the same time, Donald was instrumental in securing funding for facilities at the University of Florida and in Tampa. In 2013, Donald was very proud that his beloved Florida State University acquired the center, and thoroughly enjoyed that the students referred to it as "The Tuck."

Donald is survived by his best friend and beloved wife of 32 years, Joan Tucker; sons Donald L. Tucker Jr. (Valerie) of Tallahassee, Joe Tucker (Katherine) of Lehigh, Utah, and Richard Tucker of Orlando; grandchildren Donald L. Tucker, III, JC Tucker, Carl Tucker, Kristina Tucker, of Lehigh, Utah; Jameson Tucker of Alexandria, Virginia, and Lex Tucker of Tallahassee; Brother Stan (Marsha) Tucker of Crawfordville; Numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and countless colleagues and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, sister Janice Tucker and brother Luther C. "Kit" Tucker.

A private family service will be held on Thursday, October 3. A public celebration of a great man and a life well lived will be held Friday, October 4, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center. A reception will immediately follow. Joan and the family look forward to spending time with

everyone that shared our love for Donald.

In lieu of flowers, you may make a charitable donation to The Salvation Army or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Known in equal parts for his intellect and wit, Donald was also a natural raconteur. He leaves us with the rich memories of his inquisitive childhood adventures, vast political history, and abiding love for his family and community. Donald suffered for many years from the effects of cancer, and yet he never complained. His wonderful spirit remained strong, and he was always more interested in how others were faring than himself. When asked if he had any regrets in his lifetime, his reply was, "My only regret is not having another 30 years with my beautiful wife."

He was a gentle soul with a heart of gold.

Rocky Bevis of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Tucker family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT 4. 3:00 PM (ET)

Donald L. Tucker Civic Center
505 W. Pensacola Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

RH

“ I just learned of the passing of Mr. Tucker. I met him briefly when a I performed at a function at The Ridges Golf Club in Hayesville, NC some years ago. His wife Joan contacted me sometime later and asked if I would come to Tallahassee to perform for Mr. Tucker's Birthday Party. I gladly accepted and had the honor of speaking with him again. I only knew him for a short time but I could see he was a very inspirational man.

*Ron Harrell - The One Man Band
Hayesville, NC*

Ron Harrell - March 17, 2021 at 09:50 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Speaker Donald L. Tucker.



October 03, 2019 at 02:17 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Speaker Donald L. Tucker.



October 03, 2019 at 09:03 AM

JR

“ Joan,
Was sad to hear of the passing of your
husband.....I know you had many good year's
together. I remember all the fun times working
with you and all the gang in the Carlton
bldg....

Martha Thompson Rawls

P.s. my husband has known many of Dons family over the years.

His Daddy worked with Done daddy. And with Done brother Kit.

John C Rawls...they were in Wakulla County.



John C Rawls, Martha Thompson Rawls - October 02, 2019 at 06:05 PM

TO

“ The Nell Tucker Ohana purchased the Strength &
Solace Spray for the family of Speaker Donald L.
Tucker.



The Nell Tucker Ohana - October 02, 2019 at 01:57 PM

BM

“ Dear Joan, there are no words at hand to express my deepest sympathy. You and I both loved the same wonderful man--albeit in different ways; and so I know the depth of your love for Don was like an anchor for his soul to cling to for all these wonderful years. The fond memories I have of Mr. Speaker--and of the many times I was allowed to be near him and advise him while he conducted the business of the House of Representatives will never leave me. I was privileged to be there working on the floor of the House for too many sessions to remember--each time walking away in complete awe of the love I could feel being expressed towards Don by so many members of the House. Serving Florida as Speaker for four consecutive years is proof positive of what I am saying about the man so many of us loved. Be comforted in knowing that many hearts are broken over the loss of the great man who loved you so. Love, Bruce.

Bruce Alexnader Minnick - October 01, 2019 at 11:44 AM

JT

Beautiful Bruce, thank you from my heart! Miss him more each day.....

joan tucker - May 24, 2020 at 02:52 PM



“ Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Speaker Donald L. Tucker.



September 28, 2019 at 12:06 PM

SJ

“ Dear Joan, I wanted to express my sincere condolences to you and your family. I will never forget how much it meant to my family that Don delivered the eulogy at Tom's funeral and the kindness you both showed to me and my family. You will be in my thoughts and prayers as you go through this most difficult time. If I can do anything, please let me know. Hang in there. I am so sorry for your loss. Don was a great man. Love, Sandra Johnson.

sandra johnson - September 27, 2019 at 02:10 PM

JW

“ Dear Joan, Everyone at our office sends their prayers for you and your family. Don was a giant in the Florida Legislature. As they say: they don't make "em like that anymore. God's peace to you and your family. James F. Walton III DDS

James Walton - September 27, 2019 at 10:31 AM

KW

“ Dear Joan and family, the Woodburn family is very sorry for your loss. I remember growing up how highly regarded Speaker Don Tucker was by my parents, Bonnie and Ken Woodburn (both who passed on this year). My mom helped do artwork for his campaign and my Dad worked alongside him as Speaker Tucker presided over votes and forming legislation on Florida environmental issues. I believe they are all together now, pain free and surrounded by love, and one day we will see them again.

Kenda Woodburn - September 26, 2019 at 09:09 AM