



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

For Immediate Release: December 23, 2016

Former Labor, Revenue Commissioner G. Thomas Surtees Dies at Age 66

MONTGOMERY – G. Thomas “Tom” Surtees, who served under two gubernatorial administrations as both Revenue Commissioner and Labor Commissioner passed away on December 23, 2016, at the age of 66, following a long battle with cancer.

Surtees was appointed as Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Revenue in 2004 by Governor Bob Riley. He served in that capacity until 2007, when he was appointed Director of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. Surtees was re-appointed as Director of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations upon Governor Robert Bentley’s election in 2010.

Surtees successfully supervised the merger of two state agencies, the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations and the Alabama Department of Labor, into a new, singular agency called the Alabama Department of Labor in 2012. His title changed to Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor following the merger. He retired from state service in July of 2014.

In addition to these appointments, Surtees further served his state and its citizens by serving temporarily as both the Governor’s Legislative Liaison and the Governor’s Education Policy Advisor for Governor Bentley.

“It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the passing of my friend and former Cabinet member Tom Surtees. Alabama lost a leader and dedicated public servant,” Governor Bentley said. “Tom dedicated a decade to serving the people of this state, through his time as Revenue Commissioner, Director of Industrial Relations and Labor Commissioner. His devotion to Alabama, passion for her people and his friendship will be forever missed.”

Surtees also devoted much of his time to charitable organizations, such as the Alabama State Combined Campaign, a division of the United Way, where he served as Chairman for seven years. More than six million dollars were raised under his leadership. He was also very involved in the Boy Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Club, and the American Cancer Society.

An avid baseball fan, and lover of all things regarding the history of baseball, Surtees was a member of the Friends of Rickwood, America's Oldest Ballpark (located in Birmingham), and played for many years in its annual Rickwood volunteers game.

"So many in this state are mourning the loss of Tom Surtees," said Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Labor. "He was a true gentleman, and I was proud to have known him."

He was a veteran, serving in both the Alabama Army National Guard and the Army Reserves. He retired in 1997 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He attended the University of Alabama and UAB where he received his Bachelor of Science degree and a Masters of Business Administration degree.

Surtees is survived by his wife of 44 years, Cecilia Woods Surtees, son Lee Surtees and wife Krista, daughter Lynn Surtees Pruitt and husband Scott, and grandchildren Ward and Kate Surtees and John Thomas Surtees Pruitt.

Arrangements will be announced at a later time.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Communications Director Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.