

**ST. LOUIS: James C. Laffin**

Monday, Apr. 14 2008

James C. Laffin, an ardent civic booster for Clayton who served as the city's mayor during the 1970s, died Saturday (April 12, 2008). He was 90.

Mr. Laffin's colleagues considered him a rare breed — a politician with no enemies. "Compromise is my forte," Mr. Laffin once told the Post-Dispatch. In his eight years as mayor, 1971 to 1979, the board almost always voted unanimously.

As mayor, Mr. Laffin took steps to promote shopping in the city. He worked to beautify Clayton, including planting trees, establishing parks in the DeMun neighborhood and providing neighborhood improvements in the Moorlands subdivision.

Mr. Laffin was born in Cement, Okla., and received his law degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio.

Before coming to St. Louis, Mr. Laffin was a special agent of the FBI for three years.

He came to St. Louis in the mid-1940s to work for the Southern Comfort Co., where he was a vice president for almost four decades. He was vice chairman of the board of Clayton Federal Savings & Loan Association, a director of St. Louis County Bank and president of radio station KWK.

He was a trustee of Fontbonne College and the Academy of Science and president of the St. Louis County Municipal League. He was president of the Archdiocesan School Board in 1970.

Mr. Laffin served as an alderman from the 3rd Ward from 1954 until he became mayor.

Mr. Laffin devoted much of his time to church activities through St. Joseph Catholic Church in Clayton.

Mr. Laffin was named a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the highest honor given to Roman Catholic laymen.

Visitation will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. today at Lupton Chapel, 7233 Delmar Boulevard, University City. The funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday at St. Joseph, Meramec and Maryland avenues, Clayton, with burial at Calvary Cemetery.

Among the survivors are his wife, Mary Elizabeth Laffin; three sons, Mike Laffin of Aptos, Calif., Pat Laffin of Clearwater, Fla., and Tim Laffin of University City; three daughters, Molly Laffin of Bowling Green, Ohio, Monica Laffin of Carlsbad, Calif., and Maureen Laffin of Moscow, Idaho; two stepdaughters, Mary Clare Lipic and Geri Zeidler, both of St. Louis County; two stepsons, Jamie Kearns of St. Louis County and Pat Kearns of Washington; two brothers, Bill Laffin of Houston and John Laffin of Albuquerque, N.M.; a sister, Jane McKinney of Tucson, Ariz.; 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Two wives, Rita Ann Laffin and Jane Sue Laffin, preceded him in death.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Louis University Tribute Fund, P.O. Box 8005, St. Louis, Mo. 63156-9950, or St. Mary's Health Center, Fund Development Office, 6420 Clayton Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63117-9987.

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