

Nathan Delano Dean (1934 – 2013)

Because Nathan Dean's political acumen was so well honed after years of elected service, it is difficult to think of him as a political novice. But everyone must start somewhere. Right? For Nathan Dean, that start was election to the Rockmart City Council for a four-year term at the young age of twenty-five.

Advancing beyond the local level, he was then elected to the Georgia House of Representatives for several terms. Following that he was elected to the Georgia Senate where he spent 30 influential years representing our district. After retiring from the Senate, he concluded his stint as a public servant with an appointment to the Board of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for six years. With his two years served in the United States Army added to his years of elected and appointed service, the total years of public service totals 54 years. An extraordinary feat.

The name Nathan Dean is prominent in our community today. Because of his tireless work to procure funding to four lane Highway 278, the section of this main traffic artery through Rockmart bears the name Nathan Dean Parkway. Likewise, the city recreation fields are named the Nathan Dean Sports Complex. A main gathering spot in the city is named the Nathan Dean Community Center. In his professional life, he owned and operated an insurance business, The Nathan Dean Agency. The business continues today under the leadership of his son, Alan.

Nathan Dean was a proud product of the Rockmart community. He gained prominence in the State Legislature and became known over the state for his tireless work for not only the local constituents but for all Georgians. He rubbed elbows with the state's elite, but never lost the common touch at home. He not only grew up in the local mill village but retained a home there for all his life. He and his wife were members of a church located on the edge of the mill village, Piedmont Avenue Baptist. As he drove around town, he could be counted on to wave vigorously at every vehicle he met as if every day were a campaign day. His handshake was as quick to the draw as Marshall Dillon's sidearm coming out of its holster.

As testament to Senator Dean's political clout, his funeral held at the Rockmart First Baptist Church was attended by four former Governors of Georgia as well as the current governor at the time. Former Governors Zell Miller, Roy Barnes, Joe Frank Harris, and Sonny Perdue attended and spoke during the service. The sitting Republican Governor at the time, Nathan Deal, was there as well and spoke about his longtime Democrat friend.

In addition to Nathan Dean there are others buried in Rose Hill that gave time for service in the political arena. Of note is Ivey Felton Mundy. He matched Dean's trifecta of service, having served at the local level as Mayor, also at the state level as both a State Representative and later as a State Senator. Mundy, did not, however come close to Dean's years of service, since his life

ended at the young age of thirty-seven. He died two days after suffering an attack of appendicitis in the Senate chambers at the State Capitol in Atlanta.

Others buried in Rose Hill who served Polk County in the Georgia House of Representatives are Seaborn, Jones, James Freeman Dever, Cecil Franklin, James O. Lane, Paul W. Hurt and Marson Dunaway. John A. Jones, Seaborn Jones' father, served in the Georgia House of Representatives when the area was in Paulding County, prior to the formation of Polk County in 1851.

Buried also in Rose Hill are thirty former Mayors of the City of Rockmart.

We honor the lives and service of Nathan Dean and others who served in political office as Rockmart celebrates 150 years.

Sources: "The Heritage of Polk County Georgia 1851-2000", 2000

"Polk County Georgia: The First One Hundred Years", Larry D. Carter, 2012

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Rose Hill Cemetery Tour Committee