



## Speaker Tom Murphy: Steady Leadership in Changing Times

A cigar. A gavel. A scowl. These were tools that Thomas B. Murphy used in his role as Georgia's Speaker of the House of Representatives – from 1974-2002 – a position that he held longer than anyone in the state's history.

Murphy's half century in politics came during a period of great change in Georgia, in the South, and in the nation, but Speaker Murphy provided steady leadership throughout. In charting his course, Murphy never wavered from the values he absorbed growing up in small-town Bremen, Georgia, during the difficult years of the 1920s and 1930s.

Murphy became House Speaker at a time when the office was gaining political power, and he was never afraid to use this power. He helped bring about many changes and the rapid growth that occurred in Georgia during the late twentieth century.

A fervent Democrat, Murphy almost single-handedly held off the Republican tide that began to sweep the South in the 1960s, managing to keep the legislature in Democratic hands until 2003. He promoted the issues that he felt most passionate about: sound fiscal management, statewide economic development, and government support for disadvantaged Georgians.