

# Mr. Speaker



(above) Murphy presides over the House Assembly;  
*Courtesy of the Murphy Collection at the University of West Georgia*



(right) the Georgia State Capitol  
*Courtesy of Ashley Judy*

Traditionally in Georgia, the governor had dominated the state legislature. But in 1966 the legislature managed to break free of the governor's control. This made the position of the Speaker of the House of Representatives very powerful. Tom Murphy became Speaker in 1974 by unanimous vote of the legislature.

Speaker Murphy cut an instantly recognizable figure with his trademark Stetson hat and cigar. But his folksy image disguised a razor-sharp mind. He was a master of the rules under which the House operated. Murphy was especially powerful through his influence over the state's annual budget.



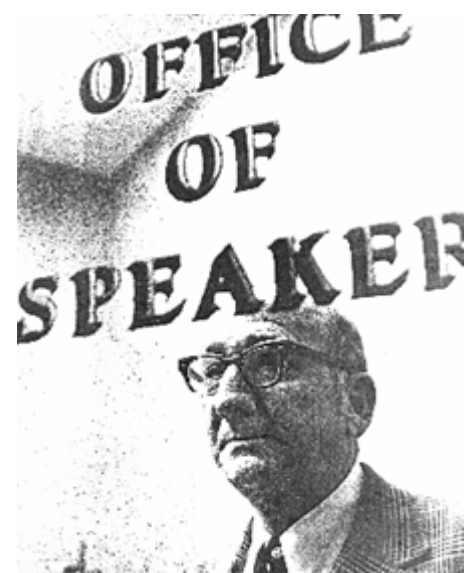
Murphy in his trademark Stetson hat  
*Courtesy of the Murphy Family*



Murphy controlled the Georgia House with his infamous gavel  
*Courtesy of the Murphy Collection at the University of West Georgia*

*"To do well as the Speaker, you either need the respect or the fear of the body. He has had both."*

*- Lt. Governor Mark Taylor*



Murphy in his office as Speaker of the House  
*Courtesy of the Murphy Collection at the University of West Georgia*