Chapter 3


In 1992, six years after Burruss’s death from pancreatic cancer, Georgia Public Television and Kennesaw State University (then Kennesaw State College) made a film in honor of A. L. Burruss about his career in the Georgia General Assembly. This film highlights two aspects of Burruss’s career in the 1970s that had a major impact on him personally. One was his friendship and support of Jimmy Carter through two gubernatorial races and his run for president. The other was Burruss’s own ambitions, his method of gaining support, and how he recovered from his first major failure as a state representative. These two things say much about Burruss’s development as a politician and how his success grew in the 1970s and 1980s from that of a novice to a powerful force to be reckoned with in the House.

Though Carter had lost his first bid for governor of Georgia in 1966, he ran again in 1970. Burruss, who once more loaned Carter his plane to travel around Georgia, often served as pilot for these trips. Paul Shields, former anchor at WAGA-TV in Atlanta, narrated the film about Burruss’s political life and had this to say about the friendship that developed between Carter and Burruss: “When Carter was campaigning for governor, Al Burruss’s plane and pilot’s license became indispensable to the campaign. While they were crisscrossing the state, they got to know each other very well; they became friends. After Carter was elected, he made Al his floor leader in the Georgia House of Representatives.” The trust Carter placed in Burruss was
based on their friendship and mutual respect although, as Shields pointed out, it also presented Burruss with a tremendous burden: “Floor leader for Governor Carter. This was quite a beginning for a new legislator. Burruss was hard-pressed. Time now must be spent between Cobb’s needs, his poultry business, and keeping Governor Carter’s proposals intact.”

Burruss’s role in Governor Carter’s new programs was not an easy one; as Carter himself described it:

“We tried to reorganize the entire state of Georgia’s government. It hadn’t been done since 1932 when Senator Russell had been the governor of Georgia. And we tangled with a lot of powerful special interest groups, some of them quite benevolent in character but they had carved out for themselves hundreds of little agencies and bureaus and so forth, turf that was precious to them and there was a tremendous waste of Georgia’s money and it was very complicated administrating the affairs of a great state but Al Burruss as my floor leader was able to husband these extremely controversial and important legislative proposals through the House of Representatives. Quite often they were not friendly to what we proposed.”

Gary M. Fink, in Prelude to the Presidency, describes the ambitious agenda Carter laid out even before he took office as governor, a plan that included not only reorganization of state government, but also included initiating “programs in such politically volatile areas as welfare reform, tax policy, conservation, education, judicial reform, and consumer protection.” Carter was successful in getting the reorganization plan carried out, as well as most of the programs he laid out, except for his consumer protection plan. Moreover, Carter did not govern in the manner of traditional Georgia politicians; he refused to grant favors in exchange for votes. As Carter’s floor leader, Al Burruss was charged with getting the House legislators on board so legislation could be passed.

Burruss was obviously a good choice for such a role, even if he was fairly new to the legislature. Senator Steve Thompson of Cobb County, who served alongside Burruss in the House before election to the Senate,
Explains Burruss’s powers of persuasion: “Al was a trader. He was able to work with people of all echelons…. he could talk to people with limited educations or he could hold PhD’s in the palm of his hand.”

Terry Lawler, also a fellow state legislator and a friend of Burruss’s, says that “Al could bring people together, even when they were in severe and acrimonious conflict with each other.”

Looking back at his association with Burruss, Jimmy Carter recalls the traits that made Al special: “So what Al brought was a remarkable combination of basic personal integrity—he was honest in every way; he told the truth, he didn’t exaggerate, he was very modest…. Al was never reluctant to say this was a bad idea, you’ve made a mistake here; I think you should do something different. And that’s where the value comes in of dealing with someone with that degree of strength and personal friendship and integrity.”

As can be seen from Carter’s memorandum to the Legislative Control Team that lays out his schedule of daily meetings, Burruss, as his floor leader in the House, had a busy workload. In addition to his work as a legislator, he was tasked by Carter, along with Al Holloway, Hugh Carter, and Frank Sutton, with bringing “together all legislators who will be involved in the key issues during the day so I can explain my position and let the legislators explain how they plan to approach the problem and what action the other legislators and I need to take.”

In the first session of Carter’s term as governor, Burruss helped House Bill No. 1 get through the House; this bill ensured that the reorganization plan for state government “would automatically become law after the beginning of the next legislative session, unless vetoed by a majority in the house and the senate”; it only passed by one vote, but it gave Carter the mandate he needed to move forward.

Burruss had his work cut out for him during Carter’s term, for the governor had few friends in the legislature. Fink reports an incident when a reporter asked Burruss to identify Carter’s supporters in the House and Al quipped, “It’s not going to be a long article, is it?”

Serving as Carter’s floor leader, however, also had its perks, one being that Burruss gained increasing recognition, a factor that aided him in his legislative ambitions.

When House Speaker George L. Smith, II died early in December of 1973, it was expected that Speaker pro tempore Tom Murphy would move into the Speaker position, which would then leave his position open.
briefly considered running for Speaker but decided not to as he was considering a run for governor in 1974. With Tom Murphy stepping into the Speaker’s slot, this left the Speaker pro tempore position open and Burruss quickly announced he would be a candidate. Opposing him was Representative Bill Lee, among others. Frederick Burger, writing in *The Marietta Daily Journal*, pointed out that Burruss’s drawbacks for the position were his short time in office—Lee had served in the House since 1957 while Burruss first achieved office in 1969—and Burruss’s close affiliation with Carter, who was unpopular in the House. In an interesting comment, however, Burger noted that Burruss had split with Carter in the previous year because Burruss had failed to become director of the new Department of Transportation, which was created in the reorganization. This “split” is difficult to credit since Burruss remained friends with Carter and later supported him in his run for the presidency. Moreover, Burruss was still, at this time, Carter’s administrative floor leader in the House and Burruss even mentions his work for Carter when explaining why he’s the right choice to be Speaker pro tempore: “I think I have been able to keep down a lot of the controversy in the House by tempering proposals from [Governor Carter’s] department heads before they reached the floor.”

In an unusual move, Burruss decided to take his case straight to each legislator in the House before the General Assembly reconvened in January 1975 to elect a new Speaker pro tempore. As Celestine Sibley reported, Burruss “wanted a political post [Speaker pro tempore of the Georgia House] which nobody from a metropolitan area has held in a long time. He needed the country and small towns to get it—and he went and asked them for it.” He got in his car the day after Christmas in 1973 and drove all over the state, visiting as many of the one hundred eighty members of the House as he could find at home, and telephoning the rest or catching them at the Capitol; he succeeded in reaching all but three of the legislators. He told Sibley about his campaigning: “‘Of course, they didn’t all say they’d vote for me,’ said the dark-haired, dark-eyed mountain-born Burruss, grinning. ‘Some of them were committed to one of the other four candidates…. But it was important to talk to them and to ask them if there was a run-off if they’d support me.’” There was a run-off between Burruss and Representative Williams, but Burruss won on the second ballot with eighty-four votes to Williams’s sixty.
Burruss was ecstatic and even cried upon attaining the desired post, saying “I’m 46 years old and I’m glad I can still cry when I’m happy.” Milo Dakin claimed that Burruss got a lot of supporters because he had assured Tom Murphy that he wasn’t ambitious for the Speaker’s post in 1975. When the legislative session opened and Burruss was confirmed, he told those gathered:

I am not a slave to any one section of the state. I am aware there are forces in state government that would like to see a feud develop in this House, but that will not happen, and Al Burruss is not looking for a fight I want you to know you have not misplaced the trust you placed in this rural chicken plucker from urban Cobb County.

His address to the House members and the press illustrates a lot about Al Burruss, especially his astute political sense of how things worked in the Georgia Assembly and how to stay above the fray, even when pushing the political agenda of an unpopular governor. His speech pulls together the disparate parts of his appeal—his humble beginnings and his current urban status. This “chicken plucker” knew how to politick, and as his wife Bobbi says, he never forgot where he came from. Yet, in light of his later pursuit of the Speaker post, it may be that he was also thinking of the powerful Tom Murphy as the one with whom he might feud.

Besides getting Governor Carter’s legislation introduced and passed during the early 1970s, Burruss helped “to repeal the old blue law which prohibited businesses from operating on Sunday. The law that Burruss helped pass and that Carter signed liberalized the old system by identifying 35 types of businesses that could operate on Sundays.” Burruss also worked for a women’s credit bill that outlawed discrimination against women who wanted to borrow money. While the credit bill may seem odd today, when women have the same credit rights as men, in 1974 this was very significant to the lives of women in Georgia. Another piece of legislation that Burruss supported was the Equal Rights Amendment though it failed to get ratified by the Georgia General Assembly.

Terry Lawler describes Burruss’s habit of playing things close to his chest: “For example, when the Cobb delegation would go to meetings (sort of town
halls) on specific legislation to answer questions, discuss issues, Al kept his full opinion to himself. Where others might say they were going to vote yea or nay, Al wouldn’t say. Few knew where he stood until he cast his vote publicly. So he surprised his constituents when he voted for the Equal Rights Amendment, the only legislator in the House to do so.”28 Understanding why he voted for the ratification when he had to know that his constituents in conservative Cobb and Paulding counties would not support it indicates that Burruss voted from his conscience and that he personally favored equal rights for women. Only a man supremely easy in his own skin, one who had no problem with joining the Band Mothers organization at the high school his daughter attended, would have no problems with ensuring women had equal rights under the law.

Another piece of legislation that surprised some constituents was Burruss’s support of the antismoking legislation given his own heavy habit, variously reported as two or four packs of cigarettes a day. The antismoking bill made it a misdemeanor, punishable by fines, for anyone to smoke in any public area where No Smoking signs were posted.29 Burruss told Celestine Sibley, with whom he was close friends, that he was “probably the heaviest smoker in this House—tobacco farms don’t have to worry about going out of business as long as I’m alive…. I’m in serious support of this bill because I know people who are severely allergic to tobacco smoke. People ought to be able to ride elevators and public conveyances without encountering something so severely endangering.”30 From the things he said and the legislation he supported emerges a portrait of a conscientious man, one who genuinely cared about others, including the environment they lived in. Burruss cosponsored the Metropolitan Rivers Protection Act of 1974, which established “a 2,000-foot protection corridor along the Chattahoochee River and its impoundments for 48 miles between Buford Dam and Peachtree Creek.”31 He also aided the passage of the House of the Environmental Education Act of 1974, which created educational programs to further protection of the state’s natural environment.32 For his sponsorship of these two bills, Burruss was named the Georgia Legislative Conservationist of the year by the Georgia Wildlife Federation.33

In addition to his legislative work and running his businesses, Burruss also became George Busbee’s campaign manager after the primary election
in 1974. Burruss’s sister Jane Ragan, who worked as a volunteer on the Busbee campaign, relates an interesting anecdote from that time. Her brother told her not to tell people she was his sister until the day after the election so no one would know she and Al were siblings. He was a father figure to her and very protective of her. She recalls that even though no one, except Busbee, knew they were related, in all that time, she “never heard one bad word about Al.”

Cobb historian Tom Scott tells the story of how George Busbee sought out Representatives Joe Mack Wilson and Al Burruss, Senator Roy Barnes, Harold Willingham and others to garner support in the area north of Atlanta, where Busbee had little name recognition:

When he asked what he could do to gain their support, the Cobb countians asked for three things: the conversion of Kennesaw Junior College to senior-college status; the completion of Marietta loop, including an underpass at Atlanta Street under the railroad track; and the construction of the last leg of I-75.

Scott reports that Busbee agreed with their wishes and saw to it they got what they wanted over the next four years of his term as governor.

Getting Kennesaw Junior College (KJC) elevated to senior-college status was not easy because the Board of Regents opposed such a move, as its vision of KJC, and all other junior colleges, was as a feeder school for Georgia State University. Also, Chancellor George Simpson “argued that the creation of a four-year school in predominantly white Cobb County would delay the university system’s efforts to meet a federal desegregation order.” To counter these arguments, several delegations went to the Board of Regents to argue their case, but little was done until Joe Mack Wilson, Al Burruss, and Appropriations Committee chair Joe Frank Harris managed to get $100,000 in 1975 and another $250,000 in 1976 earmarked in the state budget for converting KJC into senior-college status. Another factor that Scott points out was Busbee’s appointment of several new regents to the board who voted more favorably with regard to KJC’s conversion. Rick Beene noted that Burruss, who served on the KJC Board of Trustees, was “pivotal in getting funds for the college to become a four-year institution.” In an article about
Burruss, entitled “Al Burruss—Cobb’s Legislative Ace,” the first thing listed is the $250,000 put into the budget for converting KJC to four-year status.41 Burruss’s relationship with Governor Busbee was the second thing on the list—he was referred to as “Cobb County’s ear,” in the governor’s office.42

Burruss not only supported KJC, he was also instrumental in getting Southern Tech students greater autonomy from Georgia Tech. He introduced a bill in 1975 to make Southern Tech students eligible to take the Georgia professional engineer exam one year earlier than the mandated six-year wait.43 Though he did not succeed in always getting his agenda through the House—for example, he and Tom Murphy opposed the Sunshine Law requiring all meetings of the House be public44—he succeeded often enough to become a powerful force in the legislature even though he had only been there since 1969.

When Jimmy Carter ran for president in 1976, Burruss supported him though not to the extent he had been able to when Carter only needed flying around the state. Burruss had an absolute faith in Carter’s ability to achieve his dream of becoming president. Former Governor Roy Barnes, who knew Burruss all his life, tells an interesting story about Burruss’s belief in Carter: “I remember Al Burruss was the only person I ever met who was convinced from the very beginning that Jimmy Carter was going to be President of the United States.” One morning, Barnes and some other local politicians and lawyers were at City Café on Church Street in Marietta,

with a long table in back and we would all meet up there in the morning unless we were off to court or something and we’d drink coffee around 7, 7:30. Al would come by, Joe Mack [Wilson], Harold Willingham, me, all of us. Al came in and read this article [Bill Shipp had written an article called “Jimmy Who?”] and everybody was laughing about Jimmy Carter going to run for President and there came a dead silence and Al says, “Well, boys, he’s going to be the next President of the United States; I’m just as convinced of it as I am that I’m going to take the next breath.”

Barnes found this to be “A good example of his perceptive nature—he saw something in Jimmy Carter that most people did not.”45
As his immediate family members, from his wife and son and daughter to his sisters and brothers attest, Burruss entered public service because he believed he could make life better for others. Given his success and the esteem of his colleagues in the House—he was reelected as Speaker pro tempore in 1975 and 1976—and his having had close relationships with two governors, first Carter, then Busbee, it is understandable that Burruss would want to move upward into an even greater position of power where he could accomplish even more. But his next political move almost proved his undoing.

In 1976, he announced he would run for Speaker of the House. Though Speaker pro tempore is a powerful post, presiding over the House in the Speaker’s absence, real power resides with the Speaker. Arnold Fleischmann, associate professor formerly of University of Georgia, and Carol Pierannunzi, former director of the A. L. Burruss Institute of Public Service & Research, point out that “Perhaps the greatest power of the Speaker is the ability to appoint the membership of the committees that will review and draft legislation.” When Burruss sent out the press release announcing his intention to run for Speaker, he revealed what those who knew him best might call his combative side.

Though Burruss was generally an affable man, he “had a temper,” according to his friend Chet Austin, who remembers an incident that involved the vendor that Tip Top Poultry allowed to come onsite to sell food and drinks to employees at lunch time. He said he and Al were “Careful as to who we’d allow. We’d let one get on the property who’d run an account with the employees. Another fellow decided he wanted to do it and was in the road. Al went down to convince him to leave and they got into it. Police came and put Al in the back seat and took him home. They let him go. Only thing he ever said was, ‘they don’t have any handles in the back of those police cars.’” Of course, this incident can also be seen as one in which Burruss was protecting the rights of the vendor he was permitting to sell exclusively to the employees and perhaps protecting the employees as well if this vendor was known to offer safe food. But it’s also a telling example of Burruss’s sense of fairness and his willingness to assert himself when needed.

In the press release, Burruss came out swinging, claiming his mission was to create more democracy within the House, to achieve House reform, to “limit the tyrannical power of the Speaker so that everyone gets a
fair hearing,” and to get rid of the “vindictiveness and retribution of the position.” He later toned down his rhetoric and said he was running a race for reform of the House, not a personal race against Tom Murphy. Then, in a move obviously calculated to make his candidacy seem imminently reasonable, Burruss released a list of what he would do if elected Speaker to The Marietta Daily Journal, which duly printed it. If elected, he’d introduce a proposal to call bills and resolution for debate on the House floor according to how they appear on the general calendar; a proposal to restructure the appropriation process to “open it up” to all House members; a plan to change House rules so legislators can bring up a controversial issue a second time without interference from the Speaker; a proposal to allow House membership to elect the Democratic policy committee instead of its being appointed by the Speaker; a plan to change House rules so that a bill or resolution may only be reconsidered once.

From this list it is obvious that Burruss had been chaffing under Murphy’s dominance and the plans and proposals he lays out are all about fairness—about being treated with the respect and integrity owed to members of the House, and he wants this not only for himself, but also for everyone else. Burruss had noble ideas, but they showed little understanding of how politics in Georgia worked, and little sense of just how powerful Murphy really was. Judge Harris Hines, Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, spelled out what Burruss was up against, when he said, “Now you’ve got to remember the speaker in the House of Representatives in Georgia here is extremely powerful. The budgetary process starts there but also the speaker basically appoints enough committee chairmen and vice-chairmen to win an election if you run against him.” Despite traveling throughout the summer, talking to legislators and asking for their support, when the House voted that November, Burruss lost to Murphy ninety-eight to fifty-eight. Though he might have been expected to resign as Speaker pro tempore, Burruss refused to do so, telling reporters, “I am not a quitter.” Of course, he was not reelected to the post in the next legislative session, nor were he and his supporters made chairs of any committees. Recalling this time,
Tom Murphy later said, “I never did understand why Al wanted to become Speaker so hard, except I guess he’d always been sort of top dog in everything he ever did so he wanted to have the feeling he was top dog here. He would have been disappointed because being the speaker in this place here you’ve got a lot of folks you’ve got to listen to and you don’t always necessarily get your way.” Though Burruss lost the election to Speaker, he managed to get some changes in the House and later earned Murphy’s respect, as Murphy himself relates: “Good came out of it... I began including many more people in the decision-making process. I broadened the thing tremendously. Of course he and I became good friends. He was a very smart fellow, he was a hard worker. He had no limit he’d put on time in doing the job.” Murphy had a rueful appreciation of the kind of worker Burruss was. “He was one of the hardest workers I’ve ever seen but when he locked in on something it was awful hard to get him to change. He didn’t like to make compromises. And sometimes in this business that’s what you have to do.” Murphy turned out to be the longest serving Speaker of the House in Georgia’s history, indeed in the history of any state. According to Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, he did not face a challenge to his Speakership from the time Burruss opposed him until 1992. That Burruss took him on and survived to become one of the most powerful legislators in the House says a great deal about Burruss’s perseverance. As he told numerous reporters, he was not a quitter.

Jimmy Carter may have said it best about Burruss’s comeback: “You know I ran for governor once and lost. For reelection for President and lost. Al was able not only to accept the defeat but to analyze the reasons for it. And then in an almost unprecedented way to come back from it. He later became as you know a leader, one of the top leaders in the House even when he had challenged the political forces that he couldn’t overcome.” There was speculation that Burruss might go to Washington with Jimmy Carter, who had won the presidential election the same fall in which Burruss lost his own campaign, but he did not. He remained in Georgia at the state House, where he gradually rebuilt not only a position of trust, but went on to become majority whip, then majority leader, a post he held until his death.
A. L., at age two, “Sloppin’ the hogs” at the Burruss home in Cumming, Georgia. (1929)

A. L. (kneeling in front, second from the right) on the honor board of Smyrna High School. Chet Austin (far right, sitting on stone column) is also in this photo. (1944)
A. L. (second from the left) as the Smyrna High School basketball team manager and timekeeper. Chet Austin (fourth from the right) is also on the team. (1944)

A. L.’s high school graduation portrait. (1944, Smyrna High School)
A. L. in his Navy uniform. (1944)

A. L. standing in front of a car. (1947)

Bobbi and A. L. at Thanksgiving. (1954)
A. L. holding his son, Robin. (1954)

(Below) A. L., helping distribute campaign fly swatters, talks with Buddy Darden. Although the photo was taken during Burruss’s 1968 campaign, Darden signed this photo for Renée in 1987. (1968)
(Top) Campaign advertisement that ran daily for one week in October of 1964; (Middle) campaign advertisement that ran in the newspaper on August 21, 1964; and (Bottom) campaign advertisement for State Representative in 1968.
Wedding of Penny Owens to Robin Burruss accompanied by A. L. and Bobbi. (1970)

A. L. and Georgia Governor Lester Maddox stand with Cindy Penick (Guthrie), Lorrie Austin (Long), and Renée Burruss. (1969)
A. L. and Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter stand with Beth (Mauldin) Brooks, and Renée Burruss. (1972)

A. L. BURRUSS: THE LIFE OF A GEORGIA POLITICIAN AND A MAN TO TRUST

A. L. in his office at the Georgia House of Representatives. (1974)

A. L. and Bobbi in Burruss’s office at the Georgia House of Representatives on the last day of the session. (1974)
A. L. and Bobbie with Governor George Busbee and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, at the Governor’s mansion in Atlanta. (1975)

A. L. and Bobbi in Burruss’s office at the House. (1976)
A. L. Burruss: The Life of a Georgia Politician and a Man to Trust


Wedding of Renée Burruss to Ken Davis accompanied by A. L. and Bobbi. (1979)
Shaking hands with the President. (L–R: John Foster, Governor George Busbee, President Jimmy Carter, Judge Clarence Vaughn, A. L. Burruss, and Hugh Carter. (Photo by Jessie Sampley, 1977)

A. L. in a discussion with Joe Mack Wilson. (1979)
A. L., Renée, Robin, and Bobbi at home on Renée’s wedding day. (1979)

A. L. talks with Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris at an early 1980s Jefferson-Jackson dinner.
A. L., baby Jared, Renée and Bobbi stop for a photo at Renée’s graduation from Kennesaw State College. (1983)

Bobbi and A. L. during the campaign against Doug Howard. (1984)
This 1983 Burruss family portrait was used in A. L.’s campaign brochure (L–R: Jared, Renée, Ken, A. L., Ashley, Bobbi, Penny, Meghan, and Robin).

A. L. dismissing the House (a ritual of adjournment sine die). (1986)
Meet Al Burruss...

The Burruss Family: Al Burruss married Bobbi Elrod from Cornelia. Al and Bobbi have a son, Robin, a daughter, Renee Burruss Davis, and three grandchildren; all living in the Marietta area.

Al Burruss, the oldest of eleven children, was born near Cumming, in the hills of North Georgia. He has lived and worked in Cobb County since moving here in 1935.

Al believes in hard work. Al Burruss is a product of hard work. While attending elementary and high school, Al worked as a janitor, delivery boy, and on a farm.

In 1945, Al Burruss joined the United States Navy and served as a refrigeration machinist. Four years after his honorable discharge, he purchased a partnership in Tip Top Poultry Company and was later joined in this venture by his brother Jimmy, and school friend, Chet Austin. Al Burruss continues to serve as President of Tip Top Poultry, Inc.

The Burruss family is active in the First United Methodist Church of Marietta where Al serves as a member of the Administrative Board and Finance Committee, and has served on the Board of Trustees. Al serves on the Kennesaw College Foundation and has served on the Southern Tech Foundation, the Kennesee Hospital Authority, and as President of the Western Little League.

Representative Burruss began his public service career by serving as Cobb County Commissioner from 1965-1969. He followed this by being elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1969 where he has served for 16 years. In 1974, Burruss was elected by his colleagues as Speaker Pro- Tempore of the House. In 1980, he was elected Majority Whip. In 1982, House members elected Al as their Majority Leader.

Re-Elect

AL BURRUS

A Champion Legislator
For Cobb County

...20 Years of Service

Pages from A. L. Burruss's election brochure that was used during his last campaign for the House of Representatives. (1984)
A. L. Burruss: The Life of a Georgia Politician and a Man to Trust

**HARD WORKING DEDICATED EXPERIENCED**

**AL BURRUSS**

...20 Years in Public Service

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**Georgia Legislators are in session for only 40 days.**

Al Burruss works for his community twelve months of the year. He is a committed leader and worker who takes no season off from his public service responsibilities.

Al Burruss...a representative that makes a difference with YOU in mind.

---

**Al Burruss...**

A champion legislator for Cobb County...a champion public servant for Cobb County for 20 years...4 years as a Cobb County Commissioner...16 years in the House of Representatives serving Cobb County...Elected by his House Colleagues in 1974 as Speaker Pro-Tem...In 1980, elected as Majority Whip of the House...Elected to serve as House Majority Leader in 1982.

Al Burruss brings home Cobb County’s fair share of state funds and services for his constituents.

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Al Burruss is the only Representative from Cobb County that has served on the Budget Conference Committee. This committee recommends the final version of the state budget.

**Al Burruss...A Conservative and his record proves it...**

- Author of House Bill 95 — providing more than 25 million state dollars to reduce property tax in Marietta and Cobb.
- Worked with Board of Regents to make Kennesaw College and Southern Tech 4 year institutions and has worked for increased funding for new buildings and higher percentage of Regents’ budget for both institutions.
- Passed legislation that increased teacher retirement benefits and other benefits for school bus drivers and custodians.

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(Left and Right) Pages from A. L. Burruss’s election brochure that was used during his last campaign for the House of Representatives. (1984)
Representative Burruss is hardworking, direct, and experienced. Cobb county is better off because Al Burruss has spent twenty years representing and working for you!

Al Burruss... A citizen honored and respected by his community.

- Cobb County Citizen-of-the-Year, 1983.
- Special Appreciation Award—Association of Retarded Citizens, 1983.
- Recognition for “Outstanding Contribution” to the Cities of Georgia.
- Honorary Alumni, Kennesaw College.
- Jaycees Young Man-of-the-Year, 1962.
- Recognition for “Outstanding Service and Contribution” to the Georgia Recreation and Park Society.

- Supported every reasonable property tax relief proposal.
- Never supported any sales, income, or property tax increase of any kind unless people were given right to vote for the change. Initiated removal of sales tax from prescription drugs, eye glasses, and contact lenses.
- Worked for passage of school property tax exemptions for Cobb’s senior citizens.
- Reduced income tax by increasing standard deduction for all citizens.
- Authored $2,000 exemption of retirement income (62 and older or disabled).
- Led fights that killed tax legislation harmful to Cobb and State.
- Won battles to protect Cobb’s Chattahoochee River.
- Primary author and conferee of resolution to revise State Constitution.
- Secured funds for day services and new Mental Retardation Training Center in Cobb.

The Presidential candidates will be first on your ballot. Vote for your choice, then move on to the other candidates. Be sure to vote INDIVIDUALLY FOR AL BURRUSS.

AL BURRUSS... A CLEAR WINNER

“I make only one promise... to continue to use my extensive business and legislative experience and other God given abilities to administer the affairs of Cobb County in an honorable and efficient manner.”

A.L. Burruss
Georgia House of Representatives
District 20-2
Portrait of Bobbi and A. L. (1985)
A. L., standing with Jared, Renée, and Speaker of the House Tom Murphy at the beginning of Burruss’s last House session. (1986)

Jared, former President Jimmy Carter, and A. L. Burruss at the Burruss home in Marietta. (1986)
Notes for Chapter 3

2. *ibid*.
3. *ibid*.
10. Wheeler, p. 70.
11. Quoted in Fink, p. 169.
16. *ibid*.
17. *ibid*.
19. *ibid*.
20. *ibid*.
21. *ibid*.
27. *ibid*.
28. Lawler, interview.
30. *ibid*.
33. ibid.
38. ibid.
39. ibid.
42. ibid.
44. See Frederick Burger, “Assembly Split Over Sunshine,” *MDJ* 13 Jan. 1975, p. 1. However, a compromise was later reached, allowing both the House and Senate to vote to close a session if work could not be done under public scrutiny (see Rex Granum, “‘Sunshine’ Ruling for Panels Gaining,” *AJC* 29 Jan. 1975, p. 1A).
46. See Arnold Fleischmann and Carol Pierannunzi, *Politics in Georgia*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997, p. 149. Fleischmann and Pierannunzi describe the “broad powers” of the Speaker of the House, including “the ability to change the order of bills appearing on the calendar and to control floor debate through recognition of members, suspension of debate, and decisions about the appropriateness of amendments…. In addition, the Speaker is second in line to succeed the governor after the lieutenant governor.”
47. See Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, p. 149.
48. ibid.
52. A. L. Burruss: A Remembrance.
57. ibid.
58. See Fleischmann and Pierannunzi, p. 173.