

Jon Fox

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Former GOP Congressman Jon Fox dead at 70

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Jon D. Fox, 70, of Abington, a former congressman, state representative, and county commissioner in the Philadelphia suburbs, died from complications associated with cancer at his home on Sunday, Feb. 11, his family said.

Friends and colleagues remembered Mr. Fox as an outgoing and nontraditional politician who left an indelible mark on Montgomery County.

"He was a legendary political figure in Montgomery County for decades. I'm 56 years old, and when I was a child, he was a major force," said Bruce L. Castor Jr., a Montgomery County commissioner from 2008 to 2016 and district attorney before that. "Jon devoted his entire life to public service, and Montgomery County is the better for it."

Mark Weaver, a political strategist for Mr. Fox, compared him to the hero in the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. "Like the fictional George Bailey, Jon was beloved by his hometown, and his success was built by advancing the success of others," Weaver said.

In an [online tribute to his friend](#), Weaver also wrote that Mr. Fox was different from many other elected officials. "Most of us know how to spot a typical politician: someone looking over your shoulder searching for another hand to shake, another vote to secure," said Weaver. "Jon Fox rejected that ethos. Serving in local, county, state and federal office, he shunned contentious partisan fights, preferring the quiet satisfaction of helping people when government stood in their way."

Mr. Fox, a Republican, represented Pennsylvania's 13th District from [1995 to 1999](#). He was part of the "Republican Revolution," in which the GOP [took control of both the House and Senate](#) in the 1994 election for the first time in four decades.

In 1998, Mr. Fox [voted](#) in favor of all four articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Fox was also a member of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners between [1992 and 1994](#), and the Pennsylvania State House from [1985 to 1992](#). Before that, he worked as an assistant district attorney and served in the Air Force.

Mr. Fox's brother, Larry, said his policy achievements included helping to create a [health department in Montgomery County](#), which was formally established in a 1989 voter referendum, and [blocking GOP cuts to the legal services corporation](#).

"It was really a profile-in-courage moment," said Larry Fox of his brother's support for legal aid for the poor. "If he hadn't come forward and gotten a few other Republicans to support it, it would have been ended. ... He viewed government as part of the solution."

Republican State Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, who represents Bucks and Montgomery Counties, said Mr. Fox "was always very active in the community, whether it was politics or government or just people in need. Most importantly, he was a very positive influence on society and the people in this area. I think that's more important than anything else. He was very friendly. He would help you if you asked."

Frank Bartle, former chairman of the Montgomery County Republican Committee, agreed. He said Mr. Fox "was known more for his constituent service ... than perhaps any elected official in my memory."

"He loved people, and it didn't matter who you were," added Bartle. "If you needed help, Jon was there to help."

Castor said, "I don't know anybody that didn't like Jon. He really tried to make everyone feel like they were special."

Mr. Fox was a graduate of Cheltenham High School, Pennsylvania State University, and the Delaware School of Law. Weaver said Mr. Fox's favorite bumper sticker was an homage to his alma mater: "If God's not a Penn State fan," it read, "why is the sky blue and white?"

Mr. Fox is survived by his wife, Judi; son Will; and two siblings.

A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at Congregation Adath Jeshurun, 7763 Old York Rd., Elkins Park. Burial will follow at Roosevelt Memorial Park in Trevose.

The family will sit shivah at the temple after the interment.