

# [***Florida's Bob Graham remembered as a governor, senator of the people***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWM-J2J1-JC5B-G3CN-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Former Democratic Gov. and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham was remembered Friday by Republicans and Democrats alike as a man whose love for people and his state of Florida transcended partisanship, many of them smiling with memories of his five decades in ***politics*** as they passed by his casket in the historic old Capitol.

A long line wound down the steps as people waited to pay their respects to the two-term governor and three-term senator, who [*died last week at 87*](https://apnews.com/article/bob-graham-florida-government-b5aae564aff2dc42320ad0f48e7a807e). A bouquet of white flowers sent by President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, was alongside the coffin, as Graham's wife, Adele, and four daughters greeted hundreds of mourners.

“The true feeling of really loving him — that is something that has meant so much to so many people,” said one daughter, former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, during a private moment away from the crowd. “He cared about Florida and the people of Florida. People feel that. The outpouring of love that I've felt is because people knew his genuineness.”

Graham was known for wearing ties with the state's outline printed on them, and dozens of people in the line donned similar ones in tribute. Elected officials and Supreme Court justices, past and present, were among the crowd.

“He was so easy to work with. Whether he agreed with you or not, you never left without a pleasant feeling about the meeting,” said former Republican Gov. Bob Martinez, who succeeded Graham in 1987 after he was elected to the Senate. “It was a different time. It wasn't as contentious as it is today.”

Graham was also known for his so-called workdays, when he would try a new job for a day. They began when he was a state senator and became a regular feature of his campaigns and time in office, Graham's way to meet and connect with everyday folks. His 408th and final workday involved wrapping Christmas presents for a Florida Keys charity.

The coffin was topped with an arrangement that included a mix of palm and citrus greenery, orchids, kumquats, Spanish moss and Florida fauna. It was commissioned by his family to represent Graham's lifelong love of Florida’s environment, something he worked to protect through efforts to preserve the Everglades and other natural resources.

Graham was a staunch Democrat who briefly ran for president in 2004. When Al Gore lost to George W. Bush in 2000, many speculated that he would have won if he had picked Graham as his running mate for the race, which was decided by a 537-vote margin in Florida.

But it was the person and not the ***politics*** that many remembered Friday.

“He was not overly partisan,” said former Republican Senate President Jim Scott, who sat by Graham back when they both served in the old Capitol, before the new one was built. “His attitude was you're elected as a Republican or you're elected as a Democrat, but then you're a senator and then you're governor and you govern first and not worry about every little partisan fuss.”

The Graham family held a private funeral after his body was taken from the old Capitol, and another memorial service is planned for May in his hometown of Miami Lakes.

“I know exactly what they’re going through,” said Lawton “Bud” Chiles III, son of former Gov. Lawton Chiles. “I just pray they get some sleep. I know they’re tired. It’s a lot to get through.”

Graham, a millionaire and a Harvard-educated lawyer, will be buried wearing one of his folksy Florida ties as well as a humble wristwatch his daughter gave him — a $12 Casio that he continued to wear for years, even as he wielded tremendous power and influence.

“Anyone who knows Dad knows he was notoriously frugal,” Gwen Graham said. “He would literally replace the batteries on the watch rather than get a new watch. I finally said, 'Dad, the batteries cost more than the watch. I'll get you a new one.'”

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