

# [***Former Florida Gov. and US Sen. Bob Graham remembered for his civility at memorial service***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0V-1N11-JC5B-G1FD-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

MIAMI LAKES, Fla. — Family and friends remembered former Florida Gov. and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham on Saturday as a politician who usually avoided rancor, enjoyed meeting regular Floridians and always behaved civilly, even behind closed doors.

About 200 people gathered for a memorial service at Miami Lakes United Church of Christ for the two-term governor and three-term senator, who [*died last month at 87*](https://apnews.com/article/bob-graham-florida-government-b5aae564aff2dc42320ad0f48e7a807e). They were greeted with recorded music by fellow Floridian Jimmy Buffett, who died last year.

The program featured a photo of Graham smiling in a tie, his suit coat thrown over his shoulder, his pant legs rolled up as he stood calf deep in Everglades muck. A painting of Graham stood on an easel at the front of the chapel, his wife of 65 years, Adele, dabbing her eyes as she sat in the first pew with their family.

Robin Gibson, a lifelong friend who was Graham's general counsel as governor, said in his eulogy that Graham's friendly and civil public demeanor was not a charade — he behaved that way even in important and stressful meetings. Graham, a Harvard University-educated lawyer whose family built Miami Lakes, was governor from 1979 to 1987.

“There was no macho profanity. There was no agenda. There was no pettiness. There was no gossip. It was, ‘How do we get to make the best decision for the best reason?’ It was that simple,” Gibson said.

Two practices Graham was known for were his penchant for taking meticulous notes after many interactions and his “workdays,” where as both a governor and senator he would spend a shift at a different ordinary job each month.

Buddy Shorstein, a longtime friend who became his chief of staff, said Graham looked forward to each workday shift, eager to “learn what the average Floridian went through to make a living,” He did more than 400, including teacher, bellhop, construction worker and farm laborer.

After each, Graham would return to his office “refreshed and rejuvenated," Shorstein said. “The most important, consistent lesson he taught was good public policy makes good ***politics***."

Shorstein bristled at how some political reporters considered Graham's note-taking to be “quirky,” which he adamantly said his former boss was not. He wondered if that public perception played a part in Graham being passed over by Democratic presidential nominees Michael Dukakis, Bill Clinton and Al Gore as their vice-presidential pick.

Shorstein speculated that Gore would have won in 2000 if he had picked Graham because the race was decided by a 537-vote margin in Florida. That, he said, would have prevented the second Iraq war.

Former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, the eldest of Graham's four daughters, joked about how she was a college student in Washington, D.C., in 1987 when her father was elected to the Senate. He became her roommate so her mother could stay in Florida as the youngest daughter finished high school.

She said that one night she found her father in the kitchen “stirring something that looked inedible in a pot.” She asked him what it was.

“He replied proudly, ‘Pumpkin.’ I spotted the empty can and offered to get him something more substantive and tasty for dinner. But he said, Nope, nope. This is great. That sums up Dad, so easy going. The pumpkin met his needs. Plus, it did not cost him a penny. Dad was notoriously frugal,” she said, drawing laughs.

But then she turned serious, saying her father was always her inspiration and role model.

“There has never been a day I haven’t been proud to be Bob Graham’s daughter.”

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Spencer reported from Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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