

Former state Sen. Paul Muegge, a Tonkawa farmer who earned national recognition for his environmental stand against confined hog and chicken feeding operations, died Monday. He was 84.

A Democrat who served three terms from a Republican-leaning district in north-central and northwestern Oklahoma, Muegge is credited with creating the state's first meaningful regulations for concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, in the late 1990s. Muegge began his political involvement on the other side, as a lobbyist for farmers and ranchers opposing land use restrictions.

In a 1998 interview with *Governing* magazine, Muegge said those interactions convinced him that farmers and environmentalists had more in common than in conflict. His championing of stricter control of agricultural waste earned Muegge the wrath of many in his own industry, and he won reelection in 1998 by only 67 votes. But *Governing*, the leading journal of state and local government, named Muegge Legislator of the Year, and he later received a Profiles in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library. Muegge retired from the Senate in 2002 but remained active in environmental causes. He was born in Enid on Sept. 28, 1936, and died at his home in Tonkawa

after a long illness. He was a graduate of Lamont High School and Oklahoma State University. Muegge was preceded in death by a son, Tim Muegge; a grandson, David Muegge; a granddaughter, Madison Muegge; and a daughter-in-law, Linda Muegge. Survivors include his wife, Nancy Muegge of Tonkawa; daughter Amy Muegge; son Shawn Muegge and his wife, Debbie; son Jeff Muegge and his wife, Leslie; granddaughter Ryan Muegge; sister Ann Black and her husband, Jack; and brother Joe Muegge and his wife, Dianna. A private memorial service will be held Aug. 27. Get local news delivered to your inbox!

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