

*Thomas Dale Alford*  
*Jan 28 1916-Jan 25 2000*  
*AAFA #0268*

**THOMAS DALE  
ALFORD, M.D.**  
**1916-2000**  
**AAFA #0268**

*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*  
Pulaski County — Wednesday,  
January 26, 2000

THOMAS DALE ALFORD, M.D., age 83, of Little Rock died Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2000. He was born in Pike County and graduated from high school in Rector at the age of 16. He attended Arkansas State University and what is now the University of Central Arkansas before receiving his doctorate in medicine from the University of Arkansas Medical Science Center in 1939. He served his internship at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City before serving his residency in general surgery at the Missouri Pacific Hospital in Little Rock. While in college, Dr. Alford has extensive experience as a radio sportscaster, covering all Southwest Conference football games for a period of five years. Dr. Alford had an opportunity of leaving the regional network and go national in radio broadcasting but chose to continue in the medical profession. Dr. Alford served in World War II from 1940-46 as a captain in the U.S. Army, having active duty as a



surgeon in the European Theatre with the 160th Station Hospital. After the war, Dale served his residency in ophthalmology at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary in Chicago, becoming an ophthalmology surgeon. In 1947, Dale became an assistant professor of ophthalmic with Dr. J. Mason Baird at Emory University serving one year before returning to Little Rock beginning his private practice in ophthalmology in 1948. From 1949-56, Dr. Alford was chief assistant in ophthalmology surgery at the Little Rock Veterans Hospital, also serving as a diplomat on the American Board of Ophthalmology, a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, a fellow of the College of Surgeons as well as a fellow of International Surgeons, a

member of the Cataract Refractive Surgeons, a member for over 50 years of the American Medical Association, the Pulaski County Medical Society, the Arkansas Medical Society, Past Vestry member of Christ Episcopal Church, a founding member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

He served on the Little Rock School District Board, on the board of trustees at Little Rock University, now University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and was a past board member of All Saints Episcopal School in Vicksburg, Miss. Dr. Alford was also very active in his community, serving as a founding member and once president of the Arkansas State Opera Association, Past President of the Association of University of Illinois Eye Alumni, and a 32nd Degree Mason, Hot Springs F.&A.M., #62, and a member of the Scimitar Shrine. He was a member of the Phi Chi Medical Fraternity and Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, past state commander of the American Legion, a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, disabled American Veterans Association, past vice chairman of the National Commission on Americanism of the American Legion, a member of the Country Club of Little Rock, the Little Rock Yacht Club, the

U.S. Power Squadron, Trinity Episcopal Churches. Dr. Alford was elected to the 86th and 87th United States Congress as a representative of the state of Arkansas. During his service, President John F. Kennedy appointed Dr. Alford the keynote speaker and delegate to represent the United States at the 51st Inter-parliamentary Conference held in Brasilia, Brazil, in 1962. Dr. Alford also appointed General Wesley Clark as a cadet at West Point College. General Clark went on to be the head of NATO Forces. Dr. Alford is preceded in death by his wife, L'Moore Smith Alford, marrying in 1940 [see AAFA ACTION Winter 2000 p. 24], and his son, Thomas Dale Alford Jr. who died in 1989 [see AAFA ACTION March 1990 p 10]. Dr. Alford is survived by two daughters, L'Moore Fontaine Alford and Anne Maury Alford Winans, both of Little Rock; a daughter-in-law, Kay Alford of Little Rock; one brother, Dr. Boyce Alford of Pine Bluff; one sister, Joyce Gardner of Bryant; five grandchildren, Robert Wheat Kelly-Goss, Elizabeth Fontaine Goss Gardner, William Whistler Winans, Alexander Alford Winans, Thomas Dale "Tad" Alford III, and one great-grandchild, Pearl Fontaine Kelly-Goss.

There will be a visitation Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at Ruebel Funeral Home, followed by a funeral service Thursday at 11 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church officiated by The Reverend Henry Hudson. Burial will be at Mount Holly Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials should be made to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral or the St. Vincent Infirmary Foundation.

**From Marian Alford Hodges,  
AAFA #0350**

Dear Morris,

Thanks so very much for forwarding Dr. Dale Alford's obituary. I had found out about his death on Tuesday and sent an e-mail to Gil. I just attended the funeral this morning and it was a very nice fairly brief service. The coffin was draped with the American flag. And we sang "Come Ye Thankful People" on which the minister commented "Dr. Alford said this was written by a relative, Henry Alford."

It is bitterly cold here and we expect 4-6 inches of snow within the hour so I did not attend the burial service. However, I talked to his daughter L'Moore. She said he will be buried in Mount Holly Cemetery, the most historic cemetery here where many civic and political leaders are buried, and will be next to his wife and his son. She indicated there will be a military presence there and at the conclusion they will play taps.

Thanks again, Marian

Thursday, January 27, 2000

**Alford, write-in House  
winner of Central era, dies**

Larry Ault  
ARKANSAS  
DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Dr. Dale Alford, an ophthalmologist who served in Congress from 1959 to 1963 after winning office in a write-in campaign on a tide of segregationist sentiment from the integration of Central High School, died Tuesday in Little Rock. He was 83.

Alford, who died of complications from congestive heart failure, mounted the write-in campaign in the fall of 1958 after he served on the Little Rock School Board. He defeated eight-term Rep. Brooks Hays, considered a moderate, for the seat in Congress.

Alford often felt that he was misunderstood and that the media inaccurately portrayed his position on integration.

In a 1976 interview, Alford said he was "one of the most misunderstood persons who ever advocated anything." He said he was interested in preserving the Little Rock public school system without discrimination.

"I made mistakes, as other people have made mistakes," Alford said. "One thing I never made clear during all the disturbed emotions [of that period] was that I was taking what I took to be a constitutional stand against unconstitutional stormtroopers in our midst -- in making our home state a battleground."

Little Rock Central High School became internationally known Sept. 2, 1957, when Gov. Orval Faubus sent Arkansas National Guardsmen there. Faubus said he called out the guard "to maintain ... the peace and good order of the community" and directed the National Guard to prevent nine black students from entering the all-white school.

Faubus removed the Guardsmen

on the order of a federal judge. When the black students went to Central three days later, on Sept. 23, a violent crowd gathered. The students were removed for their protection.

President Eisenhower then federalized the National Guard and sent 101st Airborne Division troops to the school the next day to enforce the school's integration. The black students attended school the rest of the year under federal protection.

Alford often contended that "outside forces" picked Little Rock to be the battleground for desegregation.

In 1958, Alford said he had never voted for integration when he was a member of the Little Rock School Board.

"I am a segregationist because I sincerely believe that 'evolution rather than revolution' is the only practical, sensible and peaceful approach to this age-old problem," he said.

Grandson Robert Kelly-Goss of Minturn, Colo., said recently that Alford "was fearful for the potential for violence at the high school." He said his grandfather favored integrating the schools, beginning with the elementary schools.

Professionally, Alford was an eye doctor with a racially integrated medical practice, Kelly-Goss said.

Alford was born on a farm near Murfreesboro on Jan. 28, 1916, in Pike County to Thomas H. Alford and Ida Womack Alford, struggling young teachers in an isolated country school.

His father eventually served as president of the Arkansas Education Association and as principal of Jacksonville High School. Like other high schools in the Pulaski County district, Jacksonville

admitted dozens of Little Rock students in 1958-59, when Little Rock voters closed the city's senior high schools rather than integrate them.

Alford attended Arkansas State College, now Arkansas State University, at Jonesboro and graduated with a degree in medicine from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine.

Alford married L'Moore Fontaine Smith of Sardis, Miss., on July 27, 1940. He served five years of active duty in the Army Medical Corps during World War II.

After World War II, Alford served about two years in private medical practice in Atlanta. He returned home to Little Rock in 1948.

He served on the staffs of several major Little Rock hospitals.

Alford was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 4, 1958, and re-elected in 1960. He retired after those two terms, then ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1962 and 1966.

After serving on the Little Rock School Board during the school desegregation crisis, he started a write-in campaign eight days before the November 1958 general election, which he won with 30,739 votes to Hays' 29,483. His campaign workers handed out stickers bearing his name, which voters could then affix to the ballot.

Alford chose not to seek a third term because reapportionment after the 1960 census cost the state one of its House seats and placed him in the same district as U.S. Rep. Wilbur Mills of Kensett.

In 1984 he ran again for the 2nd Congressional District seat, which includes Little Rock, but finished last in a field of five in the

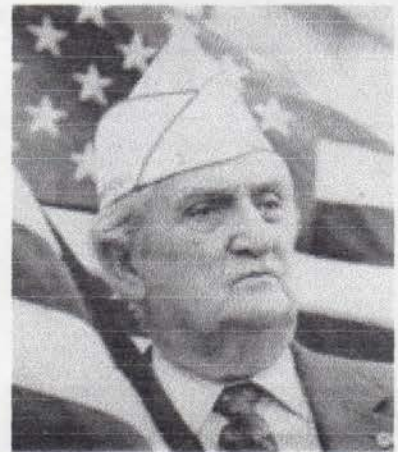
Democratic primary.

Alford's health had deteriorated in recent years because of cancer and after he sustained a stroke.

Jim Johnson of Conway, who during the Central High crisis was an outspoken segregationist, promoted Alford's political endeavors and called his old friend "one of God's noble men."

"He stood for states' rights and constitutional government," Johnson said. "He was a great American. Dale Alford was a tremendous congressman, who would have made Arkansas a great governor. With the kind of zeal and kind of enthusiasm he had, it never fades away.

"He was of a kindred spirit with that little band of patriots who left bloody footprints in the snow at Valley Forge. I wouldn't worry about the future of America if we



**Gary Indiana, Post-Tribune  
Tues. Nov. 12, 1991**

WWII Veteran Dr. Dale Alford participates at ceremonies Monday in Little Rock, Ark. Alford is a former Congressman.

had more Dale Alford's."

Claude Carpenter Jr., a Little Rock lawyer, served as Alford's campaign manager during the 1958 campaign.

Carpenter lauded Alford's involvement in the American Legion and veterans affairs in his later years.

Arkansas historian and author Roy Reed interviewed Alford in the early 1990s for his book, *Faubus: the Life and Times of an American Prodigal*.

Reed said that behind closed doors, Faubus supported Alford in his write-in campaign but would never admit it publicly.

"Both men never acknowledged that support," Reed said.

"Supporting a write-in candidate isn't good for the party. There was considerable evidence, though, that Faubus' people worked hard for Alford."

[For more on Dr. Alford see AAFA ACTION March 1990 p 5, Robbie Moreland's "Alford Maintains Interest In Politics", ARKANSAS MAGAZINE Oct. 18, 1987.]

## DALE ALFORD

AAFA #268

Sent by Don Alford, AAFA #59

*COURIER DEMOCRAT*  
Russellville, AR-Thurs., 12 Nov 1992

The state commander of the American Legion, Dr. Dale Alford of Little Rock, will speak to Riggs Hamilton Post 20 in Russellville on Tuesday, Nov. 10....

Alford served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. He ran as a write-in candidate and defeated Brooks Hays. He ran for governor and was defeated by Orval Faubus.

Alford is an eye surgeon.

He served in the European Theater of Operations as a medical officer during World War II.

Post Commander Dwight Earnest said all veterans and their families are invited to the banquet.

Alford will speak at the Lions Club luncheon Tuesday at Bonanza Restaurant.

In a related article:

*COURIER DEMOCRAT*  
Russellville, AR-Thurs., 12 Nov 1992

Remember veterans

Dr. Dale Alford urged Russellville Lions to remember the sacrifices of

veterans "because we would probably not have a country today if not for those who served in time of war from before World War to the recent Persian Gulf war." AM is state commander of the American Legion and a former congressman. F was introduced by Bob Legan.... James Newton ... told the Lions that Alford was instrumental in obtaining federal funding for the Russellville Post Off building dedicated in 1961 at Second and Boston.

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18 Oct 1987 by Robbie Moreland

## ALFORD MAINTAINS INTEREST IN POLITICS

For more than two decades, Dr. Dale Alford's time was divided between politics and medicine.

A few years after he opened his ophthalmology practice in Little Rock, Alford came on the political forefront when he ran for Congress as a write-in candidate in 1958. He defeated the late Rep. Brooks Hays, a Democrat. After serving two terms in Washington, D.C., Alford returned to Little Rock to begin his campaign for the 1962 Democratic gubernatorial nomination. He was defeated that year and, again, in 1966.

It was eight years before Alford took a break from the full time practice of medicine to run for Congress again. The 1984 2nd Congressional District race pitted him against four other candidates, including Pulaski County Sheriff Tommy Robinson who won the seat.

Despite the fact that he finished last, Alford, 71, said recently that he has no regrets about hitting the comeback trail.

"I consider it an honor to be elected to Congress two times and I wanted to return, but I'm not disappointed with how things turned out," he said. "I enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones."

Although he's said he doesn't plan to seek political office again, Alford's interest in politics is apparent. The issues with which he

is concerned come across in his smooth, oratorical manner of speaking, perhaps a carry over from the five years he spent as a play-by-play announcer for the Razorback Radio Network.

"You have to have a tremendous sources of money to finance a campaign, which my organization didn't have. But, as far as politics is concerned, I still have interest," he said.

Alford's first bid for Congress, in which he supported state's rights, came on the heels of the Central High School desegregation crisis. When Alford sought a third term, the controversy over school consolidation, which was just beginning, became an issue in his campaign. He found himself defending his earlier stand and trying to overcome the segregationist stigma which had followed him through the years. The racist label was unfounded, Alford said

"Integration was never the issue. I felt at the time and it's still my opinion that certain judicial orders were violation of the U.S. Constitution."

Because both of his parents were teachers, he has always been concerned with issues affecting education, Alford said. Commenting on the recent strike by teachers in the Little Rock School District, Alford offered a possible alternative to settling the dispute over teachers' salaries.

"It's a tragedy that the schools had to close, but I am totally sympathetic with the teachers," he said. "But, if we're not always

allowed to guide our own schools because of the federal government's control, maybe the schools should be nationalized so that teachers would be civil service employees. Salaries and benefits could be made equal to those of other government workers."

"But I'm not running for public office, I'm enjoying my practice," Alford said.

Alford, a native of New Hope (Pike County), received his medical degree from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine. He served a preceptorship at the Army & Navy General Hospital in Hot Springs before becoming a medical officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War II. He entered private practice as assistant to the professor of ophthalmology at Emory University in Atlanta before returning to Little Rock to set up private practice as associate clinical professor of ophthalmology at the Veterans Administration Hospital.

A history buff, Alford enjoys reading about early American History. "The development of our country never ceases to fascinate me," he said, noting that he still subscribes to the *Congressional Record* to keep informed on current events.

Alford and his wife, the former LMoore Smith of Sardis, Miss., have three children and three grandchildren.