

Al Gore's mother, Pauline, dies at 92



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NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) -- Pauline Gore, whose son Al became vice president and nearly captured the presidency and whose husband served a lengthy and distinguished career in Congress, died Wednesday. She was 92.

She had been weakened in recent years by strokes and a heart attack, and died in at her home in Carthage, Tennessee.

"Her son called me earlier this morning and said she passed in her sleep," former Gov. Ned McWherter said.

Trained as a lawyer, Pauline Gore was a familiar figure on the campaign trails of her late husband, Albert Gore Sr., and her son, former Vice President Al Gore Jr.

In Tennessee, she was nearly as widely known as her liberal husband and played a central role in much of his campaign strategy. Gore Sr. served in the House from 1939-1953 and in the Senate from 1953-70.

"She was my father's closest adviser," the then-vice president said in 1999. "Together, they strengthened the future of this great country."

Pauline Gore campaigned for her son when he ran for the Democratic nomination for president in 1988. During the 1992 campaign, she and her husband campaigned actively for the Clinton-Gore ticket. They made a seven-week bus tour with many of the stops at senior citizens' gatherings.

She never complained publicly about the demands public life made on her family, although she joked in a 1993 interview that she had saw so little of her son that she had "swapped a son for a vice president."

Her husband died in December 1998.

Pauline Gore's public appearances were more rare in recent years. But in April 1999, she accepted a state Senate resolution honoring her late husband, and she mentioned her son's presidential ambitions.

"I think Al is going to be elected -- and you know I hope he is -- and when he is and you need something, just let me know," she told the legislators. "You don't have to fool around with him. Just give me a ring."

She once said she never encouraged her son to go into politics, but impressed upon him the importance of "family values." She had hoped Al would become a lawyer. He was a divinity student who worked as a journalist before making his first run for Congress in 1976.

Born and raised in Tennessee

Pauline Gore was born Pauline LaFon in Palmersville, Tennessee, and spent her childhood in Jackson, Tennessee, before enrolling at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

She worked her way through Vanderbilt University Law School as a waitress, meeting her future husband at the coffee shop where she worked. In 1936, Mrs. Gore was one of the law school's first female graduates.

Pauline Gore practiced law briefly in Arkansas before returning to Tennessee and marrying her husband in 1937.

The former vice president once said his parents studied for the bar exam together and passed it on the same day.

"I've heard them joke about who got the highest grade," he said. "If I interpreted the jokes correctly, she did."

She watched her husband become one of only three senators from the South who refused to sign the "Southern Manifesto" opposing desegregation. His opposition to the Vietnam War ended his 32 years in Congress.

The senior Gore was briefly a vice presidential candidate himself during the 1956 Democratic national convention. He withdrew in favor of fellow Tennessee Sen. Estes Kefauver, who won the nomination and lost as running mate to Adlai Stevenson.

Al Gore Jr. is the Gores' only living child. Their daughter, Nancy, died of cancer in 1984. Other survivors include a brother, Whit LaFon of Jackson, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

(Caption for above picture: Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore and his wife Pauline speak with their son, Albert Jr. and his bride, the former Elizabeth Aitcheson of Arlington, VA, after their wedding at Washington Cathedral, in a May 19, 1970 photo. Pauline Gore, whose son Albert Jr. became vice president and nearly captured the presidency and whose husband served a lengthy and distinguished career in Congress, died Wednesday in her hometown of Carthage, TN, said James Bass of Bass Funeral Home. She was 92.)

Mrs. Gore played central role in campaigns:

Herald Citizen Newspaper, 16 December 2004, front page:



Nashville, TN (AP) – Pauline Gore, whose son Al became Vice President and nearly captured the presidency and whose husband had a long and distinguished career in Congress, died Wednesday. She was 92.

She had been weakened in recent years by strokes and a heart attack, and died in at her home in Carthage.

Trained as a lawyer, Pauline Gore was a familiar figure on the campaign trails of her husband, Albert Gore Sr. and her son, former Vice President Al Gore.

She played a central role in shaping her husband’s campaign strategy. Gore Sr. was a liberal Democrat who served in the House from 1939 to 1953 and in the Senate from 1953 to 1970 and aspired to the presidency himself. He died in 1998.

“She was my father’s closest adviser,” the then Vice President said in 1999. “Together, they strengthened the future of this great country.

Pauline Gore campaigned for her son when he ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination for president in 1988.

During the 1992 campaign, she and her husband campaigned for the Clinton-Gore ticket. They made a seven-week bus tour with many stops at senior citizens’ gatherings.

She never complained publicly about the demands public life made on her family, though she joked in a 1993 interview that she had “swapped a son for a Vice President.”

He was a divinity student who worked as a journalist before making his first run for Congress in 1976.

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The former Vice President once said his parents studied for the bar exam together and passed it on the same day. "I've heard them joke about who got the highest grade," he said. "If I interpreted the jokes correctly, she did."

Her husband was one of the few senators from the South to refuse to sign the segregationist Southern Manifesto in 1956. His opposition to the Vietnam War ended his 32 years in Congress.

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Mrs. Gore was known as "Mrs. Pauline" during her frequent visits to her son's presidential campaign headquarters in Nashville in 2000.

"She was always full of advice. She was an optimist and one of the smartest women I've ever met in politics," said Donna Brazile, Al Gore's campaign manager.

Al Gore Jr. is the Gores' only living child. Their daughter, Nancy died of cancer in 1984. Other survivors include a brother, Whit LaFon of Jackson, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The funeral will be Saturday in Carthage.

Associated Press Writer, Joe Edwards contributed to this report.

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