



## Alan Ray Ater

December 15, 1953 - May 21, 2017

Former Louisiana Secretary of State Al Ater, 63, died peacefully May 21, 2017, in Houston, Texas. In addition to serving as Secretary of State, he was a longtime public servant and worked tirelessly for the betterment of Louisiana. Al had many business as well as political interests. First and foremost he was a farmer and steward of the land. His Lakeland Planting Co. farmed corn, cotton, soybeans and rice in several parishes of northeast Louisiana.

Services for Mr. Alan Ray Ater will be Friday, May 26, 2017 at Jefferson Street United Methodist Church in Natchez, MS, at 11 am. The Rev. John Kramer will officiate. The family will receive friends on Friday from 9 am - 11 am at the church. Interment will follow service at Natchez City Cemetery Natchez, MS., under direction of Young's Funeral Home, Ferriday.

Born in Decatur, Illinois, on December 15, 1953, Al was the youngest of five children of Donald Edward Ater and the former Ruth Lavonne Chapman. Al Ater graduated in 1971 from Huntington High School in Ferriday and attended Northwestern State University in Natchitoches. At age 29, Mr. Ater was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, District 21, and served from 1984-1997. In 2001, he was named Secretary of State Fox McKeithen's first assistant. He then worked as first deputy in the Department of Insurance for a year before returning to the Secretary of State's office. Following Mr.

McKeithen's death, Mr. Ater served his state as Secretary of State and in 2010 retired from statewide political office, in order to focus on his primary passion of farming and family.

In addition to his farming interests, he served on the boards of the Concordia Parish Farm Bureau, Catalyst Energy in Vidalia, Louisiana School Employees Retirement System, Louisiana Tourist Development Commission, Louisiana Workmen's Compensation, Second Injury Board, Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs, International Association Corporation Administrators, and the National Association of Secretaries of State. He was elected to the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame in 2009.

Parents Donald Edward and Lavonne Ater and sister Kay Ater Goeggle predeceased Mr. Ater.

Mr. Ater is survived by his wife of 32 years, Susie Beard Ater; daughter, Whitney Lauren Ater; two sons, Thomas Ater and wife Rivers and Elliott Ater; grandsons, Soren Riker, Kai Riker, and Benton Ater; granddaughters, Maya Fuentes and Graciela Fuentes; brother, Donald Ater and his Fiancée Carol Anders; sister, Lynette Ater Tanner and husband Buddy; brother, Edward Ater and wife Mignonne. He is also survived by a host of nieces and nephews.

Pallbearers will be his nephews, John Goeggle, Jeff Goeggle, John Branton, Don Branton, Dan Ater, Lance Byrd, Alan Byrd, and Preston Beard.

Memorials may be made to Jefferson Street United Methodist Church-building fund, PO Box 862, Natchez, MS 39121.

# Cemetery Details

## Natchez City Cemetery

Natchez, MS

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 26. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Jefferson Street United Methodist Church  
511 Jefferson Street  
Natchez, MS 39120

## Service

MAY 26. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Jefferson Street United Methodist Church  
511 Jefferson Street  
Natchez, MS 39120

# Tribute Wall

LG

“ sending deepest sympathy and prayers to all of the Ater family.

Linda j Gardner - May 27, 2017 at 08:30 AM

DE

“ Dale & Elizabeth purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Alan Ray Ater.



Dale & Elizabeth - May 25, 2017 at 04:07 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Alan Ray Ater.



May 25, 2017 at 09:56 AM

LC

“ Louis Dreyfus Company purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Alan Ray Ater.



Louis Dreyfus Company - May 24, 2017 at 11:19 AM

FT

“ I was saddened to hear of the passing of a dear friend. I have so many memories of serving with him in the legislature. I pray that your family finds comfort in knowing that friends are thinking of you and praying for you during this time.

Senator Francis Thompson, State Senator, District 34

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Francis Thompson - May 24, 2017 at 09:25 AM



“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Alan Ray Ater.



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May 24, 2017 at 09:21 AM

TB

“ My prayers are with the whole family now in the days to come. My God wrap his loving arms around you and carry you through this time. TJ and Dallas Batey.

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T. J. Batey - May 24, 2017 at 07:21 AM

TF

“ Terry Mize Jr. Family purchased the America the Beautiful for the family of Alan Ray Ater.



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Terry Mize Jr. Family - May 24, 2017 at 05:10 AM

AB

“ *Al was a remarkable public servant. Always thoughtful, considerate, patient and humble. He always was hesitant to take credit for many of his accomplishments and typically would pass the credit to others. For eight years we served together in the House and he was always a leader to be admired. He was a special person that found happiness wherever he went and left it behind with others when he departed. Allen Bradley*

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**Allen Bradley** - May 23, 2017 at 10:25 PM

AR

“ *Susie and family,*

*What a huge loss for you and all the people that Al touched over so many years of always doing and caring for you and others. He was generous beyond belief with his talents, his good deeds, kind words, leadership and most of all his friendship. I will always count him among the most influential people in my career in government and feel so honored to have truly known him and his goodness. I was privileged to meet him while in his legislative career but even more privileged to work with him in the Secretary of State's office, especially on our Hurricane Katrina project. Al was such a smart and strong leader and his trust and faith in all of us at the Secretary of State's office to get the job done will never be forgotten. Thank you for sharing Al with us all those years as we all knew how much he loved farming and had to get back to it! You are in my thoughts and prayers and I hope the many wonderful memories of Big Al carry you through until you see him again. Much love and respect,  
Angie Rogers*



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**Angie Rogers** - May 23, 2017 at 04:21 PM

SW

“ To Your Family of AI, I send my most heartfelt respect, and lift you up in Prayer.

To You AI, I say the following knowing you are listening from Heaven, pain free.

Such a man that mere words do You an injustice. I call You a Family Man, a Man of the People and Most of All to Me a Wonderful Friend. Always looking out for the little guy. AI you will be missed by all that ever met you and the World is a much sadder place to live with Your passing, Your Friend, Stephen Watts

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**Stephen Watts** - May 23, 2017 at 03:42 PM

SH

“ Shelia Herrington lit a candle in memory of Alan Ray Ater



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**Shelia Herrington** - May 23, 2017 at 03:07 PM

BD

“ A good and kind man has left us too soon. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Susie, and with your family. Jerry and Becky Daye

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**becky daye** - May 23, 2017 at 01:35 PM

JG

“ *What a wonderful human being gone way too soon. I worked under Al at Secretary of State an I wanted to extend my condolences to the family. "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen."*

Julie Guidroz - May 23, 2017 at 01:20 PM

DD

“ *DAVID & ELOISE DONNELL purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Alan Ray Ater.*



DAVID & ELOISE DONNELL - May 23, 2017 at 10:53 AM

HY

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Al Ater and his many friends. He will be missed.*

Hope Young - May 23, 2017 at 09:54 AM

BF

“ *Many Prayers and candles for Susie and family*

Bruce and Ann Faillace - May 23, 2017 at 08:37 AM

KS

“ *Katherine Squyres lit a candle in memory of Alan Ray Ater*



Katherine Squyres - May 22, 2017 at 07:00 AM

CW

“ Al was always a good man. We were classmates, teammates and friends. You could always count on Al to make the last shot. My condolences to Susie and his family. Rest in Peace, Buddy.

*Christopher Williams*

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**Christopher Williams** - May 22, 2017 at 06:56 AM

EN

*Al was one of the Good Guys. Praying for the Ater Family & Friends.*

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**Ernie. Newman** - May 22, 2017 at 06:43 PM

VB

*Al had a wonderful sense of humor, was great fun to work with, and was a fair task-master who did not hesitate to "drill down" with his tough questions. Al was always willing to pitch in and do the heavy lifting (literally too) when needed. He was a very real, down-to-earth person who could mix with everyone from whatever walk of life. Al was genuinely compassionate. He was a real credit to his family. Stories--Al could tell the funniest stories. We will all miss his stories--all told with that Al Ater cadence. He will be sorely missed.*

*Ginny Benoist*

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**Virginia Gerace Benoist** - May 23, 2017 at 02:47 PM

SH

*I always enjoyed talks with Al he was a good man.  
Many prayers for family.*

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**Shelia Herrington** - May 23, 2017 at 03:10 PM

DB

*I find myself at a loss of words to express how saddened I feel! Al, you were so loved, so admired, and so very respected by all who knew you! Susie, Donnie, Ed, Lynette and other family members..I am hurting with you, and love all of you. God Bless You.*

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**Dana Ater Berry** - May 23, 2017 at 06:56 PM

DS

*Always the consummate gentleman, with a sincere smile and warm greeting for you. Al will be so greatly missed. Our hearts and prayers go out to all of you . God Bless.*

*Mike and Desiree Smith*

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**desiree smith** - May 23, 2017 at 08:44 PM