

Date
Section(s)
Byline

October 21, 2002
Obituary

Samuel Thomas "Sam" Cofer, 81, of St. Simons Island died unexpectedly on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2002. He was born in Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia on Jan. 24, 1921, to Henry Jackson Cofer and Ruby Littleton Ray Cofer. He attended public schools in Glynn County and in 1935 entered the Baylor School in Chattanooga, Tenn., from which he graduated in 1938. Subsequently, he began his freshman year at the University of Georgia, and was an avid Georgia Bulldogs Club fan.

Active in social and civic affairs, Mr. Cofer was a long-time member of the old St. Simons Volunteer Fire Department, and a former president of the St. Simons Boating and Fishing Club. He was a charter member of the Brunswick Lions Club and the Tall Timbers Experimental Station in Thomasville. Mr. Cofer was also a charter member of the Wildlife Conservation League of Georgia, member of the Gridiron Society, the Navy League and the St. Simons Rotary Club, serving a term as president from 1968 to 1969. He served two terms as president of the Board of Trustees on the St. Simons Rotary Foundation, and was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow and Ed Bruce Fellow.

Appointed by former Gov. George Busbee, Mr. Cofer served 8 1/2 years on the policymaking Board of Natural Resources as the coastal representative and was chairman of the North Georgia Mountain Authority. While serving on the Natural Resources Board, Mr. Cofer was involved in the state permitting of the new F.J. Torras Causeway leading to St. Simons Island. He helped Glynn County acquire 960 acres from the state, set aside as the Blythe Island Regional Park on whose board he served at his death. He championed the spreading salt sea marshes of Glynn, fragile coastal resources, the plight of shrimp fishermen and the needs of law enforcement. He was chiefly an advocate for conserving Georgia's natural resources and preserving historic sites and landmarks.

In 1986, he sought elective office, filling the unexpired term of former commissioner Willou Copeland Smith who championed Mr. Cofer's advocacy of the Georgia State Department of Natural Resources. Later, in February 1991, State Representatives Smith and Ron Fennel sponsored a resolution that was read and adopted by the Georgia General Assembly, providing for the dedication of the Department of Natural Resources Regional Headquarters, 1 Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia, in honor of **Sam Cofer**.

Mr. Cofer is survived by his wife of 57 years, Marie Joyner Cofer; two children, Patricia Barefoot, Donnie Cofer and their spouses, Forrest "Frosty" Barefoot and Brenda Williams Cofer and one grandchild, Tiffany Lynn Cofer, and several nieces and nephews. His surviving sisters are Mrs. Murphy (Frances Sasser) Bowman, Mrs. Edith C. Parker, & Mrs. James E. (Patricia) Thompson, all of Glynn County.

Pallbearers are Bill Downey, Woody Hinton, Carl Alexander, Ted Crews, Jim Goodis, Teddy Crews, Frank Beckum and Dr. Bill Hitt. Honorary pallbearers are Ralph Bufkin, W.A. Hamby, George Bufkin, James D. "Jimmy" Moore, Gilly Werntz, Jimmy Seaver,

Teddy Brandeis, Morris Kent, Joe Cline and Captain Jay Childers.

The family will receive friends at Edo Miller and Sons Funeral Home with visitation from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, October 22, and services will be held at Christ Episcopal Church, Frederica, at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, with interment at Oglethorpe Mausoleum.