

## James Harrington, Former NC Cabinet Secretary, Dies At 92

By Bryce Wilson

Monday, 06 January 2020 14:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 08 January 2020 12:57

---

A businessman whose governmental service included the leadership of North Carolina departments during the administrations of two governors has died. James E. Harrington, 92, passed away January 1 at his home in Southern Pines after a brief illness.

Harrington served as secretary of the state Department of Natural and Economic Resources from 1973 until 1976 under Gov. Jim Holshouser. While in that capacity, he led the agency through a consolidation brought about by a major reorganization of state government.

After returning to business between 1976 and 1985, Harrington served from 1985 through 1989 as secretary of transportation during the administration of Gov. Jim Martin, leading efforts to improve funding for roads, rails and aviation.

“North Carolina has lost a brilliant and dedicated man who served the state in many ways,” said Martin. “Jim Harrington's public service was marked by sound policy judgment, highly competent managerial skills, and significant innovations that contributed to the state and its people. As I express my sincere condolences to Jim's family, I also wish to publicly convey my gratitude for his service and for the lasting differences it made.”

As a business executive, Harrington's roles included 20 years with the Pinehurst golf and resort property, including a tenure as its president. He later held positions leading the development of the Kildare Farms subdivision in Cary, Southern Shores in Dare County, and Bald Head Island in Brunswick County.

Harrington graduated from Virginia Military Institute in 1949, was nearly immediately called to active duty, and served as a member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. After separation from active duty, Harrington joined the N.C. National Guard, where he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

As North Carolina's NER secretary, Harrington was responsible for a host of diverse divisions that involved state parks, marine fisheries, wildlife, forestry, environmental regulation, economic development, and tourism. During his tenure, the department administered the establishment of the North Carolina State Zoo, orchestrated a successful effort to gain state and federal recognitions of the New River as a natural and scenic resource, and opened the state's first

## James Harrington, Former NC Cabinet Secretary, Dies At 92

By Bryce Wilson

Monday, 06 January 2020 14:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 08 January 2020 12:57

---

overseas trade offices in Canada and Germany. Legislatively, the department worked collaboratively with the N.C. General Assembly to establish a means for regulating sediment runoff, enact the N.C. Coastal Area Management Act, and secure authorization for local governments to attract industry through the issuance of industrial development bonds.

As transportation secretary, Harrington, working closely with both the governor's administration and the legislature, played a prominent role in a multi-year effort that ultimately resulted in the enactment of legislation establishing the state's Highway Trust Fund. The fund supported highway work that paved secondary roads in rural areas, built an enhanced statewide network of four-lane highways, and constructed freeway loops in major urban centers. During the same timeframe, he worked to secure dedicated, recurring funding for public transportation, the state rail program and the N.C. Division of Aviation.

Harrington was born in New Hampshire in 1927. His parents were school teachers who later bought and operated hotels, one near his birthplace and the other in Southern Pines. He grew up shuttling between seasonal peak times in those areas, spending from spring through fall in New Hampshire and winters in Southern Pines.

Harrington had a long history of Republican political involvement that began when he raised small contributions for Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 presidential campaign.

He is survived by his wife, Ann Quarterman Harrington of Southern Pines, Daughters Nancy Harrington Enloe (Steve) of Raleigh, Mary Harrington Tomasiewicz (Steve) of Newtown, Conn., Morrill Harrington Weaver (Jim) of Waynesville, sons Harry Alexander Harrington (Lynn) of Apex and David Michael Harrington of Waynesville, stepdaughter Stephanie Briggs (Robert) of Charleston, S.C., and 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. [bolesfuneralhome.com](http://bolesfuneralhome.com)