



## Charlie Bumpus

### **Mayor of Wasilla Dies at 42**

Wasilla Mayor Charlie Bumpus, who saw himself as a maverick politician working to build the image of his community, died early Wednesday evening after collapsing from an apparent heart attack on Elmendorf Air Force Base. Air Force public affairs officer Maj. Darrell Hayes said Bumpus, 42, was with three golfing partners playing through the 12th hole at the Eagleleglen Golf Course when he fell just before 6 p.m. Two of his friends began performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation while a third ran to the club house to call for an ambulance, Hayes said. Medics from Elmendorf Hospital attempted to revive Bumpus, then rushed him to the base hospital. He was declared dead about 7 p.m., Hayes said.

Known as a tenacious and controversial businessman and politician, Bumpus began a three-year term as Wasilla's first mayor in January 1985. Residents had voted to give Wasilla first-class city status three months earlier. Talking about his role as mayor last year, Bumpus agreed that he was something of a maverick. "A maverick's a colt that runs by itself. Yeah. I guess that's me. I'm not your average politician."

In May, Bumpus began a controversy by pushing a proposal that his city create its own time zone, 30 minutes ahead of the rest of Alaska. Indeed, the city council at first approved their mayor's resolution, but rescinded its vote weeks later while Bumpus was on vacation.

He fought to change Wasilla's image from that of a sleepy town to a progressive city and initiated a fight to get Palmer's Valley Hospital to build a full-service hospital in his town. In September of last year the city council approved a retroactive salary for the mayor, agreeing to pay Bumpus \$54,035 a year in salary and benefits. When he was elected there was no salary set for the mayor.

A 13-year Air Force veteran, Bumpus was a graduate of the Air Force Academy and served in Vietnam for a year and a half. He moved to Wasilla in 1975 and opened a land development company. He served on the city council from 1978 to 1983, but was bumped after a federal court convicted him of tax fraud charges in August of that year. He was reputed to have been illegally sheltering money in a Belize corporation. He fought the charges and won a reversal of the conviction from a federal appeals court a year later.

Bumpus had also been known as a jazz musician and had often sat in with musical groups around Anchorage on weekends.

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