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William R. Ratchford, Connecticut Congressman, Dies at 76

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HARTFORD (AP) — William R. Ratchford, a former three-term Connecticut congressman who later served in the Clinton administration, died on Sunday in Arlington, Va., where he had lived for many years. He was 76.

The cause was complications of Parkinson's disease, his wife, Barbara, said.

Mr. Ratchford, a Democrat, served six terms in the Connecticut House of Representatives, from 1962 to 1974, and was the House speaker in his last four years. After a failed run for Congress in 1974, he was chairman of Gov. Ella T. Grasso's Blue Ribbon Committee on Nursing Homes and was the commissioner on aging from 1977 to 1978, when he was elected to Congress.

Mr. Ratchford held the Fifth District seat, representing northwest Connecticut, and served on the House Appropriations Committee as well as the interior, education and labor, and transportation committees. In 1984 he was defeated by John G. Rowland, a Republican, in the Reagan landslide. (Mr. Rowland was later governor of Connecticut.)

After leaving Congress, Mr. Ratchford was a lobbyist and taught at Georgetown University. President Bill Clinton appointed Mr. Ratchford assistant administrator of the General Services Administration in 1993. He held the position until 2001.

William Richard Ratchford was born on May 24, 1934, in Danbury, Conn., and graduated from the University of Connecticut. He received his law degree from Georgetown in 1959.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three sons.

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