

# Late city attorney honored for shaping Alpharetta

FULTON COUNTY



*City Attorney Sam Thomas died Aug. 24 after 36 years as Alpharetta's chief legal adviser.*  
COURTESY OF CITY OF ALPHARETTA

**By Adrienne Murchison**  
[adrienne.murchison@ajc.com](mailto:adrienne.murchison@ajc.com)

This week, Alpharetta and the Georgia House of Representatives formally honored the attorney who helped shape the city and establish its charter.

City Attorney Sam Thomas passed away Aug. 24 after serving as Alpharetta's chief legal adviser for 36 years.

Thomas' legacy was remembered at the start of the Alpharetta City Council meeting

Monday. The late attorney's family members, colleagues from his former law firm and friends including state Rep. Chuck Martin, R-Alpharetta, shared memories.

Thomas, a native of Decatur, served five mayors and two interim mayors after his firm Bovis, Kyle, Burch & Medlin was hired by the city in 1985. He helped form Alpharetta's city codes and charter as well as the first parks bond, according to a city proclamation. The bond provided the funding needed to acquire Wills Park and for the creation of the Ed Isakson YMCA, the document reads.

Martin, a former Alpharetta mayor, described Thomas as a quick-witted friend and colleague with a wry sense of humor.

Mayor Jim Gilvin added that Thomas was always the smartest man in the room.

In August, Gilvin told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that Thomas died of a stroke but was battling melanoma, a dangerous type of skin cancer, for about a year and a half.

"He was an amazing man," Gilvin said. "One of the most amazing people I've ever had an opportunity to meet."