

Herman W. Alford

Sep 26 1915 - Sep 24 1988

AAFA #0068

Herman W. Alford Memorial Highway

The following newspaper article, submitted by AAFA Treasurer Doris Vetri, is a tribute to deceased AAFA Member #68 Herman W. Alford.

THE NESHOPA DEMOCRAT
Philadelphia, MS—2 Oct 1991

HIGHWAY MEMORIALIZES LATE HERMAN W. ALFORD

The late attorney Herman W. Alford was remembered Friday at the dedication of a highway bearing his name as a person who advanced the quality of life in the community because of his many years of work in industrial development and education.

The Herman W. Alford Memorial Highway is a portion of Highway 19 from near the Colonial Motel southward to the intersection with Highway 15.

Speakers on the program said that in order to get an idea of Alford's achievements, all one had to do was look at the facilities along the road that now bears his name: the airport, the Marshall Durbin feed mill and hatchery, the industrial park, Witco, U. S. Motors and the National Guard Armory.

The dedication ceremony was held by the State Highway Department under the direction of Central District Commissioner Wayne Burkes.

Members of the Herman Alford family included his widow, Mrs. Gwen Alford, daughter Janne Thomas, sons Pat and Herman Alford Jr and their families, and his brother retired Marine

Corps Brig. Gen. Bennett Alford.

Former Mayor Allan King was master of ceremonies.

Speakers included Steve Webb, president of Citizens Bank and member of the Industrial Development Authority; State Representative Shelton Bounds; City School Superintendent Therrell Myers; Mayor Harlan Majure; Bennett Alford, brother; Commissioner Burkes; and Mrs. Alford.

Excerpts of their remarks:

Steve Webb—I had known Herman Alford all of my life, as a family friend and associate in the National Guard. He was my commanding officer; he recruited me in the Guard when I was 19 years old. . . .

About 1982 Herman approached me with the idea that we needed a new industrial park. I was serving as chairman of the Industrial Committee of the Chamber of Commerce at the time. He said that times and laws have changed and that we needed a new vehicle for industrial development. He took the lead and was largely responsible for drafting (and getting adopted) a bill in the legislature forming the Industrial Development Authority for Neshoba County.

Through this Authority we now have this new industrial park. We were able to purchase the land and make the improvements. I could go on a long time talking about the contributions Herman made to our community and our nation. Herman was truly one of those people who left things better than he found them.

State Representative Shelton (Buck) Bounds— . . . This is an honor that could not be bestowed on a more deserving person. A lot of the things you hear today are going to be repeated by a lot of us, because we worked with Mr Alford very closely.

It was my pleasure to have worked with Mr Alford for eight years on the city council that I served. He was the city attorney. And unless you know how hard he worked and was associated with him, you will never know what contribution Mr. Herman Alford made to Neshoba County and the welfare to the county and the state of Mississippi.

Mr Alford was synonymous with the word workaholic. We went in for a council meeting at 7 o'clock on the first and third Tuesday night. We would meet until 10. And during the winter-time Mr Alford would say, "Well, I've got to go feed my cows now." This was at 10 o'clock at night when it was cold and raining outside. This was the kind of dedication Mr Alford had. He left nothing undone, whatever it might be. . . .

Superintendent of Schools, Therrell Myers— . . . Herman Alford and I had association with one another in school related business since June 1979. Upon my arrival to Philadelphia and Neshoba County with school business, I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Alford as school board attorney. Immediately I began to notice things about Mr. Alford and his leadership and his commitment. And there were many. I think it is true that he was a

workaholic but he had some other characteristics which, I believe, came from background, from dedication, from loyalty and from desire—that being his desire to see the young people in Philadelphia and Neshoba County move forward in the educational environment. . . .

As a friend, and I came to know him as probably one of my best friends in this part of the county and this part of the state, he had another trait that was always dear to me and that I came to respect, and that was that was that he would listen. If I called Herman Alford at 12 o'clock at night or at 11 o'clock in the morning or at 6 in the morning, it didn't make any difference, he would listen. He would sit there attentively and listen at the remarks that were made and in turn give you direction that would lead you out of the circumstances, or into the best environment that was available under the circumstances. . . .

Mayor Harlan Majure— . . . For many years, Herman Alford was the most influential man in Philadelphia and Neshoba County and I would tell him so. He didn't like for me to tell him, but it was true, Herman Alford had more influence than any individual in this area. He did not use that influence as power; he used that influence as guidance and leadership for our community. Things were being done; Herman was in the background and he was the man getting most of the work done. As Steve mentioned, as you go from here into town, or in any direction into or out of the city or even out into the county—you've got the airport here, the industrial park, two Marshall Durbin plants, across the railroad there's Witco, the new fire station, the National Guard armory and a park and recreation complex over there that's second to none for a town the size of Philadelphia anywhere in the state. Around the corner of course, is U. S. Motors. These are only a few of the things. We could go on all day long. His influence and his work and his

dedication are still having a positive and progressive effect on our community and for this we are grateful. This memorial that we are dedicating this morning is only a small memento that we can dedicate in his honor and say, "Thanks for a job well done."

Bennett Alford, brother—I'm grateful today to be here. I think this is the greatest dedication I've ever witnessed in my life. And it's because of each one of you people, each person here contributing, or this dedication would never have taken place. (Quoting Emerson's definition of a successful life). . . . I know my brother's life was a success because I know I have breathed easier because he lived. I've got one other thing to say that's important. I was too young to know my father when he died; we were raised by a widow woman. But I will never forget the two boys who took my father's place, Homer Alford and Herman Alford.

Highway Commissioner Wayne Burkes— . . . When I first got to know Herman Alford—most of you know that I grew up just a little further out here to the north and down the River Road—grew up on what we called the big road. We traveled this gravel road then to go to town, usually on a Saturday. After I graduated from Arlington High School and before I went on to East Central Junior College, Mr. Kiah Key gave me the opportunity and privilege of working in the parts department of Key Chevrolet in Philadelphia. W. H. Sanford's and Herman Alford's law office was just a couple of doors down in the Citizens Bank building. Herman Alford was the younger member of that law firm and I got to know him at that time. . . .

He was patriotic, served his country during World War II in the 82nd Airborne Division. Retired, as most of you know, as a brigadier general in the Mississippi Army National Guard. And as has already been indicated, his brother, who is also my longtime friend, is retired from the active Marine Corps. . . .

Mrs. Gwen Alford—The naming of the Herman Alford Memorial Highway is a great honor to Herman. He loved all of you in Philadelphia, Neshoba County and he loved the state of Mississippi. And thank you for your gracious words of tributes to Herman. Anything that he did that was helpful to any of you brought him great pleasure. . . .

Herman W. Alford

AAFA Member #68

Source newspaper unknown

Herman W. Alford, 72, a lawyer, died of cancer on Saturday, 24 September 1988, in F. G. Riley Memorial Hospital in Meridian, Mississippi. In March 1983 Gil Alford received a letter from Mr. Herman Alford, Attorney at Law in Philadelphia, MS. The letter started as follows: "Your letter addressed to Pat Alford dated February 28, 1983, was opened by me, his father. I note that you had written him some previous letters to which he has not responded." There followed a warm five year association between Mr. Herman and Gil Alford with several exchanges of significant amounts of Alford information. Mr. Herman Alford made financial donations to both the association and before that to the work of Gil Alford. As member #68 he was one of the founding members of the association.

Herman W. Alford was born 26 September 1915 in Philadelphia, Neshoba County, Mississippi, the son of Benjamin Warren and Phronettie (Davidson) Alford. Benjamin's parents were John Madison Alford and his second wife Sarah Frances Cooper. John Madison was the son of John Alford born about 1800 in North Carolina. A complete chart on this branch of the Alford family was printed in Gil Alford's newsletter, *ABOUT ALFORDS*, issue #4, July 1983.

Herman married Gwendolyn P. Thomas 6 July 1942 and they had Herman Alford Jr., Patrick Alford and Janne Alford. Janne married Robert Thomas who was a law partner with Mr. Afford.

Herman was a deacon at the First Baptist Church, where he taught Sunday school and held other church offices. He was a veteran of World War II and was retired from the Mississippi National Guard as a brigadier general. He was a member of the Philadelphia Masonic Lodge, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Philadelphia Exchange Club and the Neshoba County, the Mississippi and the American Bar Associations. He was a director of the Neshoba County Fair Association and the Citizens Bank and was on the county's Industrial Development Committee for several years.

He was preceded in death by siblings, Jewell, Clennie and Homer Lee Alford. His survivors include his wife, two sons, a daughter, brother Bennett Alford and sister Cleo McLemore.

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