



Congresswoman dies after cancer battle

Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis succumbs to disease after two-year fight

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RICHMOND, Va. - U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Davis, a Republican who represented southeastern Virginia for seven years, died Saturday morning after a two-year battle with breast cancer, her office said.

Davis, 57, died at her home in Gloucester.

Davis was found to have breast cancer in 2005 and had a recurrence this year. Her health took a turn for the worse during the past week, her office said.

She became Virginia's first Republican woman elected to Congress in 2000, and she was a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee.

"Her determination to fight the disease is an inspiration to all of us," President Bush said in a statement.

"She was a fine example of a public servant who worked hard to cut government waste to ensure the people's money was used wisely," Bush said. "Her common-sense values will be missed on Capitol Hill."

Gov. Timothy Kaine, a Democrat, will schedule a special election, probably before the end of the year, to fill the remaining year of Davis' term, Kaine spokeswoman Delacey Skinner said.

Fought for benefits for veterans' families

Her first piece of legislation, passed by the House in 2001, increased the life insurance benefit paid to survivors of military members killed on duty.

Before Congress, Davis served four years in the Virginia House of Delegates.

A conservative who came from modest means, Davis was known for her unquenchable inquisitiveness and how quickly and deeply she learned about any legislative issue.

"I always admired Congresswoman Davis' strong convictions and the tenacity that she brought to bear in acting on them," said U.S. Sen. John W. Warner, a fellow Virginia Republican.

She attended Hampton Roads Business College; she got her real estate license in 1984 and her real estate broker's license four years later. In 1990, she opened Jo Ann Davis Realty.

She underwent chemotherapy treatments and a mastectomy when her cancer was first diagnosed in 2005. When the cancer returned, she underwent chemotherapy again and often monitored hearings from home.

Survivors include her husband, Chuck, two sons and a granddaughter.

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