

By Angie Mayes

Jack Moore never met a stranger.

That is evident by the number of friends he has made throughout his life. And by the number of friends he has made since he first arrived in La Vergne in 1966.

This week, those friends remembered Moore as a man who loved La Vergne, and one of a few visionaries who were integral in the formation of La Vergne as a city and community.

“He was very knowledgeable of the city, the economy, society and government,” said former Mayor A.C. Puckett, who served with Moore on the city’s Board and counted him as a good friend. “Jack was very instrumental in making this city what it is. La Vergne is partly what it is because of Jack.”

Current Alderman Mark Dodd shared the sentiment.

“His leadership and experience have been so integral to the process of our government,” Dodd said. “Of all the monuments that a person can leave behind -- their family and friends are number one -- but to have a whole town be a monument...Jack had the foresight to make the decisions to help make La Vergne what it is today.”

Dodd, like others, agrees that Moore was a real advocate in making positive decisions for the city concerning things such as water, sewer or the parks and schools. He was an “emotional advocate” for schools and for children.

“He was driving force with children, teachers, coaches, the new library and the new recreation park,” City Attorney Dave Bolin -- who has been the city’s attorney since it’s 1972 incorporation -- said. “He basically had the foresight to think of La Vergne in the year 2000.”

For Alderman Sherry Green, Moore’s passing will be like the loss of not only a friend and mentor, but of a member of the family as well.

“I’ve grown up with Jack,” she said. “He gave me lots of good advice. He took care of me when I was elected. He was always there for me...felt the need to take care of me.”

Moore was a basketball coach at various Tennessee schools and coached three of Green’s brothers and one sister at Auburntown.

“My grandma was a cook at the school and used to sneak food to him. He loved her dearly,” she said. “I feel like I’m not only losing a friend but a family member at the same time.”

The feeling that Moore was a friend was expressed by many this week, including City Administrator Don Pickard and Mayor Mike Webb.

“It’s a sad thing,” Pickard said. “I feel like I’ve lost a friend rather than someone I’ve worked for.”

Webb agreed.

"I want to say farewell to a close friend," he said. "Jack was a dedicated person to the City of La Vergne. He'll certainly be missed by the city and by me. He was loved by many."

Alderman David Fleming was running with Moore in the upcoming election. Their slogan -- for the two alderman at large spots -- was "Moore Fleming is good for La Vergne."

"Jack taught me to be political," Fleming said. "Not just knowing right from wrong, anyone can figure that out. He showed me how to get things done...the method to accomplish things."

Fleming said that La Vergne "will be lost without someone with Jack's experience on the board. Our council will not be the same after the election no matter who wins. It will be fresh people -- which is not bad -- but they won't have the experience that Jack had."

Fleming said that Moore's connections were impressive.

"He was so well connected," he said. "He couldn't go anywhere without someone knowing him. He got more doors open for us because he knew everybody. That's a side of him that the general population didn't know."

Fleming pointed out that "it's fitting that Jack fulfilled his duty as alderman and completed his term of office." The final city council meeting before the Oct. 6 election was Sept. 1.

A member -- and former president -- of the La Vergne Lions Club, Moore was a driving force behind the club's success.

"He was the backbone of the La Vergne Lions' Club," current President Wes Mayes said.

"Jack was a leader in the community and with the club. Due to his health, he retired as president last May, but still remained active, helping us with everything from the planning of the Old Timers' Day event to the annual nut sale."

Smyrna Mayor Robert Mullins felt close to Moore because of their common connections.

Mullins worked with Moore's daughter at the Tennessee Farmer's Cooperative in La Vergne. Moore's other daughter works at Middle Tennessee Christian School, on whose board Mullins is a member. In addition, Mullins' sister-in-law Carolyn worked for Moore at his appraisal business.

"Jack Moore is one of those individuals that has been there forever," Mullins said. "You expected to see him at any function. He always has information to share. It may be fact or opinion, but he would talk to anyone who would listen."

"He has given much to his family, his students, friends and community. The Town of Smyrna extends our sympathy to his family."

State Representative Mae Beavers said Moore was never ashamed to ask her for what the city needed.

“Jack impressed me because he cared about La Vergne,” she said. “He was not bashful about calling and asking for help from the state. He was not reluctant in asking for help with roads or anything else.”

Dodd believes that Moore was a servant of the people in the true sense of the phrase.

“I wouldn’t say politics was in his blood but I would say that public service to the people was in his blood,” he said. “La Vergne is a monument to Jack Moore and others who had the foresight to make the decisions and think outside the box.”