

The New York Times**Obituaries****George Mickelson, 52, Governor Of South Dakota, Dies in a Crash**

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Gov. George S. Mickelson of South Dakota, who followed his father's career path from a rural law practice to the state's highest office, died in a plane crash in Iowa on Monday night, a spokesman for his office said. He was 52.

Governor Mickelson was one of eight people killed in the crash about 15 miles southwest of Dubuque as they were returning from a trip to Cincinnati to promote economic development in the state, the spokesman said. Engine trouble was suspected.

Mr. Mickelson was co-chairman of the National Governors Association's task force on health care.

A Republican, Mr. Mickelson was first elected in 1986 and won another four-year term in 1990. He also served six years in the South Dakota House, where he was Speaker in 1979-80.

Lieut. Gov. Walter Dale Miller, who succeeded Governor Mickelson today, vowed to try "to accomplish all he wanted to accomplish for us." A Home-Grown Style

Mr. Mickelson was the son of George T. Mickelson, who served as South Dakota's Governor from 1947 to 1951.

When he followed his father into the Governor's mansion, he focused on economic development, encouraging manufacturing growth in a state that is more dependent on agriculture than any other sector.

He sought to raise teachers' salaries, among the lowest in the nation, and in 1989 made two record increases in state aid to school districts by setting aside 56 percent of the state's sales tax revenue.

Mr. Mickelson tried to improve relations between Indians and non-Indians in South Dakota, naming 1990 the Year of Reconciliation. Several times he sat with Sioux leaders and smoked the sacred pipe.

He had a home-grown style, often driving a pick-up truck to work. He was a popular member of the South Dakota House for six years, quitting in 1980.

In 1989, Mr. Mickelson's teen-age son, David, was charged with a sexual offense after a 16-year-old girl said she had been raped during a party at the Governor's Mansion. The Governor and Mrs. Mickelson were out of town at the time. David Mickelson was acquitted of the sex charge but was placed on probation for under-age consumption of alcohol. He and another boy at the party were ordered to pay the girl's medical bills. Served in Vietnam

Mr. Mickelson was born in Mobridge, S.D., and lived in the eastern South Dakota city of Brookings and the state capital, Pierre. He received a bachelor's degree in business administration and a law degree from the University of South Dakota.

After two years in the Army in Vietnam, he practiced law in Brookings, then served as Brookings County state's attorney and assistant state attorney general.

In addition to his son, Mr. Mickelson is survived by his wife, the former Linda McCahren; another son, Mark, and a daughter, Amy.

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