

Death Ends Fiery Career Of Louisiana's Earl Long

ALEXANDRIA, La. (AP)—Earl Kemp Long, grizzled patriarch of a Louisiana political clan and three times governor of the state, died of a heart attack early Monday.

The 65-year-old Long, winner of the Democratic runoff for a congressional seat from the state's Eighth District only 10 days ago, "just turned over in his bed and died."

Mrs. Blanche Long, his estranged wife, said Long's doctors

told her he had a heart attack Monday morning after spending a good night.

He awoke in good spirits, she said, but "he went out just like a light after he drank a cup of coffee."

Ellis ("Easy Money") Littleton, 30, who drove a sound truck for Long and acted as his hospital attendant, was in Long's room when he died. He said Long got up at 6:30 a.m., drank some coffee and then went back to sleep.

Littleton said he was shaving and heard Long cough twice.

"They sounded like gasps. It was a funny racket. I saw he was in sort of a strain. I went outside and called the nurse. She went and looked at him and said, 'He's going.' And she called the doctor.

"And then he died. He just died."

Long had been a patient at Baptist Hospital here since Aug. 28, the day after he defeated Rep. Harold McSween in the Democratic primary.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete. Dr. R. U. Parrott, Long's personal physician, said Long would probably be buried in Winnfield, the Central Louisiana town where he and his famous brother, Huey P. Long, rode muleback through the red-clay hills as boys.

Earl's death came just five days before the 25th anniversary of the death of his brother, self-styled "Kingfish" of Louisiana and its governor and U.S. senator. Huey Long was shot on Sept. 8, 1935, in the corridor of the skyscraper Capitol he built. He died two days later.

A dynamic force in state politics for more than 30 years, the volatile, combative Long reached the pinnacle of his career last year. His antics, including bouncing in and out of two mental hospitals, piqued the nation's curiosity and drew headlines in foreign newspapers.

The ordinary was extraordinary for Earl Kemp Long for he did nothing ordinary. He tried to defy state law, prohibiting a governor from succeeding himself, by announcing he would resign shortly before his term ended to run again. His boast fell through and he tried for the lieutenant governor's office, but lost badly.

He came back to the political scene just a few weeks after his term closed and ran for the congressional seat once held by his late brother George. He battled McSween into a runoff and won by almost 4,000 votes.