

Frederick L. "Fritz" Eagan Sr., a New Orleanian who spent 17 years in the Louisiana Senate, where he worked to improve public education and health care and was chairman of the powerful Revenue and Fiscal Affairs

Committee, [died](#) Tuesday at his home in Bay St. Louis, Miss. He was 76.

Mr. Eagan also worked as an insurance agent and was active, with his four brothers, in running three family businesses: Leitz-Eagan Funeral Home, Leitz-Eagan Insurance and Eagan Insurance.

He served in the Senate from 1963 to 1980, representing the 6th District, which included the Irish Channel, the Garden District and much of Central City and Broadmoor.

He lost his seat in December 1979 to William Jefferson, a young lawyer who became the Senate's second black member before moving on to Congress.

Mr. Eagan was [born](#) in New Orleans and graduated in 1942 from Alcee Fortier High School, where he was captain of the football team and won city and statewide recognition.

He entered Tulane University, but his education was interrupted by three years in the Navy. After returning to Tulane, he graduated with a degree in economics and political science. He was a member of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity.

Besides his role as chairman of the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee, Mr. Eagan also was, at various times, chairman of the Legislative Committee on Education, vice chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and a member of the Budget Committee and the Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee.

He also was a member of the State Board of Education for three years, secretary of the Southern Regional Education Board and a legislative floor leader for the Orleans Parish School Board.

He was the principal Senate author of legislation creating the state's Coordinating Council of Higher Education, the Louisiana Educational Television Authority and a hotel-motel training school at the University of New Orleans. He also was a chief architect of the state's expanded network of vocational-technical schools and author of the Special Education Act and Career Education Act.

Mr. Eagan was known for his liberal voting record, and in June 1979, six of the city's seven black legislators signed a statement praising his Senate record, even knowing he faced a major challenge from Jefferson. The statement, addressed to Mr. Eagan, said in part:

"You have long identified with needs and aspirations of poor and disadvantaged people and have taken it upon yourself to provide leadership in fighting for increased public welfare, a better system of public schools, improved health care, and day care centers, to mention a few."

But the six stopped short of endorsing Mr. Eagan, and he was easily defeated by Jefferson. After leaving the Legislature in 1980, he worked for a while as a

lobbyist.

Mr. Eagan received honors and awards from the Council of College Presidents, Louisiana Tech University, the Bureau of the Aging, Northeastern Louisiana University, the Vo-Tech School Directors Association, the Louisiana State Nurses Association, the Delgado College Alumni Association and the Louisiana Association of Retarded Citizens.

He was a former chairman of the New Orleans March of Dimes and the Friends of St. Alphonsus, and former grand marshal of the Irish Channel St. Patrick's Day Parade.

After retiring and moving to Bay St. Louis, he was active in the Knights of Columbus and helped manage St. Joseph Chapel in Bay St. Louis.

Survivors include his wife, Peggy Hopkins Eagan; a son, Frederick "Ric" Eagan Jr.; three daughters, Polly Eagan Breit, Deborah Eagan and Ellen Eagan-McNeill; a brother, Lloyd E. Eagan Sr.; and four grandchildren.

A Mass will be said Thursday at 2 p.m. at Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, 228 S. Beach Blvd., Bay St. Louis. Visitation will be today from 6 to 9 p.m. at Leitz-Eagan Funeral Home, 4747 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Metairie, and Thursday at 1 p.m. at the church.