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Pinehurst, NC

Former Republican state Senator and Pinehurst resident Harris Blake has died.

Blake, a Pinehurst business owner who represented District 22 for a decade before he retired in 2012, died today at his home. He was 84.

District 22 included constituents in Harnett, Lee and Moore counties. He was elected to the state Senate in 2002 after several failed bids for public office.

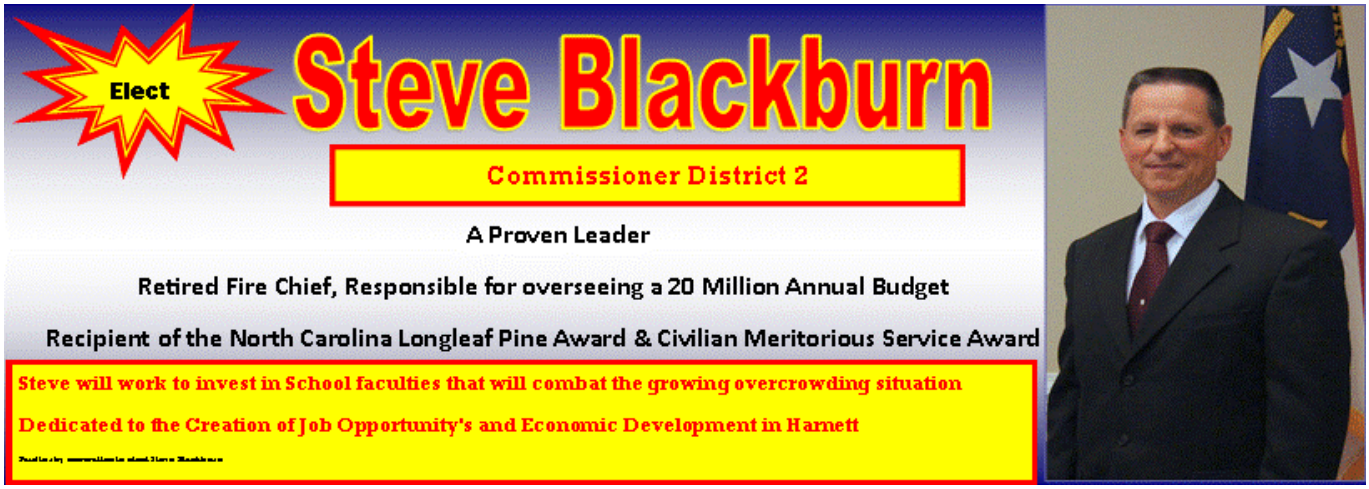
Prior to his election, Blake made two unsuccessful runs for Congress, one for county commissioner and one for secretary of state. He also served as a member of the Moore County Board of Education.

Blake grew up an orphan after both sharecropper parents died when he was only 5 years old. Jackson Springs saw to it that the Blake's' children were cared for. Following military service, he worked in the hardware business, then in real estate. He owned Pinehurst South Realty.

During his political career and after, Blake worked to forge friendly relations between China and North Carolina through his work with the Carolina China Council.

Blake was inducted into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2013. The Order of the Long Leaf Pine is the state's highest honor.

Since its creation in 1963, the honor has gone to persons who have a proven record of service to the state or some other special achievement. It is presented by order of the governor of North

Carolina.

During his induction into the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, Blake was described as a “self-made man” who was praised for his dedication to his community. He was called an “unfailing advocate for limited government, responsible state spending, and for his constituents,” and a “forceful advocate for those he represented.”