

Legislative Profile

By *Coleen Vansant*, Information Manager, Alabama Forestry Commission



Thomas E. Jackson
Democrat
68th District
*(Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh,
Marengo, and Monroe)*

Representative Thomas Jackson is currently serving his third term as representative of the state's 68th district. He lives in his hometown of Thomasville with his wife Dorothy. They have four children (Kimberly, Terence, Thomas III, and Trumaine) who, according to Jackson, are "grown but not gone." He also has one grandson, Elijah, who is three years old.

Following high school, he attended Selma University before receiving his B.S. in psychology from Knoxville College and his M.A. in Education and Counseling from Alabama State University.

Representative Jackson has worked for seven years as Director of the Upward Bound Program for Alabama Southern College. This program provides assistance to first generation low-income

students with the potential for going to college. Aside from his work, he serves as associate minister of the Church of God in Christ. Representative Jackson has been a lay speaker for approximately 18 years.

In the House of Representatives, Jackson is known as a strong supporter of forestry and the rural volunteer fire departments. He is Chair of the Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Committee and Vice-Chair of the National Conference of State Legislatures for Forestry and Agriculture Committee. Jackson also serves on the House Health Committee.

The veteran statesman serves on the Board of Directors of Todd-Town Community Development Corporation, the Board of Directors for the Southwest Alabama Boys and Girls Club, and is Coordinator of the Thomasville Precinct of the Alabama Democratic Conference. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, the National Black Caucus for State Legislators, both the Alabama and National Education Associations, and the Kiwanis Club. Representative Jackson has also served as past Vice-Chair of the Clarke County Democratic Conference, and as Past President of the Clarke County Education Association.

In 2003, the State Employees Association honored Representative Jackson with the "Legislator of the Year" Award. "Public service is honorable and I am proud to serve the people that live in my district. They have put their trust in me," he stated. "This job is one of fulfillment and I will continue to have an open mind in serving the people of this state and the people of District 68."

Jackson stated that one of the jobs he takes very seriously is making sure that volunteer fire departments are funded. Borrowing from the *Wide World of Sports*, he said that there was a "Thrill of Victory" this past legislative session

when the legislature was able to restore some of the funding to volunteer fire departments that had been taken out the previous year. Recently he assisted in identifying grant money from Homeland Security that would provide as much as \$75,000 to qualifying departments, "so that they can go out and protect and serve." He stressed the importance of volunteer fire departments in rural communities, adding that they "serve a very important role" in the structure of a small town. "They put their lives on the line out serving the public," he commended. "I am very proud of the work they do, not only in this area but across the state."

Jackson added a special "thanks" to the Alabama Forestry Commission for the efforts provided each year by its associates in the suppression of wildfire. He said he also appreciates the way the Commission assists landowners in managing their land, especially through the TREASURE Forest program. Jackson added that Alabama does not have wildfires like some other states because of good forest management.

Representative Jackson also commended the Alabama Forestry Commission for its other "fine work." He explained that the Commission always provides legislators important information "with clarity and understanding of what the situations are." He also praised the Commission's Outreach Program for minority landowners.

In concluding, Jackson said another "Thrill of Victory" was having a part in and working with the Agriculture and Forestry Program at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) in Huntsville, AL. He added that Alabama should be very proud of this program because it is the only certified forestry program in the United States that is located at a Historical Black College or University (HBCU.) ♣

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