

David Hampton Pryor

Born: August 29, 1934, at Camden, Arkansas

Died: n/a

Served: 1975-1979

David Pryor received a B.A. in political science from the University of Arkansas in 1957 and a LL.B. from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1964. A newspaperman from 1957 until 1961, Pryor's political career began in the Arkansas House of Representatives where he served three terms, 1961 to 1966. He was then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served from 1967 to 1972. He was elected Governor in 1974 and served two terms. During his tenure, Pryor championed reform of the 1874 Constitution and was instrumental in the calling of two conventions to revise the state's fundamental document. Pryor's administrations were noted for the quality of his appointments to boards and commissions, including numerous women and African-Americans, and by his devotion to fiscal restraint. His legislative programs included education aid for the elderly and the ultimately defeated "Arkansas Plan" which would have shifted much taxation responsibility from state to local government. In 1978 Pryor successfully sought a seat in the U.S. Senate, where he served until 1996. Most recently, he has served a two-year term as the Director of the Institute of Politics at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and in late 2003 was tapped as the first dean of the University of Arkansas's Clinton School of Public Service.

William Jefferson Clinton

Born: August 19, 1946, at Hope, Arkansas

Died: n/a

Served: 1979-1981; 1983-1992

William J. Clinton was born in Hope, Arkansas. He earned a bachelor's degree in international affairs in 1968 from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and attended Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. After graduating from Yale Law School in 1973, he joined the faculty of the University of Arkansas School of Law and practiced in Fayetteville. He was elected attorney general in 1976 and in 1978 won his first bid for governor, becoming the state's second-youngest governor. Clinton's first administration advanced small business development, improved teacher standards and road construction but suffered from the effects of regional and national economic woes, natural disasters and bad publicity stemming from an influx of Cuban refugees and increased vehicle-licensing fees. In 1980 Clinton's re-election bid failed but in 1982 he regained the governor's office, to which he was re-elected in 1984, 1986, and 1990. Notable initiatives of Clinton's subsequent terms include education reform, multilevel economic development and adoption of a state code of ethics. He served as chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, the Democratic Governors' Association, and the Education Commission of the States. In October 1991, Governor Clinton resigned his office in order to pursue, successfully, the Democratic Party's nomination for president.

Frank Durward White

Born: June 4, 1933, at Texarkana, Texas

Died: May 21, 2003, at Little Rock, Arkansas

Served: 1981-1993

Frank D. White was born Durward Frank Kyle on June 3, 1933. His mother remarried and his stepfather, Frank White, adopted him. He graduated from the New Mexico Military Institute and received an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in 1952. After graduation from Annapolis in 1956, White took a commission in the U.S. Air Force, accumulating more than 1,800 flying hours as a captain. He entered the securities business in Little Rock in 1961; White later was affiliated with Little Rock banking companies. He was appointed director of the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission in 1975, a position he held until 1977. Elected governor in 1980, White's friendly personality and self-deprecating style won him much personal popularity but his legislative program was modest and won little support in the Legislature or around Arkansas. During his tenure, he signed a measure approved by the legislature requiring Arkansas teachers to include "creation science" in the curriculum if the theory of evolution was also taught. The law was later struck down as unconstitutional by a federal judge but drew national attention. White's efforts to reform utility regulation were overshadowed by charges of coziness with utility company executives. Frank White lost his 1982 bid for re-election and returned to commercial banking. Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee named White his state banking commissioner in July 1998.

James Guy Tucker Jr.

Born: June 13, 1943, at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Died: n/a

Served: 1991-1996

James Guy Tucker Jr. received a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University in 1964 and a law degree from the University of Arkansas in 1968. He was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and was a civilian correspondent in South Vietnam in 1965 and 1967. He served as a prosecuting attorney; state attorney general and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served on the Ways and Means Committee. He was elected lieutenant governor in 1990; he resigned from his position as a senior partner in his law firm to become acting governor in October 1991, when then-Governor Bill Clinton began his campaign for President. He served the balance of the Clinton term and then was elected to a four-year term in November 1994. As governor, Tucker pursued a course of economy, cutting agency budgets and funneling saved monies into education, but called a special session of the Legislature in August 1994 to deal with the rising juvenile crime rate. Over thirty measures from this session were signed into law, affecting most aspects of the juvenile justice system. In 1995, however, Tucker's political fortunes began to fail. An initiative on his part to improve roads was defeated. This was followed by his indictment as part of the expanding Whitewater investigation surrounding President Clinton. Tucker's July 1996 conviction was followed by his resignation. Though he paid a large fine, Tucker would spend little actual time in prison because of fragile health. He maintains a residence in Little Rock and is engaged in various business ventures.

Michael Huckabee

Born: August 24, 1955, at Hope, Arkansas

Died: n/a

Served: 1996-2007

A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and an ordained Baptist minister, Mike Huckabee served as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and challenged veteran U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers in the election of 1992. Although Bumpers won re-election, Huckabee polled about 40 percent of the vote. A special election was called in 1993 to choose a lieutenant governor; Huckabee defeated the Democratic nominee. As lieutenant governor he served as acting governor on several occasions. He became Governor of Arkansas in July 1996 when his predecessor resigned. Huckabee was elected to a full four-year term as governor in 1998 and was reelected in November 2002. As governor, he has advocated the reorganization of state government and various education reforms in Arkansas that significantly expanded the availability of college scholarships, increased the number of charter schools, and established new approaches to workforce education. Huckabee has also advocated improved health care for children, a sales-tax increase to fund state park improvements and bond issues to rebuild and improve the state's interstate highways.

Mike Beebe

Arkansas's current governor is the **Honorable Mike Beebe**. Governor Beebe was elected in November 2006 and took office in January of 2007. For more information on him please visit www.governor.arkansas.gov.