

# GeorgiaTrend

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## 100 Most Influential Georgians

Edited By Jerry Grillo

Published January 0

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Michael Adams

President

University of Georgia

Athens

Age: 59

UGA continues to be recognized as one of the nation's best business and public research universities. Adams' efforts to improve student quality are reflected in the growing campus. Total construction initiated during his tenure has hit \$1 billion, including the new \$40 million Lamar Dodd School of Art scheduled to open next fall.

Dr. J. David Allen

Chairman

Georgia Chamber of Commerce

Atlanta

Age: 62

Allen holds the Georgia Chamber of Commerce record for recruiting the most new members (more than 200), and chaired the record-setting 2006 Chamber fund-raising campaign. In 2007 the dentist and healthcare consultant (Allen & Associates) was appointed to serve on the Department of Natural Resources board.

Daniel P. Amos

Chairman & CEO

Aflac, Inc.

Columbus

Age: 56

With a little help from a web-footed friend, Amos has grown Aflac revenues to more than \$14 billion. The company's people-first management approach has led to a reputation as one of the best places to work for both Hispanics and working mothers, and Fortune has again ranked it as one of America's Most Admired Companies.

Radcliffe Bailey

Artist

Atlanta

Age: 39

Having established himself as a magnificent painter of assemblages, Bailey recently moved into the realm of 3-D installation. His ambitious double-show at Clark Atlanta University's Trevor Arnett Gallery and Solomon Projects in Midtown Atlanta, part of the 2007 National Black Arts Festival, was a giant step forward for the collagist extraordinaire.

Thurbert Baker

Attorney General

State of Georgia

Stone Mountain

Age: 55

Baker helped pass a law to protect children from online sexual predators, pushed through a groundbreaking law against financial identity fraud and wrote the state's new law targeting fast-growing residential mortgage fraud. He's also led the charge against Medicaid fraud, supported strengthening domestic violence laws and upheld the state's Open Records and Open Meetings acts.

Thomas D. Bell, Jr.

Chairman/CEO

Cousins Properties

Atlanta

Age: 57

Bell, a business and civic leader who chairs Mayor Shirley Franklin's Peachtree Corridor Task Force, helms a 50-year-old, \$1.3 billion real estate company that continues to reshape Atlanta, with projects such as Terminus in Buckhead and Fox Plaza in Midtown. The firm also made a major commitment to downtown, relocating its headquarters to what was a mostly vacant 191 Peachtree Tower.

Sanford Bishop

U.S. Congressman

District 2

Albany

Age: 60

Bishop has helped secure more than a billion dollars in federal grants and loans for agricultural interests such as peanut, cotton and soybean farmers, helping southwest Georgia's heavily rural and agricultural Second District prosper. He's also pushed through bills to sustain and expand local military installations such as Fort Benning.

Arthur Blank

Owner & CEO

Atlanta Falcons and

Georgia Force

Chairman, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation

Atlanta

Age: 65

The Falcons' 2007 season unraveled before it began with the indictment, guilty plea and federal felony conviction of star quarterback Michael Vick for illegal dogfighting and gambling, but Blank remains on target as one of Atlanta's philanthropic giants. His family foundation has granted more than \$160 million to community causes, and he has given \$35 million toward a new Atlanta Symphony Center.

Bill Bolling

Executive Director/Founder

Atlanta Community Food Bank

Decatur

Age: 60

Bolling founded his organization as an emergency food source in the basement of St. Luke's Episcopal Church 29 years ago in downtown Atlanta. Today the ACFB distributes some 22 million pounds of food and other donated grocery items to more than 800 nonprofit partner agencies in 38 North Georgia counties.

Lisa Borders  
President  
Atlanta City Council  
Atlanta  
Age: 49

As Atlanta City Council President since 2004, Borders has encouraged neighborhood stability, supported the availability of affordable housing and sustained growth in the city's business districts. She juggles all that with her role as senior vice president for Cousins Properties. But with plans to run for Atlanta mayor in 2009, her biggest challenge still awaits.

Annette Bowling  
Executive Director  
Albany Advocacy Resource Center  
Doerun  
Age: 71

For more than 30 years Bowling has carried a passionate message to elected officials and anyone else who would listen: The disabled can be productive members of society. Thanks to her tireless efforts, thousands of lives have been changed as housing and healthcare programs have brought disabled people from the fringes of society into the mainstream.

Walter Broadnax  
President  
Clark Atlanta University  
Atlanta  
Age: 63

When Broadnax became the second president in the school's history, Clark Atlanta was facing a deficit of some \$25 million. Today, university claims put the deficit at \$4 million following an alumni fund-raising campaign, and enrollment has increased. And yet, a group of faculty and students has called for his removal, claiming the school is in worse shape.

C. Michael Cassidy  
President/CEO  
Georgia Research Alliance  
Atlanta  
Age: 54

With Cassidy at the helm, the Alliance has become an internationally acclaimed model for uniting business, research universities and state government to create and sustain a technology-driven economy. To date, it has invested roughly \$400 million to attract eminent scholars and create new technology jobs, as well as leverage \$2 billion in federal and private funding.

Dan Cathy  
President/COO  
Chick-fil-A, Inc.  
Fayetteville  
Age: 54

Cathy represents the next generation of leadership for the family-owned Atlanta-based restaurant company, with more than 1,350 stores in 37 states and Washington, DC. Chick-fil-A surpassed \$2 billion in sales in 2006 and will probably exceed \$2.5 billion for 2007. The fast-growing chain, which regularly wins awards for customer service, has more than 47,000 employees nationwide.

Saxby Chambliss  
U.S. Senator

Moultrie

Age: 64

Chambliss' efforts to persuade the Army Corps of Engineers to update its 20-year-old Water Control Plan may help alleviate Georgia's water crisis. He's also been instrumental in drafting two farm bills and worked to reform the federal crop insurance program through his chairmanship of the Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

G. Wayne Clough

President

Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta

Age: 66

Since Clough became president in 1994, research expenditures have increased from \$212 million to \$425 million and more than \$900 million has been spent to improve the campus, including building new dorms, creating the award-winning Tech-nology Square and expanding the 5th Street bridge. In the process, he's helping change the character of Atlanta's Midtown district.

Carol Couch

Director

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Decatur

Age: 51

Couch is the first woman to lead the 850-person agency that implements and enforces state and federal laws designed to protect, conserve and restore Georgia's environmental resources. She also chairs the Georgia Water Council, the group charged with overseeing development of a comprehensive statewide water plan, which she will ultimately administer as EPD director.

Mike Cowan

Commissioner (District 1)

Whitfield County

Board of Commissioners

Dalton

Age: 51

Cowan, who is serving his fourth term on the Whitfield County Board of Commissioners since first being elected in 1996, won the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2007 County Courthouse Award for innovative governance. NACo recognized Cowan for, among other things, spearheading county projects to modernize local water system infrastructure and improve drinking water quality.

Kathy Cox

State School Superintendent

State of Georgia

Fayetteville

Age: 43

Kathy Cox is best known for implementing the Georgia Performance Standards to improve academic performance. Now, the overhaul is starting to pay off. Georgia's graduation rate jumped to an all-time high of 72.3 percent, SAT scores are keeping up with the nation, and the state's minority students continue to score as well as their peers.

Charles Craig

President

Georgia Biomedical Partnership

Atlanta

Age: 55

Craig is the point man for Georgia's life sciences industries, which provide 15,000 jobs, \$940 million in annual wages and an expected \$6.9 billion in sales (for 2007). The industry roster has grown to include emerging bio-fuel and bio-energy firms as Georgia prepares to host the 2009 BIO International Conference.

Dennis Creech

Executive Director

Southface Energy Institute

Atlanta

Age: 57

As co-founder and executive director of Southface, Creech has advocated for water conservation, saving energy and sustainable development for more than 25 years. Through partnerships and programs such as EarthCraft, the nonprofit's message reached more than 40,000 people last year alone. With Georgia's water restrictions continuing to tighten, his message is timelier than ever.

Erroll Davis

Chancellor

University System of Georgia

Atlanta

Age: 63

Davis, the first African-American to hold his position, leads a growing university system with 35 institutions, a \$5.7 billion annual budget, 260,000 students, 40,000 employees, and an economic value to the state of some \$23.3 billion a year. The system projects \$3.4 billion for new facilities to meet an expected enrollment increase of some 100,000 students by 2020.

Benjamin DeCosta

Aviation General Manager,

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

Atlanta

Age: 61

DeCosta manages the state's largest employment center with a workforce of about 56,000 and an annual regional economic impact of more than \$23.5 billion. But the world's busiest airport (almost 85 million passengers in 2006) may not be enough to meet future capacity, so DeCosta is studying the possibility of adding a second Atlanta airport.

Earl Ehrhart

State Representative

Powder Springs

Age: 48

Ehrhart, the longest-serving Republican in the Georgia House of Representatives and the no-nonsense, occasionally irascible chairman of the powerful House Rules Committee, has been an ardent supporter of, among other things, the title-pawn industry, the rights of single fathers and Speaker Glenn Richardson's GREAT Plan to reform the state tax system.

Sue Everhart

Chairperson

Georgia Republican Party

Marietta

Age: 62

The first woman to chair the Georgia Republican Party, Everhart was elected to her post in May 2007. She couldn't have made history at a better time – Georgia is one of the nation's most powerful GOP strongholds. The governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, both U.S. senators and seven (out of 13) members of the Congressional delegation are Republicans.

Shirley Franklin

Mayor

City of Atlanta

Age: 62

The “sewer mayor” now is Atlanta’s “water mayor,” presiding over an era of record drought and water consciousness in north Georgia. Under Franklin’s tenure, the city began a \$1 billion initiative to replace water mains and meters and repair leaks. Franklin, who was planning to raise water rates for overuse, supports piping in additional sources (like desalinated seawater) for the long term.

Mike Garrett

President/CEO

Georgia Power Company

Atlanta

Age: 58

Garrett is top dog at a company with 2.3 million customers throughout Georgia and annual revenues of \$5.3 billion, with an eye toward more nuclear power production at Plant Vogtle in coming years. Garrett chaired the Georgia Department of Economic Development Board in 2007 and is chairing the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta’s 2007-2008 fund-raising campaign.

Julie Gerberding

Director

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Atlanta

Age: 52

Gerberding is five years into her job as the first woman to run the public health agency with nearly 15,000 federal and contract employees, based in the busy Clifton Corridor area of Atlanta. She is directing an organizational transformation to better position the agency to respond to new challenges, including a national public health response to the effects of climate change.

Renee Lewis Glover

President/CEO

Atlanta Housing Authority

Atlanta

Age: 58

Glover manages the state’s largest housing authority, serving some 50,000 people. The AHA, the nation’s first public housing agency to completely privatize management of its properties, blurs the line between social service and economic development – in the past 12 years it has demolished thousands of public housing units in favor of new, mixed-income communities.

Jerry Gonzalez

Executive Director

Georgia Association of

Latino Elected Officials

Atlanta

Age: 36

The pragmatic Gonzalez endures threats and hate mail in his tireless effort to

increase representation of the Georgia Latino population in elected office and at the polls, where his efforts have resulted in ever-increasing numbers of registered voters. GALEO's Institute for Leadership now partners with the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute to increase civic engagement.

Jerry Griffin  
Executive Director  
Association County Commissioners Of Georgia  
Jonesboro  
Age: 63

As leader of the consensus-building organization for all 159 county governments in the state, Griffin has a considerable to-do list, especially with this year's legislative session. House Speaker Glenn Richardson wants to completely eliminate all property taxes in Georgia, which ACCG fears would shift local spending decisions from local governments to the capitol.

Karen Handel  
Secretary of State  
State of Georgia  
Roswell  
Age: 45

Handel, former Fulton County Commission Chair, was elected as Georgia's first Republican Secretary of State since the 1870s. Among her top priorities as the state's election monitor: revamping Georgia's electronic voting system, specifically the transition toward the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), a plan that could cost the state \$100 million.

Becca Hardin  
Executive Vice President of Economic Development  
The Valley Partnership  
Columbus  
Age: 42

Hardin leads the economic development team for a multi-county, multi-governmental entity covering Columbus/Muscogee County, Harris, Talbot, Taylor, Marion and Chattahoochee counties and the cities of West Point, Manchester and Phenix City, Ala. The Partnership has, since 2000, created more than 16,000 jobs and generated \$2.7 billion through new projects and business expansions.

Jim Higdon  
Executive Director  
Georgia Municipal Association  
Atlanta  
Age: 66

Higdon, chief advocate for Georgia's cities, directs an organization with a membership of more than 500 municipal governments. He has been at the forefront of opposition to House Speaker Glenn Richardson's proposed tax plan that would abolish property taxes across the state, effectively handing over the community checkbook to state legislators.

Tommy Hills  
Chief Financial Officer  
State of Georgia  
Atlanta  
Age: 63

With prudent eyes on the state's balance sheet, the former longtime banking executive is tasked with keeping Georgia fiscally stable, a tough job that promises only to get tougher. Among other things near the top of his to-do

list, Hills is overseeing the effort to effectively address a looming \$16 billion shortfall in the state employee retirement system.

Johnny Isakson

U.S. Senator

Marietta

Age: 63

Isakson, who touts conservative values, has spent his political career developing a reputation for working both sides of the political gangway. That mollifying spirit came through as Isakson sponsored a stem-cell bill that was considered a compromise to a Democrat-backed bill. Isakson's bill passed easily in the Senate, but there was no House version of the bill.

E. Neville Isdell

Chairman/CEO

The Coca-Cola Company

Atlanta

Age: 62

Isdell leads a \$23 billion global soft-drink empire with 55,000 employees and operations on every continent, a company experiencing double digit earnings increases from quarter to quarter. He assured a smooth leadership transition when he announced last month that Muhtar Kent, his second in command, will succeed him in July.

George M. Israel III

President/CEO

Georgia Chamber of Commerce

Macon

Age: 57

Georgia government has developed a reputation for being fervently pro-business, and the results-driven Israel is a main reason why. The Macon native (and former mayor of that city) has faithfully and effectively carried out the 4,000-member chamber's primary mission of aggressively advocating the business viewpoint in shaping public policy.

Eric Johnson

President Pro Tem

Georgia Senate

Savannah

Age: 53

A state senator since 1994, the Savannah Republican shaped Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship program, the state's first education voucher program. It provides state funds for children with disabilities to attend the public or private school of their choice. So far, more than 900 special needs children have used the vouchers.

Bill Jones III

Chairman/CEO

Sea Island Company

St. Simons Island

Age: 49

The \$500 million resort renaissance that Jones began six years ago was punctuated with the midsummer debut of the 160,000-square-foot Beach Club. Located across from The Cloister, the fabled landmark that was reborn in 2006, the Beach Club is focused on families – swimming pools, movie theatre, playground, etc., all of it close to some of the nation's top-ranked resort golf courses.

Vernon Jones  
CEO  
DeKalb County  
Lithonia  
Age: 48

The opinionated Jones often has been at the center of a self-perpetuating storm since becoming chief executive of diverse DeKalb in 2000, overseeing a budget of almost \$3 billion in the second most populous county in Georgia. The former Democratic state representative will run for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Republican Saxby Chambliss.

Jerry Keen  
Majority Leader  
Georgia House of Representatives  
St. Simons Island  
Age: 57

Keen, who used to lead the Georgia Christian Coalition, has been mentioned as a possible future gubernatorial candidate. A clever but subtle force behind the scenes, the ambitious socially and fiscally conservative Keen has stepped to the fore in his support of tax reform and a tough approach to dealing with sex offenders.

James Cox Kennedy  
Chairman/CEO  
Cox Enterprises, Inc.  
Atlanta  
Age: 60

Kennedy guides Georgia's largest private company (the nation's 12th largest), a \$12 billion media empire with about 78,000 employees nationwide. Cox Enterprises owns the third-largest cable TV company in the U.S., the nation's largest wholesale auctioneer of used cars, radio and TV stations, and newspapers, including The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Jane Kidd  
Chairperson  
Georgia Democratic Party  
Athens  
Age: 54

Kidd is growing a grassroots network on a county-to-county basis, combining 21st century technology with old-fashioned shoe leather as she tries to make her party relevant again in Georgia. Presidential candidate John Edwards spoke at last year's Jefferson-Jackson Dinner fund raiser (generating more than \$500,000) and Kidd expects the entire field of candidates for this January's event.

Charles "Chick" Krautler  
Director  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
Atlanta  
Age: 60

Finding solutions to the side effects of Metro Atlanta's enormous population growth – traffic congestion, air pollution and water woes – leaves Krautler in an ever-challenging job as mediator among 10 counties and 66 municipalities. To help, Krautler oversaw development of a \$67 billion regional transportation plan.

John Lewis  
U.S. Congressman, 5th District

Atlanta

Age: 67

Lewis is a tireless advocate for civil liberties, with colleagues in Wash-ington, DC., often calling him “the conscience of the U.S. Congress.” His resonant voice still stirs passion with a crowd, whether he’s recalling the dozens of arrests, beatings and injuries he suffered during the civil rights movement or neighborhood preservation, the Beltline and tax subsidies.

Jim Lientz

Chief Operating Officer

State of Georgia

Atlanta

Age: 63

Lientz, appointed the state’s first COO in 2003 by Gov. Sonny Perdue, is the man behind the scenes in charge of running state government. An executive in the financial services industry for some 30 years before his government appointment, Lientz gets high marks for his role overseeing the state’s managers.

Doug Marchand

Executive Director

Georgia Ports Authority

Savannah

Age: 60

To Marchand, the global economy can be counted one 20-foot shipping container at a time. During his tenure at the ports authority, the number of containers passing through each year has tripled to 2.3 million. Georgia’s deepwater ports and inland barge terminals support more than 286,000 jobs in the state, contributing \$14.9 billion in income, \$55.8 billion in revenue and \$2.8 billion in local and state taxes.

John Mellott

Publisher

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Marietta

Age: 50

Mellott presided over a major newsroom overhaul last year at the AJC, which has seen its daily circulation numbers tumble year after year. Still the Southeast’s largest daily newspaper and flagship of the Cox media empire, the AJC reaches a print and online audience of more than 2.3 million each week.

Emory Morsberger

CEO

The Morsberger Group

Lawrenceville

Age: 52

One of the brains driving the proposed “brain train” that would link Atlanta to Athens, Morsberger is a regional leader in the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic buildings and declining neighborhoods. His company has spearheaded the creation of two community improvement districts in Gwinnett and is responsible for the planned \$400 million renovation of City Hall East in Atlanta.

Lisa Mount

Director/Consultant

Artistic Logistics

Sautee Nacoochee

Age: 43

Mount's influence extends from Sautee Nacoochee (designated one of the "100 best small art towns in America,") where she directed and co-produced the acclaimed story-play, *Headwaters :: Stories From a Goodly Portion of Beautiful Northeast Georgia*, across Georgia and the nation. Artistic Logistics helps nonprofit arts organizations nationwide get their ducks in a row.

Sam Olens

Chairman, Cobb County Board of Commissioners

Chairman, Atlanta Regional Commission

Marietta

Age: 50

Olens understands traffic congestion. He lives it daily as he shuttles between Marietta and downtown Atlanta, delicately balancing his hyper-local duties as the elected head of Cobb government with building consensus among the disparate elected officials that make up the Atlanta Regional Commission, to address stalled roadways, air quality and water issues.

Larry O'Neal

State Representative

Warner Robins

Age: 58

The chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee achieved statewide notoriety for implementing changes in a state law that provided thousands of dollars in tax breaks for his old friend, Gov. Sonny Perdue. O'Neal is co-sponsor of a bill authored by Speaker Glenn Richardson to eliminate property taxes.

Alicia Philipp

President

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

Decatur

Age: 54

Philipp, who has led the foundation for 30 years, recognized the value of engaging the next generation of philanthropists in 2000 when she established the Center for Family Philanthropy to offer personalized services to donor families to teach their children about ways to give back. The Community Foundation awarded some 4,600 grants totaling about \$50 million to nonprofits in metro Atlanta last year.

Dubose Porter

State Representative

District 143

Executive Editor/Owner

Courier Herald

Dublin

Age: 54

An irritant of Republicans at the State Capitol since the GOP took control in 2004, Porter also serves as a gadfly in Middle Georgia as the executive editor and co-owner of nine newspapers. Porter, as minority leader, now relishes dustups over the state budget, taking on waste in state operations and safeguarding education.

Daniel Rahn

President

Medical College of Georgia

Augusta

Age: 57

Rahn is transforming the medical college's campus, boosting student enrollment 24 percent in the last six years to 2,400 students, breaking ground for the School of Dentistry's new building, launching 20 other facilities projects, and partnering with the 24 nursing programs throughout the University System of Georgia to address a nursing shortfall in the state.

David Ratcliffe  
Chairman, President & CEO  
Southern Company  
Atlanta  
Age: 58

With 4.3 million customers, more than 500,000 shareholders and some 26,000 employees, Ratcliffe runs a corporation that touches the lives of people across the Southeast. The former high school biology teacher probably never dreamed of climate change, biofuels and the region's voracious appetite for electricity when he joined a Southern Company subsidiary in 1971.

John Rice  
Vice Chairman  
General Electric  
President/CEO  
GE Infrastructure  
Roswell  
Age: 51

The soft-spoken, community-minded Rice is a high-flying road warrior. Based in Atlanta, he travels to 25-30 countries a year on behalf of GE Infrastructure, comprising the Energy, Aviation, Rail, Oil & Gas, Energy Financial Services and Aviation Financial Services operations – global businesses responsible for \$54 billion in revenue and 90,000 employees.

Glenn Richardson  
Speaker  
Georgia House of Representatives  
Hiram  
Age: 47

While Georgia leadership spent most of 2007 focusing on epic challenges in statewide water and transportation planning, Richardson (the first GOP speaker in more than 130 years) trumpeted his tax reform plan. He wants to eliminate property taxes in favor of statewide sales taxes on goods and services, radically altering the way local governments operate.

Spurgeon Richardson  
President/CEO  
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Atlanta  
Age: 66

Richardson has been the leading architect of Atlanta's tourism and hospitality industry surge since taking the helm of the ACVB in 1991. Each year, more than 35 million visitors spend some \$10 billion (supporting 215,000 jobs) in Atlanta, where 60,000 hotel rooms are occupied nightly – the city's 65 percent hotel occupancy rate exceeds the national average of 63 percent.

Dr. Larry E. Rivers  
President  
Fort Valley State University  
Fort Valley

Age: 55

Rivers has set his alma mater on the path to health and prosperity. Enrollment and the endowment have increased 20 percent while budget deficits have been eliminated, a \$44 million student housing village opened in the fall, a \$15 million science research facility is scheduled for completion in 2009 and a new \$13.5 million student center and stadium is in the works.

A.J. Robinson

President, Central Atlanta Progress

President, Atlanta Downtown

Improvement District

Atlanta

Age: 52

Making Downtown Atlanta more livable, vital and diverse seemed a daunting task for Robinson when he joined CAP in 2002. But the continued whirl of construction cranes and the resulting new additions to the skyline show that the former real estate executive is reshaping the area through economic development, improved public safety and even better marketing.

David Scott

U.S. Congressman

13th District

Atlanta

Age: 61

Scott represents one of the state's oddly shaped districts, including portions of Cobb, Douglas, Fulton, Clayton, Henry and DeKalb counties. The longtime state legislator (28 years) has taken a leadership role in the U.S. Congress, throwing his support behind legislation that includes extending PeachCare, extending the Voting Rights Act and giving veterans both retirement and disability pay.

Leah Sears

Chief Justice

Georgia Supreme Court

Atlanta

Age: 52

Sears, the first African-American female chief justice in the country, founded the Commission on Children, Marriage and Family Law to address problems associated with family breakdowns. Last year she helped reunite one family in a case that received national attention, casting one of the votes that set free Genarlow Wilson, ruling that his sentence for a teen sex conviction was cruel and unusual punishment.

Thomas (Tom) A. Smith

President/CEO

Oglethorpe Power Corporation

Alpharetta

Age: 53

Smith runs the nation's largest power supply cooperative in assets, annual kilowatt-hour sales and ultimate customers served. Oglethorpe Power serves 38 of Georgia's 42 Electric Membership Corporations, covering some 70 percent of the state's land mass. The corporation has assets of more than \$4.8 billion and annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion.

John W. Somerhalder II

President/CEO

AGL Resources

Atlanta

Age: 52

Somerhalder has the experience needed to cope with the ups and downs of the energy services business. He had already spent some 30 years in the field before being named in March 2006 to head Atlanta-based AGL, which serves more than 2.2 million customers in six states.

Andy Stanley

Founder/Senior Pastor

North Point Ministries

Alpharetta

Age: 49

Stanley presides over a mega-church for the 21st century. North Point Ministries maintains three campuses in Metro Atlanta with about 21,000 churchgoers, and about a dozen strategic partner churches around the country. Stanley, voted the 13th most influential "Christian in America" (ChurchReport.com), is a pioneer in the use of high definition video in place of a live speaker.

Kenneth (Ken) C. Stewart

Commissioner

Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD)

Marietta

Age: 58

Stewart has one of the most important jobs in state government. He heads the department in charge of attracting new business to Georgia and helping grow the ones already here. GDEcD has been praised for becoming more aggressive in its international efforts and improving the support given to the state's small businesses and entrepreneurs.

James Stokes

President

The Georgia Conservancy

Atlanta

Age: 63

Stokes, who led Alston & Bird's environmental law practice group for 20 years, has directed the Georgia Conservancy since May 2005. Among his priorities for the environmental organization are continuing active involvement in development of a statewide water plan – he was appointed by EPD Director Carol Couch to both the Water Advisory Committee and Drought Response Committee.

Jimmy Tallent

President/CEO

United Community Bank, Inc.

Blairsville

Age: 55

A native of northeast Georgia, Tallent took charge of a local, \$40 million Union County bank and has shrewdly turned it into UCBI, an \$8 billion, multi-bank holding company – third largest in Georgia, with banking offices in north Georgia, coastal Georgia, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and Metro Atlanta.

Michael Thurmond

Commissioner

Georgia Department of Labor

Athens

Age: 54

Under Thurmond's guidance, Georgia's labor department is considered one of

the best in the nation at getting the jobless back to work. Thurmond has been a strong advocate for Georgians who have lost their jobs or need help with the training or education required in today's changing labor market.

William J. Todd  
President/CEO  
Georgia Cancer Coalition  
Atlanta  
Age: 59

Todd is in the forefront of making Georgia a pacesetter in cancer care. Under his leadership, the Coalition has made encouraging progress in attracting funding for research and bringing together all resources, public and private, to focus on one goal: reducing the human suffering and untimely deaths attributed to cancer.

Cynthia Tucker  
Editorial Page Editor  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
Atlanta  
Age: 52

Tucker added journalism's highest honor to her long list of achievements, winning the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2007, after coming close as a finalist twice before. Syndicated in more than 70 papers, Tucker writes thoughtfully on a variety of complex issues and directs editorial opinion policy for the Southeast's largest newspaper.

James Wagner  
President  
Emory University  
Atlanta  
Age: 54

Under Wagner's leadership, Emory (\$5.7 billion annual economic impact) strengthened its role as an education destination in the past year, especially when it comes to faculty: Novelist Salman Rushdie began serving as distinguished writer in residence; His Holiness the Dalai Lama became a presidential distinguished professor; and Natasha Trethewey (Phillis Wheatley Distinguished Chair in Poetry) won the Pulitzer Prize.

B.J. Walker  
Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Human Resources  
Atlanta  
Age: 58

In an age when state legislators have routinely targeted social services for the budget axe, Walker has the challenge of managing Georgia's comprehensive health and social service agency, one of the largest departments in state government (19,000 employees, budget of some \$2.5 billion), providing services in mental health, developmental diseases, addictive diseases, aging, child welfare and public health.