

MEADE ALCORN, GOP LEADER, DIES AT 84

By [Martin Weil](#) January 14, 1992

Meade Alcorn, 84, a leader in the Eisenhower wing of the Republican Party who was chairman of the Republican National Committee during the second Eisenhower administration, died yesterday at his home in Suffield, Conn., after a stroke.

Mr. Alcorn was described as "the best national chairman the {Republican} party has enjoyed in modern times," by Theodore H. White, the historian of presidential campaigns, in his book "The Making of the President -- 1964."

White credited Mr. Alcorn with the mounting in 1957 of Operation Dixie. That effort recognized and amplified a growing Republican sentiment among white voters in the nation's South, which had been an exclusively Democratic electoral province only a short time before.

"Meade was an inspiration to all who were formulating political careers during the time of his leadership," President Bush said in a statement.

The president, whose father, Prescott Bush, was a Republican senator from Connecticut when Mr. Alcorn was party chief, said Mr. Alcorn "was a personal friend of my father and our entire family. He gave us support and advice at many points."

A veteran of Connecticut politics who had been chairman of the Eisenhower for President movement in his state in 1952, Mr. Alcorn became national party chairman on Feb. 1, 1957, after the resignation of Leonard W. Hall.

At a news conference a few days before, Mr. Eisenhower had referred to Mr. Alcorn as one of the party leaders responsible for the development of "modern Republicanism."

In one of his first addresses as party chairman, Mr. Alcorn defined a modern Republican as an "enlightened conservative" who wanted government to provide necessary services, but didn't want it "treading on his individual freedom."

In another talk early in his tenure, Mr. Alcorn pledged to continue his predecessor's work in setting up GOP organizations in every state "on a full-time, aggressive, fighting basis, and that includes the South."

As described by a journalist of the period, Mr. Alcorn shared with Eisenhower the view that for his party to continue to thrive it needed to separate itself from elements that had given it a reactionary image.

Mr. Alcorn was born in Suffield on Oct. 20, 1907, and attended Dartmouth College, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and starred on the track team. He was credited with breaking a world record for the 60-yard low hurdles, with a time of 6.9 seconds.

The son of Hugh Mead Alcorn, a politically active lawyer, Mr. Alcorn was known as Hugh M. Alcorn Jr. until his unsuccessful race for lieutenant governor in 1948. In that year, he added an "e" to his middle name to distinguish himself from his father and campaigned as Meade Alcorn.

Mr. Alcorn, a 1933 graduate of Yale University law school, was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1936, serving as majority leader in 1939 and speaker in 1941. Upon his father's retirement in 1942, he was appointed prosecutor for Hartford County, and held the post for six years.

He was Republican floor leader of the Connecticut Constitutional Convention in 1965.

David Schneider, managing partner of the Connecticut law firm of Tyler, Cooper and Alcorn, said Mr. Alcorn had been active in the firm until shortly after his 80th birthday.

Mr. Alcorn was married in 1933 to Janet Hoffer, who died in 1947. Survivors include his wife, the former Marcia Powell, whom he married in 1955, of Suffield; and a daughter by his first marriage.
