

## Former Colorado congressman Mike Strang dies

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CARBONDALE, Colo.—Former Colorado Congressman Mike Strang, a Republican who considered himself a citizen lawmaker and rejected the idea of career politicians, died Sunday. He was 84.

Friends said the kitchen table in the Strang house in Carbondale was a regular gathering place for people discussing life, politics and popular topics of the day. The Garfield County Coroner's office confirmed Strang's death, but no cause was listed.

Strang was elected to Congress in 1984 from the Western Slope, where he served one term. After he was defeated by Democrat Ben Nighthorse Campbell, he returned to horse and cattle ranching and consulting on natural-resource issues.

His wife, Kit, said her husband prided himself on being a citizen politician. "He liked the idea of the landowner who left the farm (to serve in Washington) and then returned," she said.

Strang was born in Pennsylvania, but spent nearly all his childhood in Colorado. His parents scraped together enough money to buy a ranch in the foothills west of Golden early in the Great Depression. They operated the Ralston Creek Ranch that depended heavily on a summer camp where kids from wealthy East Coast families paid to help with chores.

Strang completed his education at Princeton after serving in the military and worked as an investment banker in New York before moving back to Colorado, where he and his partners found a banker who gave them a loan.

Strang served in the Colorado Legislature in the early 1970s and raised eyebrows when he introduced a bill to legalize marijuana. It went nowhere, but it didn't harm his political ambitions. Colorado voters approved legalization last year.

In addition to his wife, Strang is survived by daughters Bridget and Laurie Strang Cunningham, and a son, Scott.