



## Christopher S. “Kit” Bond



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Former U.S. Senator and Governor, Christopher S. “Kit” Bond, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, whose life’s work and love was serving Missouri, died May 13, 2025 in St. Louis. He was 86 years old.

Whenever Missourians thanked Kit for his service, that Kit Bond smile would cross his face and he’d say: “Serving the people of Missouri was the honor of my life.”

A sixth generation Missourian, Bond was born in St. Louis on March 6, 1939. He grew up in Mexico, Missouri to parents Elizabeth and Arthur Bond.

Bond graduated Cum Laude from Princeton University in 1960 and received his law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1963, graduating at the top of his class.

Following law school, Bond clerked for Chief Judge Elbert Tuttle of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta working on the enforcement of groundbreaking desegregation cases. Though this work was not advertised or well known, it impacted Bond and his future actions in elected office.

Guided by his love for his home state, his country and his quiet faith as a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church, Kit began his 40 years of public service to Missouri. In 1969, he began as

an Assistant Attorney General under former Senator John Danforth. Kit won his first statewide election in 1970 as State Auditor. At age 33, Kit Bond became the 47th Governor of Missouri in 1973, the youngest Governor in the state's history and the first Republican to occupy the Governor's mansion since 1945.

After losing reelection in 1976 Bond joked, "experience is what you get when you expect to get something else." Bond redoubled his efforts and came back to earn re-election to a second term as Governor in 1980.

While Governor, Bond became a father and was known for quipping that, when he left the hospital with his son, Sam, all they got was a box of diapers and instructions to use a car seat, when what he really needed was a training manual for babies. Fortunately, Bond discovered Parents as Teachers resources and from that point on, he wanted all Missouri families to have the same help navigating sleepless nights, milestones, and the ABC's. Bond took the program statewide as Governor in 1984. Later in the Senate, he worked to export the program to families throughout the U.S. and the world, one of his proudest achievements.

Faced with a majority Democratic legislature and massive budget problems, then-Governor Bond soon learned the only way to govern was through bipartisan compromise. A lesson that would later earn the future Senator the well-deserved reputation as a statesman able to forge bipartisan compromises on thorny issues as varied as the landmark Family Medical Leave Act, first-of-its-kind birth defects prevention legislation, an acid rain trading compromise, safe and affordable public housing reform, and emergency legislation to close critical gaps in our terrorist intelligence collection efforts.

After his second successful term as Governor, Bond continued his service to Missouri by winning election to the United States Senate in 1986. That year, Bond was the only Republican to capture a seat previously held by a Democrat. Missouri voters then returned Bond to the U.S. Senate in 1992, 1998, and 2004.

Visiting regularly with mayors, farmers, veterans, and constituents across the state, Bond was quick to stress that his best ideas came from listening to Missourians, not Washingtonians. Throughout his tenure in the U.S. Senate, Bond was first and foremost a fierce advocate for Missouri's interests, from using his positions on key committees to secure federal funding for local priorities; increase the state's funding share for roads and bridges; modernizing Missouri's locks and dams; promoting scientific innovation on the farm; improving public housing; securing air superiority combat platforms; and delivering flood and natural disaster response, to name just a few.

An early leader in efforts to expand economic opportunities for American companies and institutions globally, first as Governor with the creation of the Hawthorn Foundation, and later in the Senate, Bond traveled extensively, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, building relationships with leaders across the region. In 2009, he co-authored *The Next Front: Southeast*

*Asia and the Road to Global Peace with Islam*, which outlines the importance of increased American engagement in the region.

In the halls of Congress, Kit could always be spotted with his trademark smile and be counted on for a famous “Kit-ism”. “He who drafts last, drafts last,” was his focus on legislating. “Like loading frogs in a wheel barrel,” was his description of building winning coalitions. “It was a goat roping and a windmill greasing,” was his summary of an unsuccessful legislative day. “Off like a herd of turtles,” was his response to calls for swift Senate action.

In his office, surrounded by works of favorite Missouri artists George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton, the Senator was a master at juggling votes, meetings with constituents, marking up legislation or a speech looking for a stray split infinitive, writing thank you notes by hand, running to chair committee hearings – much of the time with his beloved dog Tiger, who he named after his Mizzou Tigers, in tow.

After retiring from the Senate, Bond founded Kit Bond Strategies, now known as KBS Group. In recognition of Kit’s lifelong commitment to the State of Missouri, his friend and Senate colleague Jack Danforth established an endowment in Kit’s name to fund a lecture series at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Bond was involved with this as well as the expanded and refocused Bond International Scholars program that provides study abroad scholarships to students at MU and the University of Missouri-St. Louis, continuing Bond’s legacy of civic service and global engagement.

Kit was a friend to many, on both sides of the aisle, a mentor to numerous individuals from Missouri hoping to make a career in politics, and a much-loved boss and friend to those who had the opportunity to work for him over his career. Despite his very busy schedule, Kit always had time for what he affectionately called the “Bond Alumni” team, whether it was with advice, a call on birthdays or family milestones.

Best known among his personal passions, of which he could and would talk endlessly: Cardinals baseball, Chiefs football, the Mizzou Tigers, fishing, and his chestnuts trees – at one time the largest such orchard in Missouri - which he planted by hand on his long-time family property in Mexico. Kit’s media staff, in their fleeting attempts to “control the message”, would learn only after that Senator Bond was live on KMOX radio debating gardening techniques, uninvited. A highlight was joining his friend, Cardinals play-by-play radio sportscaster Jack Buck, who let Bond provide live color commentary for an inning or two.

In both a political and personal sense, Kit Bond will long be remembered as a ‘favorite son’ of his beloved State of Missouri. Over the course of his career, he was elected to statewide office seven times- more than any other elected official in Missouri history. Throughout his years as Governor and Senator, working alongside Jack Danforth, John Ashcroft and Roy Blunt and others, Bond helped build a team that transformed Missouri into a stronghold of the Republican party.

Kit Bond was known as the “go-to-Senator”, and often described as “the work horse not the show horse,” and he loved every minute he worked for his fellow Missourians. What made his career truly remarkable, wasn’t just what he achieved, but how he achieved it. He was widely-respected for passionately recognizing the interests of both his supporters and his critics with equal passion. He treated every voter as persuadable, every citizen as a resource and an equal, and no one outworked him. Few knew Missouri – or its people – better than Kit Bond. His authenticity, good humor, and steadfast love for the State will remain his enduring legacy.

Kit leaves behind his wife of 22 years, his best friend and the love of his life, Linda Holwick Bond; his son Samuel Reid Bond, referred by Kit as his hero for his service as a U.S. Marine in Iraq, and Sam’s family, Kit’s treasures, wife Margaret Crews Bond, granddaughter Elizabeth Ivy Bond (14) and grandson Samuel Walker Bond (11).

Kit Bond was preceded in death by his beloved parents, Arthur and Elizabeth Bond and brother, Arthur Bond Jr.

A State Memorial Service honoring the life and legacy of Governor Kit Bond will be held in the Rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 12 noon. The public is invited to attend.

Governor Bond will lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda for a 24-hour period immediately following the State Memorial Service, allowing members of the public to pay their respects.

A celebration of Kit’s life will be held at Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, 9450 Clayton Rd., St. Louis, on Thursday, May 22, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. All who knew and loved Kit are welcome to attend.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to a charity of your choosing. A number that were especially important to Kit are:

- *Parents As Teachers, St Louis, MO*
- *The Christopher S Bond Community Health Scholarship Program C/O  
The Missouri Community Health Foundation, Jefferson City, MO*
- *Central Missouri Food Bank, Columbia, MO*
- *Handi-Shop, Mexico, MO*

A private interment will take place at a later date. The family extends their heartfelt thanks for the love and support received during this time.