



Alabama newspaper executive Paul Davis, who exposed mental hospital problems, dies at 74

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AUBURN, Ala. — Longtime Alabama newspaper executive Paul Davis, who exposed abuses at state mental hospitals, died Sunday at his Auburn home after battling pancreatic cancer. He was 74.

Davis served as a reporter and associate editor of the Tuscaloosa News, where he uncovered problems at Bryce Hospital and Partlow School in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His reporting led to federal court decisions that set new national standards for the care of the mentally ill and mentally disabled.

He also served as editor of The Selma Times-Journal; vice president and general manager of the Natchez Democrat in Mississippi; and publisher and editor of the Auburn Bulletin, The Tuskegee News and Tallahassee Tribune.

Davis was a former president of the Alabama Press Association and received the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. He remained active on mental health issues, serving on board of the Alabama Department of Mental Health until his death. The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program honored Davis with a lifetime achievement award in 2008.

"Paul Davis' courage as a journalist was an inspiration to all of us in this industry. He saw a wrong and was determined to make it right," said Felicia Mason, executive director of the Alabama Press Association.

Visitation will be at Jeffcoat-Trant Funeral Home in Opelika from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, with his funeral at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Auburn Church of Christ.

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