

# **Larry Langford, Convicted Former Birmingham Mayor, Dies at 72**

By Alan Blinder

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Larry P. Langford, a former broadcaster whose made-for-television tenure as the mayor of Birmingham, Ala., began with ambitions for a \$500 million domed stadium and came to an extraordinary end with his conviction on public corruption charges, died on Tuesday in Birmingham. He was 72.

His death, in a hospital, was confirmed by his lawyer, Tiffany Johnson-Cole. While the cause was not announced, Mr. Langford had an array of health problems, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart failure, which in December prompted a judge to order his release from the federal prison where he was serving a 15-year sentence.

With a showman's touch and a penchant for defiance, Mr. Langford was a proudly unorthodox political figure in a state full of them. In and around Birmingham, where he was a public figure for more than four decades, he was regarded with an intriguing mix of admiration — for his creativity, zeal and unstinting confidence — and derision, which flowed from his reputation as a politician who dealt in himself and in spectacularly unrealistic ideas.

Indeed, Mr. Langford, who served as mayor from 2007 until he was convicted and forced from office in 2009, was but one of the mayors who saw Birmingham, Alabama's largest city, as an unrealized regional prize that could rival Atlanta. But Mr. Langford harbored the highest hopes of any elected official for the old steel hub.

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