

Cathy Cox

Georgia Secretary of State

Cathy Cox is serving her second term as Georgia's Secretary of State, having first been elected in 1998. In 2002 she earned re-election with over 61 percent of the vote, winning 146 out of 159 counties. Cathy Cox is the first woman to serve as Georgia's Secretary of State.

Because of Cathy Cox's efforts Georgia has become a national leader in election reform. Her initiative made Georgia the first state in America to deploy a modern, uniform electronic voting system in every county. The new touch screen system has won acclaim throughout the state and across the nation, and has made Georgia elections more accurate and more accessible to the disabled and visually impaired.

Secretary Cox has an extensive background in law, journalism and public service. Before her election, she served three years as Assistant Secretary of State. From 1993 to 1996 Ms. Cox represented Miller, Seminole, Early and Decatur counties in the Georgia House of Representatives.

As Secretary of State Cathy Cox has worked to enhance customer service and protect Georgia consumers. She undertook the largest decentralization in Georgia government history, moving her largest operating division from Atlanta to Macon. Under her direction a new State Archives facility, which will better protect Georgia's historical treasures and documents, will open in April 2003 in Clayton County. Her Corporations Division has become a leader in governmental e-commerce, offering a broad array of services through the Internet and e-mail.

The Secretary of State's technological leadership has won national recognition. In 2001 the Council of State Governments named her agency's website best in the nation.

Secretary Cox made campaign disclosure reports available on the Internet, allowing citizens to see for themselves who is supporting candidates for public office. She expanded the agency's successful license suspension program, which requires deadbeat parents to pay child support, to now include those who default on their student loans. Those initiatives have saved Georgia taxpayers millions of dollars since their inception.

Cathy Cox was born in Bainbridge in southwest Georgia where she attended public schools. She learned her love of public service from her father, Walter Cox, who was Mayor of Bainbridge and served for 16 years in the Georgia General Assembly.

Ms. Cox attended Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and continued her studies at the University of Georgia, where she earned a journalism degree. Her career began as a newspaper reporter with *The Gainesville Times* and *The Post-Searchlight* in Bainbridge. Later, she entered Mercer University Law School, where she was editor of the Law Review. For 10 years, Ms. Cox practiced law in Atlanta and Bainbridge.

Secretary Cox has received numerous honors for her public service. The Georgia Commission on Women named her the 2000 Woman of the Year. For the past five years *Georgia Trend* magazine has chosen her as one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians. In 2002 *Governing* magazine named her one of its 11 Public Officials of the Year – the first Secretary of State in the nation to receive this prestigious honor.

Ms. Cox, 44, is a member of the United Methodist Church. She, her husband Mark Dehler, an attorney, and their chocolate labrador Jake reside in northeast Atlanta.

** For purposes of introducing Secretary Cox, please feel free to use only portions of this material.*