



For Immediate Release
NR 19-10 (05-22-2019)

Contact: Mike Stokke or Emily Yaghmour,
703-883-4056
Email: info-line@fca.gov

FCA Board Chairman Dallas Tonsager dies

McLEAN, Va., May 22, 2019 — Dallas P. Tonsager, board chairman of the Farm Credit Administration, died yesterday of lymphoma in Falls Church, Virginia. He was 64. He is survived by his wife, Sharon; his son Keith and daughter-in-law, Lindsey; his son Josh; and his granddaughter, Ilia.

Chairman Tonsager was appointed to the FCA board by President Barack Obama on March 13, 2015. He was designated chairman and CEO by President Obama on November 22, 2016.

“Dallas dedicated his life to helping farmers, ranchers, and other rural Americans,” said FCA Board Member Jeff Hall, who was designated CEO on May 20. “Both at USDA and FCA, he worked hard to promote investments in rural communities. As chairman of FCA, he urged the Farm Credit System to work with borrowers experiencing stress as a result of the current downturn in the farm economy. He was also a fine colleague and friend. His passing is a great loss to agriculture and rural America and a personal loss to everyone who knew him.”

“Dallas’ commitment to agriculture and rural America has been an inspiration,” said FCA Board Member Glen Smith. “I am grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to serve with him these past 17 months. His leadership as a regulator has helped keep the System strong despite the extended period of stress in the farm economy, and his work to expand investments in rural communities has made rural America a better place for future generations.”

In a press release, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin C. Peterson and Ranking Member K. Michael Conaway also offered their condolences to the Tonsager family and recognized Chairman Tonsager’s contributions. “He worked especially hard to ensure the success of the biofuels industry, as well as highlighting the healthcare and broadband needs of rural America,” said Chairman Peterson. “His leadership and dedication to rural communities will be greatly missed.”

Chairman Tonsager brought to his position on the FCA board extensive experience as an agriculture leader and producer, and a commitment to promoting and implementing innovative development strategies to benefit rural residents and their communities.

He served as under secretary for rural development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 2009 to 2013. In this position, he expanded broadband communication in rural America and implemented other key elements of the Recovery Act for rural America. He dramatically expanded USDA's water and wastewater programs, expanded funding for first- and second-generation biofuels, and funded hospitals and other public facilities in rural America. He also worked with the Farm Credit System and others to set up new venture capital investment funds.

From 2010 to 2013, Chairman Tonsager was a member of the Commodity Credit Corporation board of directors. From 2004 to 2009, he served as a member of the FCA board, as well as a member of the board of directors of the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation.

Before this, Chairman Tonsager served for two years as executive director of the South Dakota Value-Added Agriculture Development Center. In this position, he coordinated initiatives to better serve producers interested in developing value-added agricultural projects. Services provided by the center include project facilitation, feasibility studies, business planning, market assessment, technical assistance, and education.

In 1993, he was selected by President William J. Clinton to serve as USDA's state director for rural development in South Dakota. Chairman Tonsager oversaw a diversified portfolio of housing, business, and infrastructure loans in South Dakota. His term ended in February 2001.

A longtime member of the South Dakota Farmers Union, Chairman Tonsager served two terms as president of the organization from 1988 to 1993. During that same period, he was a board member of Green Thumb Inc., a nationwide job training program for senior citizens. In addition, he served on the board of National Farmers Union Insurance from 1989 to 1993, and he was a member of the advisory board of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission from 1990 to 1993.

Chairman Tonsager grew up on a dairy farm near Oldham, South Dakota. For many years, he and his older brother owned Plainview Farm in Oldham, a family farm on which they raised corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay. He was a graduate of South Dakota State University where he earned a Bachelor of Science in agriculture in 1976.

The Tonsager family plans to host a funeral service in South Dakota and a memorial service in Washington.

###

The Farm Credit Administration is the safety and soundness regulator of the Farm Credit System. The System consists of two government-sponsored enterprises — a nationwide network of cooperative banks and associations established in 1916, and a secondary market entity known as the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac) that was established in 1988. The System's borrower-owned banks and associations provide credit to farmers, ranchers, residents of rural communities, agricultural and rural utility cooperatives, and other eligible and creditworthy borrowers. Farmer Mac provides a secondary market for agricultural real estate loans, rural housing mortgage loans, and certain rural utility loans. Members of the FCA board are Jeffery S. Hall and Glen R. Smith.

Note: FCA news releases are available on the web at www.fca.gov.