

2026 FGFOA E-Bulletin

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FGFOA Tribute to Past President Ricky G. Helms



Past President Ricky G. Helms

Ricky G. Helms, CGFO, of Avon Park, Florida passed away on March 1, 2026.

It is with deep sadness that the Florida Government Finance Officers Association shares the passing of **Ricky G. Helms**, a respected leader, mentor, and longtime champion of public finance in Florida.

Ricky devoted more than three decades of his professional life to public service, including 35 years serving local governments or state agencies and 34 years as an active member of the FGFOA. His commitment to excellence, integrity, and service left a lasting impact on the Association and on countless colleagues across the state.

A Legacy of Leadership and Service

Throughout his distinguished career, Ricky served the FGFOA in numerous leadership roles, including President of the FGFOA, member of the FGFOA Board of Directors, and Chairman of the Information Technology Advisory Group Committee. He was also a founding member and first president of the Highlands Chapter of the FGFOA, helping to strengthen local engagement and professional collaboration.

Beyond the Association, Ricky's influence extended statewide. He was selected to serve on the Florida Constitutional Revision Commission, testified before legislative committees on local government issues, and served on the South Florida Community College Accounting Advisory Committee. He was a frequent speaker at FGFOA conferences and local chapter meetings, generously sharing his knowledge and experience with others.

Reflections from Colleagues

In letters shared with FGFOA, colleagues described Ricky not only as an accomplished public servant but as a trusted mentor and steady leader whose impact reached far beyond his formal roles.

- He was recognized for implementing innovative administrative and budgetary practices and for his work improving the financial condition of local governments through early detection and accountability.
- Many noted his calm demeanor, integrity, and consensus-building leadership style, particularly during his time as the FGFOA President and Board member.
- He was widely respected for his role in shaping legislative policy, including coordinating updates to FGFOA legislative statements and helping draft statutory language addressing issues critical to local governments.
- Colleagues consistently highlighted his commitment to mentoring future leaders, his ability to identify leadership potential in others, and his willingness to support emerging professionals across FGFOA chapters.
- Even after stepping back from active service due to health challenges, he remained deeply connected to the FGFOA, continuing to attend events when possible and offering guidance whenever asked.

Several colleagues described him as a leader of exceptional character, “*a man of great integrity,*” whose dedication to public service and to the FGFOA never wavered.

A Lasting Impact

Ricky’s career reflected a deep dedication to strengthening the profession of governmental finance and advancing sound financial practices for the benefit of Florida’s communities. His leadership, professionalism, and generosity of spirit will be remembered with gratitude and respect.

Ricky was a devoted husband and father who valued the time he spent with his family. His most recent passion was spending time with his grandkids. He was also very active in his church and thrived in the roles of church elder and youth Sunday School teacher. He loved playing golf and would often attend the Arnold Palmer Golf Tournament in Orlando with kids from his church as his guest.



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