

# Ray Mabus

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**Raymond Edwin "Ray" Mabus, Jr.** (born October 11, 1948) is the 75th United States Secretary of the Navy. Mabus served as the 60th Governor of the U.S. state of Mississippi from 1988 to 1992 and as United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1994 to 1996.

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## Early life

Mabus was born in Starkville and is a fourth-generation Mississippian; he grew up in Ackerman, the only child of the owner of the local hardware store. After attending public schools, he graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Mississippi, where he was a member of Beta Theta Pi, with a B.A. in English and political science. He earned an M.A. in political science from Johns Hopkins University and a Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, from Harvard Law School. He also served two years in the Navy as a surface warfare officer from 1970 to 1972 aboard the cruiser USS *Little Rock*,<sup>[1]</sup> and worked as a law clerk in the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

## Political career

Mabus began his professional career working in Washington as legal counsel to the U.S. House Agriculture Committee. Following the election of Governor William Winter, he returned to Mississippi to work in the governor's office, where the youthful staff– which included Mabus, Dick Molpus, John

**Ray Mabus**



**75th United States Secretary of the Navy**

**Incumbent**

**Assumed office**

June 18, 2009

**President** Barack Obama

**Preceded by** Donald C. Winter

**22nd United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia**

**In office**

July 5, 1994 – April 25, 1996

**President** Bill Clinton

**Preceded by** Charles W. Freeman, Jr.

**Succeeded by** Wyche Fowler

**60th Governor of Mississippi**

**In office**

January 12, 1988 – January 14, 1992

**Lieutenant** Brad Dye

**Preceded by** William Allain

**Succeeded by** Kirk Fordice

**37th State Auditor of Mississippi**

**In office**

1984–1988

**Preceded by** Hamp King

**Succeeded by** Pete Johnson

Henegan and Andy Mullins– earned the nickname "Boys of Spring" from a rival state legislator.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Mississippi State Auditor

In 1983, Mabus was elected state auditor and served from 1984 to 1988, during which time he participated in a large FBI sting operation which recovered millions in misspent or stolen public funds.<sup>[3]</sup> By the time it was finished, "Operation Pretense" ensnared 57 county supervisors in 25 counties, and all but two supervisors served time in prison.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Governor of Mississippi

In 1987, he defeated Tupelo businessman Jack Reed in the gubernatorial election by 53% to 47%,<sup>[5]</sup> becoming the youngest governor in the nation at the time. Mabus, who ran on the slogan "Mississippi Will Never Be Last Again,"<sup>[6]</sup> was billed as "the face of the New South," much like his counterpart in Arkansas at the time, Bill Clinton. Mabus was featured in a 1988 *New York Times Magazine* cover story titled "The Yuppies of Mississippi; How They Took Over the Statehouse" which chronicled his challenges and successes.<sup>[7]</sup>

During his time as governor, he passed B.E.S.T. (Better Education for Success Tomorrow),<sup>[8]</sup> gave teachers the largest pay raise in the nation;<sup>[9]</sup> and was named one of *Fortune Magazine*'s ten "education governors".<sup>[10]</sup> Mississippi also had record growth in new jobs, investment, tourism and exports.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Because of the gubernatorial succession amendment ratified in 1987, Mabus was eligible to become the first governor to serve two successive terms in more than 100 years, and he ran for reelection in 1991. He was narrowly defeated in the general election by Republican Kirk Fordice.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Ambassador to Saudi Arabia

Mabus was appointed by President Bill Clinton to be the United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and served from 1994 to 1996. During his tenure, a 1994 border crisis involving Yemen was defused,<sup>[12]</sup> a 1994 crisis with Iraq was deterred,<sup>[13]</sup> presided over the embassy during the 1995 terrorist attack ,<sup>[14]</sup> child abduction cases were addressed,<sup>[15]</sup> and contracts worth more than \$16 billion were signed between Saudi Arabian and American companies such as Boeing,<sup>[16]</sup> and AT&T.<sup>[17]</sup>

Mabus' residence and embassy office in Riyadh were decorated with items of interest from his home state including an Ackerman phone book on his office coffee table and the Mississippi flag next to the American flag.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Business ventures

In August 2007, he joined the board of Enersys, the world's largest manufacturer, marketer and distributor of industrial batteries.<sup>[18]</sup> From 2006-April 2007, he was Chairman and CEO of Foamex International and helped lead it out of bankruptcy.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Less than nine months after his appointment, Foamex emerged from

	<b>Personal details</b>
<b>Born</b>	October 11, 1948 <div>Starkville, Mississippi</div>
<b>Political party</b>	Democratic
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Lynne Mabus
<b>Religion</b>	Methodist
	<b>Military service</b>
<b>Service/branch</b>	United States Navy
<b>Years of service</b>	1970–1972
<b>Rank</b>	Lieutenant (junior grade)
<b>Unit</b>	USS <i>Little Rock</i> (CG-4)

Chapter 11.<sup>[19]</sup>

## Secretary of the Navy

On March 27, 2009, Mabus was nominated by President Obama as Secretary of the Department of the Navy.<sup>[20]</sup> He was informally sworn in on May 19, 2009,<sup>[21]</sup> however it was not until an official ceremony at Washington Navy Yard on June 18, 2009 that Mabus was officially sworn in by the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.<sup>[22][23][24][25]</sup> In April 2010 a furor arose when it was reported that Mabus made the controversial proposal to name a United States Navy warship after the late Pennsylvania Democrat, John Murtha. Additional naming controversies occurred due to the naming of auxiliary ship after Cesar Chavez,<sup>[26]</sup> and a corvette/littoral combat ship after Gabrielle Giffords.<sup>[27]</sup> Secretary Mabus has a presence on Facebook and frequently comments about his daily activities. This is the first case of a branch secretary maintaining a web presence.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>



Mabus meeting with President Obama in the Oval Office, June 2010.

President Obama has asked him to develop a long-term Gulf Coast Restoration Plan as soon as possible. The plan will be designed by states, local communities, tribes, fishermen, businesses, conservationists and other Gulf residents".<sup>[28]</sup>

## Awards, honors, community service

Mabus has been awarded the U.S. Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award, the U.S. Army's Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Martin Luther King Social Responsibility Award from the King Center in Atlanta, the National Wildlife Federation Conservation Achievement Award, the King Abdul Aziz Award from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Mississippi Association of Educators' Friend of Education Award.

He is active in many community activities, primarily focusing on education. Following Hurricane Katrina, he founded the *Help and Hope Foundation*, which works to meet the needs of children affected by the storm.

He is a former member of the RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy<sup>[29]</sup> and the Council on Foreign Relations, and is the Distinguished Lecturer on the Middle East at the University of Mississippi.

As a photographer, his photographs have raised tens of thousands of dollars for various Mississippi charities.

He has appeared on many television programs as an expert on the Middle East, including "60 Minutes" and "Nightline".

In 2009, Mabus made a cameo appearance on the US drama *NCIS* as an NCIS Agent named "Ray".<sup>[30]</sup>

## Personal life

Mabus has two daughters, Elisabeth and Annie, with his first wife.

In 1998, Mabus secretly tape recorded conversations he had with his then-wife Julie and a mutual friend (a priest) in attempts to resolve marital difficulties. The conversations provided a basis for Mabus to obtain sole





26. ^ Gary Robbins; Elizabeth Aguilera (18 May 2011). "Navy secretary names ship after Cesar Chavez" (<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2011/may/18/navy-secretary-names-ship-after-cesar-chavez/>) . *San Diego Union Tribune*. <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2011/may/18/navy-secretary-names-ship-after-cesar-chavez/>. Retrieved 7 March 2012. "Mabus' remarks came amid controversy. On Tuesday, Hunter issued a statement saying, "Naming a ship after César Chávez goes right along with other recent decisions by the Navy that appear to be more about making a political statement than upholding the Navy's history and tradition.""
27. ^ Philip Ewing (15 February 2012). "Navy Plays it Safe With New DDG and LCS Names" (<http://www.military.com/news/article/navy-plays-it-safe-with-new-ddg-and-lcs-names.html>) . *Military.com*. <http://www.military.com/news/article/navy-plays-it-safe-with-new-ddg-and-lcs-names.html>. Retrieved 7 March 2012. "Less than a week after drawing traditionalist ire for naming a Navy warship after former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus returned to standard convention Wednesday in a batch of new names for forthcoming warships."
28. ^ Remarks by the President to the Nation on the BP Oil Spill, June 15, 2010 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-nation-bp-oil-spill>)
29. ^ RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy website (<http://www.rand.org/nsrd/cmep/about/advisory.html>)
30. ^ "Ray Mabus to guest star on 'NCIS'" ([http://www.upi.com/Entertainment\\_News/TV/2009/11/09/Ray-Mabus-to-guest-star-on-NCIS/UPI-53571257810519/](http://www.upi.com/Entertainment_News/TV/2009/11/09/Ray-Mabus-to-guest-star-on-NCIS/UPI-53571257810519/)) . United Press International. November 9, 2009. [http://www.upi.com/Entertainment\\_News/TV/2009/11/09/Ray-Mabus-to-guest-star-on-NCIS/UPI-53571257810519/](http://www.upi.com/Entertainment_News/TV/2009/11/09/Ray-Mabus-to-guest-star-on-NCIS/UPI-53571257810519/). Retrieved March 17, 2012.
31. ^ Rutenberg, Jim (March 28, 2009). "Navy Secretary Nominee Drew Notice Over Divorce" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/us/politics/30mabus.html>) . *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/us/politics/30mabus.html>. Retrieved March 30, 2009.

## External links

- United States Navy bio page ([http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio\\_1dr.asp?bioID=505&tid=1](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio_1dr.asp?bioID=505&tid=1))
- Mississippi Historical Society biography (<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/features/feature48/governors/mabus.htm>)
- National Governors Association biography (<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.29fab9fb4add37305ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnnextoid=0467ae3effb81010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=e449a0ca9e3f1010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>)
- White House, Office of the Press Secretary, May 11, 1994 (intent to nominate) (<https://www.clintonfoundation.org/legacy/051194-president-nominates-mabus-as-ambassador-to-saudi-arabia.htm>)
- White House, Office of the Press Secretary, July 5, 1994 (Yemen issues) (<http://ibiblio.org/pub/archives/whitehouse-papers/1994/Jul/1994-07-05-President-Meets-with-Ambassador-to-Saudi-Arabia-Mabus>)

Political offices		
Preceded by <b>Hamp King</b>	<b>State Auditor of Mississippi</b> 1984–1988	Succeeded by <b>Pete Johnson</b>
Preceded by <b>William Allain</b>	<b>Governor of Mississippi</b> 1988–1992	Succeeded by <b>Kirk Fordice</b>
Diplomatic posts		
Preceded by <b>Charles W. Freeman, Jr.</b>	<b>United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia</b> 1994–1996	Succeeded by <b>Wyche Fowler, Jr.</b>
Government offices		

Preceded by <b>Donald C. Winter</b>	<b>United States Secretary of the Navy</b> 2009–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
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