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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Former MTA Chairman E. Virgil Conway Dies at 85

E. Virgil Conway, who served as both Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) chairman and as a member of the MTA Board, died Wednesday in Southampton, New York. He was 85.

After finding success as both an attorney and a banker, Virgil began his tenure with the MTA Board as our Westchester representative. In 1995, he was asked by then-Governor George E. Pataki to take on the responsibility of chairman. He continued in that role until March 2001, serving as the seventh chairman of the MTA.

"Virgil was a hugely influential and effective chairman, and many of the successes and accomplishments the MTA celebrates today are the result of his hard work and his heartfelt service to the region," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast. "He remains a beloved member of the MTA family, and he will be sorely missed."

Virgil spearheaded the preparation and funding for the 2000-2004 Capital Program, which at the time was the most ambitious and far-reaching program in MTA history. That effort launched several extraordinary projects to expand the system and change the shape of the region's public transit to fuel our economy and better serve our customers.

These megaprojects include the Second Avenue Subway, East Side Access—bringing the Long Island Rail Road directly into Grand Central Terminal—and our recently-completed 7 Train extension to Manhattan's Far West Side. Virgil's efforts helped ensure these projects will transform our region, while at the same time improving service reliability by giving customers new ways to get where they're going—to, from, and within New York City.

Virgil also oversaw the rollout of the MTA's iconic MetroCard. He implemented fare discounts and eliminated "two-fare zones"—dramatically reducing the average cost of a ride. He brought to fruition the restoration of Grand Central Terminal, which began under his predecessor, Peter E. Stangl. And he was instrumental in bringing essential components of our system to a state of good repair, continuing the MTA's decades-long work to rebuild from the graffiti, grime, and overall disrepair of the 1970s and '80s.