

## OBITUARIES

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# Rufus W. Youngblood Dies; Protected Johnson in Dallas

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Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga.—Rufus W. Youngblood, the Secret Service agent honored for throwing himself on top of then-Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson to protect him during the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, has died at 72.

Mr. Youngblood, who retired to Savannah more than 20 years ago, died of lung cancer Oct. 2 in a hospice, his daughter, Rebecca Youngblood Vaughn, said today.

Mr. Youngblood was assigned to protect Johnson from 1961 to 1966. In November 1963, during the presidential trip to Dallas, he was riding with Johnson two cars behind Kennedy's car when he heard the fatal shots.

Mr. Youngblood turned from the front seat and pulled Johnson to the floor, shouted "Get down!" and then half-sat and half-sprawled on top of the vice president, according to news accounts.

"It could have been a firecracker, a bomb or a shot," he said afterward. "I recognized it as an abnormal sound and realized some action had to be taken. I saw quick, unnatural movements in the president's car."

He was awarded the Treasury Exceptional Service Award for risking his life in protecting Johnson.

Mr. Youngblood began his Secret Service career in Atlanta in 1951 and later transferred to Washington. He retired from the service in 1971.

Mr. Youngblood's daughter said her father, a smoker, had suffered from lung cancer for about two years.