

'Decalogue' judge Moore loses Alabama primary: Incumbent governor defeats Christian conservative hero

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Incumbent governor Bob Riley breezed past one of the best-known figures in Alabama politics—"Ten Commandments Judge" Roy Moore—to win the Republican nomination for governor.

Riley routed Moore by a double-digit margin in the June 6 Republican gubernatorial primary. Lieutenant Governor Lucy Baxley won the Democratic nomination.

For Riley, the win represented electoral redemption almost three years after voters buried his \$1.2 billion tax and accountability plan in a statewide referendum. In seeking a second term he focused on the economy, education spending and a recently enacted tax cut that will mainly benefit low-income people.

Moore appeared to accept the result. "You can never lose when it's in the hands of God," he said to hundreds of flag-waving supporters on election night.

As Alabama Supreme Court chief justice three years ago, Moore became a hero to some Christian conservatives by defying a federal court order to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the Alabama Judicial Building. That defiance cost him his job. Among voters Moore was apparently unable to widen his appeal beyond his core support.

For many evangelicals nationwide, he was "quite an important symbol," said John Green, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Green said he was struck by how much time Moore spent out of state during the campaign. *-Religion News Service*