

Caperton began his career as a businessman in West Virginia. After graduating from the University of North Carolina, he went to work for a small insurance agency in Charleston, West Virginia. Under his leadership, the company grew into the tenth-largest privately owned insurance brokerage firm in the nation.

As the state's thirty-first governor, Caperton brought West Virginia back from the brink of bankruptcy with more than \$500 million in debts, and transformed it into a state that could boast of a \$100 million surplus. Under his leadership, West Virginia's unemployment rate dropped from 9.8 percent to a low of 6.2 percent. This was accomplished by creating more than 86,000 jobs. The sound financial management approach that he initiated led Financial World magazine to call West Virginia the most improved state in the nation.

Leaving the statehouse, Caperton spent the spring of 1997 teaching as a fellow at the John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard University. He then taught at Columbia University, where he founded and managed the Institute on Education and Government.

Gaston Caperton has received numerous state and national awards and special recognition, including eight honorary doctoral degrees. He was chair of the Democratic Governors' Association and served on the National Governors Association Executive Committee. He also served as chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission, Southern Regional Education Board and the Southern Growth Policies Board.