

Successor to Johnston Is Named

The vice chairman of Lorillard Tobacco Co. will replace W. Eugene Johnston III on the board of the Piedmont Triad Airport Authority when it holds its next monthly board meeting April 27.

Alexander W. Spears III of Greensboro, Lorillard's vice chairman and chief operating officer, was appointed to replace Johnston by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.

Johnston, a Republican candidate for U.S. Senate last year, was eligible for another three-year term. A week before the commissioners' vote, he said he expected to lose his seat because he is "too prominent of a Republican."

The Democrat-dominated commissioners elected Spears in a 6-3 vote that split along party lines.

Wallace C. Harrelson, the commissioners' chairman, said that his board wasn't simply looking for a Democrat to replace Johnston.

"I think you need to note in bold headlines Mr. Spears is a Republican," Harrelson said. He said the commissioners had sought an "outstanding businessman" who made significant contributions to his community.

Johnston had been chairman of the airport authority since June 1991. F. Hudnall Christopher Jr., currently the vice chairman and one of two Forsyth County representatives on the seven-man board, will take Johnston's place as chairman when the board meets again.