George McDuffie was born on August 10, 1790, in Columbia County, Georgia. He graduated from South Carolina College in 1813. McDuffie studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1814. McDuffie originally argued against states rights but gradually changed his opinions and became a supporter of nullification and state sovereignty. McDuffie served as member of the United States House of Representatives from 1821 until 1834, as Governor of South Carolina from 1834 until 1836, and as a member of the United States Senate from 1846 until 1851. While governor, he enacted legislation that said any previously expelled freed black who reentered the state would be imprisoned and sold into slavery. George McDuffie died on March 11, 1851.