

strong sense. In 1843 he was elected to the Legislature from Louisville, and was re-elected. In 1849 he was appointed United States Marshal for Kentucky, by President Taylor. From 1853 to 1855 he was mayor of Louisville, being thrice elected during that time. In 1856 he removed with his family to Chicago, where he engaged in business until his death, in 1860, at the age of forty-nine years. His life was an exceedingly active one. He was very progressive in his ideas, and while mayor of Louisville his energies were exerted for the improvement of the city. He urged the rebuilding of the court-house, which was afterward done; and the erection of water-works, which soon followed. He improved the streets and wharf, and caused large market-houses to be built, one of which long bore the name "Speed Market."

The newspapers of the time when he was mayor indorsed his administrations, and his suggestions concerning the water-works, city wharf and improvement of the streets. A writer in one of the papers expressed the general sentiment of the people in thus speaking of his message as mayor in 1854: "The streets, the wharf, the market-houses, the avenues, all need the very improvements suggested in this admirable document. Take it in all its bearings, it is unquestionably the most sensible message that has emanated from any executive of the city of Louisville."

Under the new city charter made at that time a question arose as to when the term of the mayor expired. An agreed case was made and submitted to the Judge of the Chancery Court, in the spring of 1855, and he decided that the incumbent of the office, James S. Speed, was entitled to hold for another year, but the City Council ordered another election, in which Mr. Speed did not take part. The election went by default, as to him, and Mr. John Barbee was voted for by the other side. The court decided his election was legal, and Mr. Speed's career as mayor ended in the midst of his usefulness. It is quite remarkable that not only were his partisan friends complimentary to him; his opponents were, also, even in the controversy.