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## Teal Pomeroy will be missed



**Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 22, 2016 @ 7:37 p.m., All Rights Reserved**

**\* Updated Aug. 23, 2016 @ 2:37 p.m. \*\* Obituary at Bottom of Story**

**CHIEFLAND** -- The recent death of 42-year-old Matthew Teal Pomeroy has shaken the sensibilities of many people in the Chiefland area, and he will be missed.

For people who want to help his widow Kristen Pomeroy and the two boys Luke, 4, and Elijah, 6, there are donations being accepted at ALL Drummond Community Bank locations. Gray Drummond and Rollin Hudson are two of Pomeroy's friends who could not be reached Monday afternoon to share their perspectives of their friend.

James Weeks was Pomeroy's best friend. Each man was the other's best man at their two weddings.

On Monday evening (Aug. 22), Weeks shared his feelings about the passing of his best friend.

"Teal was a great guy," Weeks said. "He was polite – soft-spoken. He was hard to anger. He was a helping, caring person. He was highly intelligent. Sometimes, he would overthink things.

"I was the hot head, do things on the fly guy," Weeks continued. "I would jump on it. We balanced each other."

Weeks said Pomeroy was "an awesome dude" who he knew since he was 5 years old. The farthest back in his memory is of them being friends, Weeks said.

"If ever I got in trouble, I would call him and he would come running," Weeks said. "And I would do the same for him."

Weeks said they had a lot of great times together, and he wishes they could have had more.

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A quick canvassing on Monday of city government people who knew the mayor, reflects what everyone who knew him knows -- he was unique, witty, well-mannered, friendly, consistent and never afraid to share his opinion.

"He was a good person," Vice Mayor Betty Walker said. "He was very likeable. I am going to miss Teal. He

will be missed"

Vice Mayor Walker now accepts the duties of mayor, after Mayor Pomeroy died in a diving accident. Pomeroy was an avid diver who participated in the sport alone and with friends. Walker has been the mayor before.

"Teal always would say what he had to say," Walker said. "He would get the last word. He would speak his opinion."

As she reflected on her former colleague, Walker said she has some crepe myrtles in her yard, and she has always called them "Teal Pomeroy Crepe Myrtles" because she got them from him in buckets. They were blooming when she got them, she said, and they are "always blooming out."

Like everyone who spoke Monday, Walker said she feels sadness and sorrow for his widow Kristen and their two boys Luke and Eli. The couple's children impressed Walker when she saw them.

"I never saw kids so well-mannered," Walker said. "Those two little boys would just sit still. You know how some children are always coming up to their daddy."

Walker said no one knows when they are going to die. She made reference to Matthew 24:36, which in the King James Version notes, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," in reference to The Second Coming of Jesus, which can also be seen as no person knowing when he or she will die.

She sees this loss as taking a good leader away from the city.

Walker said the city has made a lot of progress and she hopes it will continue to do so.

Like many people who knew Mayor Pomeroy, Walker remembers him joking during meetings.

Chiefland City Commissioner Teresa Barron, who has been a vice mayor under Mayor Pomeroy too, said that he will be missed – not just at the Chiefland City Commission meetings but all across the area.

Pomeroy had many friends and acquaintances, Barron said.

"He was a good father," Barron said. "I feel for the young 'uns and the family -- Kristen (his wife) and the boys."

Barron said Pomeroy enjoyed hunting and he has been scuba diving for many years. Barron said her husband Eddie Barron, Rick Travers (when he was alive), Weeks and Pomeroy would go diving together on occasion.

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As far as Pomeroy and politics, “He always had a lot to say on various positions,” Barron said. “He would speak out, and hold a position.”

There was one vote on an issue where Pomeroy was the lone dissenter. When asked why he voted “No,” he said it was just to be contrary.

City Commissioner Chris Jones knew Pomeroy for many years before they were both on Chiefland City Commission.

“I’ve known Teal since we were teenagers,” Jones said.

Jones worked with Pomeroy as a teenager when they were both helping the late Andy Andrews plant trees. And Jones and Pomeroy both worked at Winn-Dixie together in 1991-92, Jones said.

“This is a small town,” Jones said. “A lot of people know each other pretty well. One of my biggest memories of him was seeing him in a store with his little boy recently...”

Jones said he was at the staging area for the rescue effort, which then became a recovery mission. He saw Pomeroy’s good friend James Weeks, Abraham Blich and Murray Tillis out there.

City Manager Ellzey was there for the duration, as was Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum.

Chiefland Police Department Capt. Ray Tremblay, who is second in command to Chief Robert Douglas, never took a break, City Commissioner Jones said.

Jones said he couldn’t do much other than going to get food and drinks for people. He was impressed to see the big network of professionals from the Levy County Sheriff’s Office, the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, the Citrus County Sheriff’s Office and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission all working together on the river and on the banks.

From Friday night when it was realized there was reason for concern until the very wee hours of Sunday morning when Pomeroy’s body was recovered, the hours stretched out, Jones said.

“It was a long, long weekend,” Jones said. “It makes you realize how short life is.”

City Manager Ellzey said Mayor Pomeroy was the mayor ever since he was first selected by his fellow commissioners in 2007.

Pomeroy was dedicated to Chiefland, she added, and he was “a special person to a lot of people.”

Chiefland Police Chief Robert Douglas said that with Chiefland being a small town, everyone is like part of the family.

When Pomeroy was first noticed as missing, Douglas said, everyone prayed for his being found.

As time went on, the chief said he started thinking about the mayor’s family and praying for them.

Pomeroy was an experienced diver, the chief said. He had his diver flag out. The boat was anchored and he was diving in the river where it was about 12 feet deep, he said.

Chiefland has lost its mayor, Chief Douglas said. And this is also the loss of a husband, a father, a friend and a neighbor.

Chiefland Fire Chief James Harris said he felt Pomeroy was a very good man, and a member of the community who cared about the people.

“He would work to keep taxes low,” Chief Harris said, “because he knew people couldn’t afford more taxes. He always stood his ground. He always voted his conscience.”

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The fire chief said this is a terrible tragedy and he hates that it happened.

\* Gray Drummond was another lifelong friend of Pomeroy's. On Tuesday afternoon (Aug. 23), Drummond shared some of his thoughts about his friend.

Drummond said Pomeroy was the first friend he remembers having, and they always have remained as friends. While some people knew the side of Pomeroy as a mayor or Chiefland City Commission member, Drummond said he knew him more from the personal side.

Pomeroy was always sincere, Drummond said. If Pomeroy said something, then he genuinely meant it because he cared about people, Drummond said.

Drummond shared the love of the outdoors with his now late friend. They would hunt, fish and scuba dive together, he said. Drummond saw Pomeroy starting to instill his passion for the outdoors with his two young boys.

"He was always a very, very, very dear friend to me," Drummond said. "This is very hard for me..."

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**Publisher's Note:** I met Teal Pomeroy when I moved to Levy County in May of 2006 when I worked for the *Levy County Journal*.

Teal introduced himself to me and said "We work for the same man."

"I said who is that?"

"Andy Andrews," he said.

I always enjoyed watching Teal on the City Commission. We had differing opinions about some issues, but we were always able to speak about that with one another and walk away as friends.

I was working for some other weekly tabloid in the area some years ago, when the city started imposing occupational license fees more stringently.

Teal took me out to his nursery at the time and showed me all of his plants. He shared his opinion about the "occupational tax" back then, reminding me to be sure that people could read that he was paying his fair share as the owner of a nursery.

Teal Pomeroy will be missed by many people.

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## \*\* Obituary For Teal Pomeroy

Teal lived ready for the next adventure – boating trips in the middle of the week, looking for sightless crawfish in a sinkhole cave, slipping off to fish with friends when all thought he was working, a quick arrowhead hunt – he would change his schedule on a whim. Those who knew him best lived on "Teal Time" because 10 minutes really meant at least 30 and mornings weren't really his thing.

Teal lived his life with integrity, faith, compassion, loyalty, and a touch of strong will. His kind words and actions showed people what it meant to act and treat others with dignity. His impact on friends and family, especially his two boys, will not fade with his death. A death that he didn't fear – he was ready to go to the Lord when He wanted him. His faith in the Lord was pure.

Teal was born in Jacksonville in 1974 to Steve and Carol Pomeroy. He moved to Chiefland as a young child. Teal graduated Chiefland High School in 1992 and went on to join the United States Army. Upon discharge, he returned to the city he loved – Chiefland.

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Teal married his wife, Kristin, in 2005. He was delighted and so proud of their children, Elijah, 6, and Luke, 4. Family time was important to Teal and he showered his boys with true fatherly love.

While Teal's public identity revolved around his position as Mayor (Commissioner) of Chiefland and co-owner of SunCoast Palms, it was his kind smile and gentle demeanor that made everyone he met feel at ease and important.

In addition to his wife and two sons, Teal is survived by his parents Steve Pomeroy and Carol Pomeroy, his sister Paige Mertz, his nephews Zane and Zachary, Uncles O.G. Gardner and Dennis Stricklin, Aunt Shirley Thompson and cousins Nathan Gardner and Huntleigh Stevenson, and a tight group of friends who were often up to something (James can fill you in).

Family and friends are invited to celebrate Teal's life on Saturday, Aug. 27 from 2:30-4 p.m. for visitation at First Baptist Church in Chiefland. Services will begin at 4 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Chiefland followed by burial at Chiefland Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations for his sons' future education can be made at: Drummond Community Bank 1627 N. Young Blvd. Chiefland, FL 32626 or at any Drummond location.

*Arrangements under the direction of Knauff Funeral Home in Chiefland.*

## Body recovered

**Story, Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 20, 2016 @ 11:47 a.m.**

**Updated Aug. 21, 2016 @ 10:47 a.m.**

**SUWANNEE RIVER** -- The body of Chiefland Mayor Matthew Teal Pomeroy, 42, was recovered by Levy County Sheriff's Office deputies and members of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 4:30 a.m. on Sunday morning (Aug. 21), Levy County Sheriff Robert B. "Bobby" McCallum Jr. said at about 10:30 a.m. Sunday.



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The body was recovered about 150 yards from the place on the Suwannee River where the boat was anchored, in the area near the Usher Boat Ramp, which is downstream from Manatee Springs State Park. The search team was stationed at Clay Landing as a staging area.

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office Dive Team, the Citrus County Sheriff's Office Dive Team, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the LCSO and the FWC searched for Pomeroy since he was reported missing to the FWC late Friday night.

The FWC was the lead agency in the search for Mayor Teal Pomeroy, FWC Public Information Supervisor Karen Parker said Saturday morning (Aug. 20).

Pomeroy was reported missing Friday night.

The Levy County Sheriff's Office contacted FWC at 10:10 p.m. on Friday (Aug. 19), Parker said, to request assistance in finding the missing diver in the Suwannee River.