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## **Former Dixie County Manager Arthur Bellot dies;**

**This photo of Arthur and Cindy Bellot is taken from her Facebook page with permission.**

**By Jeff M. Hardison**

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**Updated March 1, 2019 at 1:39 a.m.**

**CROSS CITY** – The viewing for Leon Arthur Bellot Jr. (June 11, 1951-Feb. 23, 2019) was Feb. 28 at Rick Gooding Funeral Home in Cross City.

The funeral was today Friday, March

1, at 11 a.m. in Faith Baptist Church of Old Town with the Rev. Dwayne Kight officiating. Interment followed at New Prospect Baptist Church Cemetery.

Bellot died unexpectedly at the age of 67 at his home on Saturday (Feb. 23).

He was born on June 11, 1951 to Leon and Kate Bellot. He graduated from Dixie County High School in 1969 and attended Lake City Community College before transferring to the University of Florida, where he graduated in 1972 with his Bachelor of Science Degree.

He returned to Dixie County High School to teach science, became assistant principal and dean of students. He then became qualified in Emergency Medical Services working for the ambulance companies in Dixie County and surrounding counties.

In 1975, when the ambulance service was no longer contracted out, he became the first Emergency Services Director for Dixie County. He served in this capacity until 1999, when he became the first County Administrator for Dixie County, retiring in 2009.

The name of that title today is County Manager.

Bellot was a member of the Dixie County Education Foundation, the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce, as well as being on the Board of the Suwannee River Economic Council. He was a former member of the State Cert Team, and a former member of Dixie County Rotary Club.

He formerly served as a volunteer fireman and Assistant Fire Chief for the Cross City Volunteer Fire Department. He was a member of Faith Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon and was on various committees.

He is survived by his wife Cindy Bellot; son Justin (Heather) Bellot of Cross City; daughters, Jennifer and Jessica Bellot, both of Cross City and grandchildren, Jace and Summer Bellot. He was preceded in death by his parents Leon and Kate Bellot and sister Ann Naylor.

Ten years ago, he announced his retirement for health reasons after nearly 32 years as a Dixie County employee in February of 2009.

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Bellot had started with the Dixie County as the Emergency Medical Services director and then became the county manager, his wife Cindy Bellot said Wednesday afternoon in a telephone interview. Arthur married Cindy on Sept. 12, 1980.

Immediate Past President of the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce Carol West shared some insight about Arthur Bellot during a telephone interview on Wednesday as well.

West said she thought of Arthur Bellot as “Mr. Dixie County.” He had served in several offices of the Chamber over many years, and he was always all about Dixie County.

“If he saw you buying gasoline in another county,” West said, “Arthur would drive up to you and say, ‘You know we have gas stations in Dixie County.’”

West said she also found his instincts to be right on target too.

Before the Storm of the Century struck the Dixie County Coast in 1993, West said, Bellot gathered the staff and told them to get equipment ready. Even before meteorologists were warning Dixie County about that storm in 1993, West said Bellot had the people prepared.

Bellot designed the very first brush truck for Dixie County Fire Services, West said, and he was always happy to share anything he knew with any other first responder, including the design of that first brush truck.

During a recent meeting of the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce, Bellot told members and guests that he used to drive a bus to deliver students to what used to be known as Lake City Community College and has since been renamed Florida Gateway College.

Bellot said he believes people can find a way to transport Dixie County students to technical schools. He also heartily endorses the programs in the Dixie County School System where students are learning basic life skills such as how to balance a checkbook, as well as to learn proper manners.

Bellot was among the Dixie County Chamber of Commerce members who understand the need for a return to more vocational and technical option in the county’s public school system.

Not only was Bellot an excellent member of the Dixie County government team, but he served as a science teacher in the Dixie County School system as well; hence, he understood teaching.

Beyond that, Bellot was among the founding members in 2011 of the Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition, where he served as president, and was active as a member of the Executive Board of Directors until 2014.

To say that Art Bellot was a modern renaissance man is an understatement. He was a gentleman and a scholar, as well as an avid hunting and fishing sportsman.