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**Funeral plans scheduled for Mayor Betty Walker;
Wake is March 8 - Funeral is March 9**



Flowers from the Chiefland Area Athletic Association are seen Wednesday in City Hall. The flowers are noted to be from the Children of Chiefland. The funeral on March 9 is going to be held in Chiefland High School's Auditorium. As Police Chief Scott Anderson said, this is going to be a well-attended funeral, and it needs to be in a place to handle a crowd.

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Story and Photo

By Jeff M. Hardison © Feb. 27, 2019 at 9:19 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- Several people gathered at Chiefland City Hall on Wednesday (Feb. 27) regarding the Monday Feb. 25 death of Chiefland Mayor Betty Walker, 72.



Seen here on Wednesday morning (Feb. 27) are the late Betty Walker's family members Fannie Bernard, Walker's sister; Debbie Ward, a sister; Shirley Smith, a sister; Sylvia Walker, a sister; Wilbert Gamble, a brother; Jackie Gamble, a brother; Alfonso Stockton Jr., a son; Eugene Brown, her fiancée; Karyn Smith, a niece; Barbara Gamble, a sister-in-law; and Vernon Bernard, a brother-in-law. Also present during the TV interview of Fannie Bernard (although not in this picture) were Chiefland Vice Mayor Chris Jones, Virginia Calonge, Chiefland City Manager Mary Ellzey; Police Chief Scott Anderson and Fire Chief James Harris.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Fannie Bernard, one of Mayor Walker's sisters, announced the dates, times and places of the wake, funeral and repast after the funeral.

The wake is Friday, March 8, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, 310 S.W. Fifth St., in Chiefland.

The funeral is scheduled for Saturday, March 9, starting at 11 a.m. in the Chiefland High School Auditorium, 808 N. Main St. (U.S. Highway 19), in Chiefland.

The repast after the funeral is set for Saturday, March 9, from 3 to 9 p.m. in the Community Building of Haven (formerly known as Haven Hospice), 311 N.E. Ninth St., in Chiefland.

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The following family and friends were in the Hardy Dean Sr. Municipal Building as a reporter from a Gainesville TV station showed up to speak with people about Mayor Walker.

Other family members in addition to Fannie Bernard, Walker's sister, there was Debbie Ward, a sister; Shirley Smith, a sister; Sylvia Walker, a sister; Wilbert Gamble, a brother; Jackie Gamble, a brother; Alfonso Stockton Jr., a son; Eugene Brown, her fiancée; Karyn Smith, a niece; Barbara Gamble, a sister-in-law; and Vernon Bernard, a brother-in-law.

Also present during the TV interview of Fannie Bernard were Chiefland Vice Mayor Chris Jones, Virginia Calonge, Chiefland City Manager Mary Ellzey; Police Chief Scott Anderson and Fire Chief James Harris.

Mayor Walker was a native of Chiefland.

Bernard said her sister had struggled with congestive heart issues since 2009. Most recently, kidney failure compounded Mayor Walker's health issues, her sister said, and she had to undergo dialysis.



In this photo, outgoing City Commissioner Teresa Barron hugs Mayor Betty Walker. This is an example of Walker's grace and style, where she presented the outgoing city official with a plaque for her service.

To see the story and other photos in regard to this meeting, please click [HERE](#).

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As an example of Mayor Betty Walker's never-surrender attitude and her extremely strong work ethic, even when she was unable to walk up the steps to be at the dais, Mayor Walker led the City Commission meeting from a desk at floor level. Chiefland Deputy City Clerk Laura Cain is seen at the dais.

Not only did Mayor Walker serve as the mayor of Chiefland since 2016, after the passing of Mayor Teal Pomeroy, who died in a scuba-diving accident, but she had been the vice mayor and city commissioner on the Chiefland City Commission for in excess of 15 years, City Manager Ellzey said. As city manager Ellzey is also the ex-officio clerk of the city.

In addition to her civic duties with the city, Betty Walker served a special group of people for 38 years.

Walker was the executive director of the Levy Association for Retarded Citizens for many of those years before she retired on Jan. 31 of this year, her sister said. Walker began her tenure at LARC as an aide, her sister said, and worked her way up to become the executive director

Bernard had been helping Walker during the end of her life. Bernard, who normally resides in Williston, lived with Walker at the Mayor's Chiefland home since October of 2018.

When Walker died at North Florida Regional General Hospital, Bernard said she was devastated. She had lost her friend, her sister, a confidant, who was a mother to people beyond her own children.

Walker was a very family-oriented person, Bernard said.

In fact, Bernard said, she and her sisters and brothers saw Walker treating them as if she was their mother on occasion.

When Walker passed away, she took a piece of Bernard and many others who loved her dearly.

Bernard said everyone will miss Walker's cooking. During the last part of her life, though, Walker was asked what she wanted to eat one night. She replied that it did not matter, because she was eating at Fannie's Restaurant.

Bernard said her sister had a keen sense of humor and was a day-brightener for many. On the flip side, too, Walker knew how to keep anyone in line who was starting to go out of bounds.

Walker was a very giving person. She had a pool, but could not swim, her sister said. She got

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the pool for others' enjoyment.

"She would have big parties," Bernard said, "and she just expected us to come."

Bernard said her sister loved the people of Chiefland. She loved the entire city staff, Bernard said. Walker deeply enjoyed performing her mayoral duties on behalf of all of the residents and visitors to the city.

Walker had a very strong work ethic and worked hard at her duties for the city and for the clients of LARC.

It was just last month that Walker retired, despite her telling her sister that she was going to.

Every time Bernard did not hear from her sister early in the morning, she would come to find she had snuck out to work at LARC. That with help from Debbie Ward, another of Walker's sisters, Bernard said.

Likewise, despite her failing health, Mayor Walker would attend and lead Chiefland City Commission meetings.

As for the city's future now, City Manager Ellzey explained that the city charter includes what the leaders must do in an instance where the mayor dies in office.

First, Vice Mayor Jones becomes the mayor for all intents and purposes, the charter shows, until the City Commission chooses a new city commissioner to replace Walker and then those five leaders choose the next mayor and vice mayor.

The city's code of ordinances requires city commissioners to appointment Walker's replacement.

Ellzey said when a replacement was needed to fill Pomeroy's seat, the city began accepting letters of intent from people who wanted to serve as a commissioner.

More than likely, if the City Commission accepts that method, then applicants for the job of Chiefland City Commissioner must be 18 years old, a registered voter and a resident living within the city limits of Chiefland.

The next regular meeting of the Chiefland City Commission is scheduled for March 11 starting at 6 p.m. in Chiefland City Hall, 214 E. Park Ave., in Chiefland.