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U.S. Rep. Neal Dunn honors the life of Chiefland Mayor Betty Walker;

Family donates letter and flag to the city



Members of the Chiefland City Commission and of Betty Walker's family are seen at the front of the meeting room on Monday night.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © March 27, 2019 at 3:09 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- The death of Chiefland Mayor Betty Walker in late February was brought to the attention of the United States House of Representatives on March 13, when U.S. Rep. Neal Dunn spoke to the Speaker of the House and the other members.

On Monday night (March 25), family members of the late Mayor Walker asked the four remaining City Commission members to keep the flag and letter in the Hardy Dean Sr. Municipal Building (also known as Chiefland City Hall) as a way to memorialize the woman who gave so much to the residents and visitors of Chiefland for more than a decade.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Betty Walker of Chiefland, Florida who passed away on Monday, February 25th," Rep. Dunn said as he spoke in the House. "Mayor Walker served the citizens of Chiefland as an elected City Commissioner for over 15 years and as Mayor and Vice Mayor for 11 of those years.

"Betty Walker was the first African-American female elected official for the City of Chiefland. She was a great leader, she loved her community immensely. She advocated for the police and fire departments, and maintenance departments as well.

"Mayor Walker had recently retired after spending almost 40 years helping adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She truly loved the people of Chiefland.

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"She was passionate about parks and recreation and always had a vision for her city. Mayor Walker leaves behind a rich legacy that not many can match.

"Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring a life well-lived and a community leader who will be missed by many, Mayor Betty Walker of Chiefland," Dunn said.

On Monday night (March 25), Chiefland Mayor Chris Jones read Dunn's letter and he presented it to the late Mayor Walker's family members.

On Wednesday, in a telephone interview with HardisonInk.com, Will Kendrick the district director for the Office of Congressman Dunn, spoke about the tribute.

Kendrick, who was a four-term member of the Florida House of Representatives (from 2000 to 2008), said that Rep. Dunn flew a flag over the United States' Capitol in honor of Mayor Walker.

Kendrick said that he knew Walker even before he began his term as a state representative, and to be considered her personal friend.

Kendrick said that Dunn met Walker in the fall and that Dunn, who is a medical doctor, "really liked Betty. He could see where her heart was."

Fannie Bernard, one of Mayor Walker's sisters, spoke on behalf of the family as they went to the front of the Commission meeting room on Monday night.

"She (Walker) loved this city," Bernard said. "She loved the people of this city."

Bernard said the family has been honored by the recognition shown in regard to Mayor Walker.

She asked that the City Commission place the letter in a display case, so that people who pass by it can see what a great leader she was.

The family said the same about the flag.

The family was assured that the city would honor its wishes.

Fannie Bernard (left) holds the letter, which is part of the Congressional Record, as Chiefland Mayor Chris Jones holds the flag that was flown over the Capitol in honor of the late Mayor Betty Walker. Bernard is one of Walker's sisters.

