

# City of Gainesville, Florida

Office of Mayor Edward B. Braddy  
PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Collins Walter Duncan was born on March 13, 1926 on the Liberty Hill/Rutledge Settlement of Alachua County, Florida to Mr. Joe and Mrs. Beatrice DeBose Duncan. He is the third of four children and he loved his siblings Joseph Duncan, Alberta Rivers and Serena Hilberry; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Duncan's education began at Liberty Hill Community School, a rural schoolhouse that still stands in the 7500 block of NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. He attended Lincoln High School where he graduated in 1945. Immediately following graduation he was drafted into the Army/Airforce and within six months, Mr. Duncan achieved the rank of Sergeant. In 1946, he completed his military service and returned home; and

WHEREAS, during his visit home he shared his lifelong dream of becoming a mortician with his brother, Mr. Joseph "Joe" Duncan. He told Joe of his idea of establishing a funeral home serving the African-American community in Gainesville and extended him the invitation to go into business together. His brother excitedly agreed. In 1947, Mr. Duncan enrolled in the Eckels College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania while his brother enrolled in the Atlanta College of Mortuary Science. Graduating in 1948, Mr. Duncan returned home to begin laying the foundation for what would later become Duncan Brothers' Funeral Home; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, Mr. Duncan and his siblings assisted their father in tending to livestock and growing produce. They would travel the seven to ten miles of rugged dirt road by horse and buggy into town to sell their fresh meat, eggs, milk and vegetables to countless families in Gainesville. He was an errand boy and funeral attendant at Hughes and Chestnut Funeral Home, a bellhop at Hotel Thomas and in 1953, Mr. Duncan and his brother opened Duncan Brothers' Funeral Home where he was the Director, Business Manager and Embalmer; and

WHEREAS, the next 63 years Mr. Duncan would experience the pleasures as well as the pains inherent to the life of a mortician, from the birth of his idea and its growth into a successful business to the homegoings of numerous cherished community members, friends and family. At the age of 90, he continues to work and he is one of the oldest living original owners of a funeral home in the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, for 58 years Mr. Duncan was married to his childhood sweetheart, Ms. Gloria Marie Chestnut, whom he met in the Liberty Hill schoolyard. She preceded him in death in 2008. Three daughters were born to this union - Cheryl Dresdean Duncan-William, preceded him in death, Iris Michelle Duncan and Corlis Wanda Duncan-Nelson. He is the proud grandfather of seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Duncan is a member of the University City Lodge #1218 Order of the Elks, the Pallbearers Lodge #113 and a member of the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church in Gainesville. In his leisure, he enjoys watching sports on television, reminiscing about his old "country" days and his days in the military, eating peanuts and spending time with his family; and

WHEREAS, even though Joe passed away in June 2007, the Duncan Brothers' legacy continues through their commitment to their own family and their dedication to the families they serve. Today, 63 years after opening its doors for the very first time, Duncan Brothers' Funeral Home is proud to continue to live its motto: "Our Family serves your family with compassion, expertise and dignity."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Edward B. Braddy, by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Gainesville, do hereby proclaim April 21, 2016 as

## *Collins Walter Duncan Day*

in the City of Gainesville and invite all our citizens to join me in honoring him for being a true pillar in our community and graciously thanking him for his many years of service to the Gainesville community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of the City of Gainesville, Florida, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, A.D., 2016.

---

Edward B. Braddy  
Mayor