

# In Memoriam



*Jane Castor, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those citizens whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and nation, and one of these individuals was **Dr. Walter Lee Smith, Sr., Ph.D.**, a well-respected Educator, Author, Advocate, Orator, and Historian who passed away on Thursday, November 25, 2021, at the age of 86; and

**WHEREAS**, a Tampa, Florida native, Dr. Smith was born on May 13, 1935 to the late Eva Smith (Reynolds), and he was lovingly raised by her and his stepfather, Rubin Reynolds in Georgia, Florida, and Harlem, New York, excelling in high school where he was a star athlete, and he served his beloved country in the United States Army during the Korean War; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Smith believed in education and enrolled at Gibbs Junior College in St. Petersburg, Florida where he was President of the Student Government Association, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Biology and Chemistry and his Masters of Education from Florida A&M University (FAMU), his Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Florida State University where a scholarship is named for him, and he studied abroad; he began his stellar career with Hillsborough Community College as Assistant to the President and then promoted to Collegiums Director, Dean, and Provost, and he later served as President of Roxbury Community College in Boston, Massachusetts; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1977, Dr. Smith became the seventh President of FAMU serving until 1985, and under his leadership and vision, the prestigious institution became internationally acclaimed and grew to eleven schools and colleges including the School of Journalism, School of Allied Health, the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, the Division of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education added, academic and research programs expanded, doctorate and graduate programs created, the athletic division vastly improved, and a University Endowment was established through an impressive fundraising campaign, and the FAMU College of Architecture and Engineering Technology building was named in his honor and he was inducted into the FAMU Athletics Hall of Fame, and awarded a Senior Fulbright Scholar appointment at the University of Malawi; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout his lifetime, Dr. Smith impacted the nation and world with his advocacy for equality, especially in education, and he was instrumental in developing Titles IV and VI programs for school desegregation following the passage of the Civil Rights Act and worked with the National Education Association to assist in breaking down racial barriers in teacher organizations, developed desegregation and graduate education training centers, worked with the Kennedy Space Center developing curriculum and in South Africa following apartheid to help establish a community college system, he was the Director of the Florida Education Association, he authored *The Magnificent Twelve: Florida's Black Junior Colleges*, he opened the Dr. Walter L. Smith Library in Tampa, and much more; and

**WHEREAS**, well known for his intelligence, tenacity, loyalty, and his desire to elevate and empower people, Dr. Smith will forever be remembered for his deep love of his wife, family and friends, his commitment to higher education and in preserving African American history, and his dedication to improving the quality of life for others.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby urge all citizens to join me in publicly expressing sorrow and heartfelt appreciation to the Dr. Walter L. Smith, Sr. Family, his wife Barbara, his sons John, Andre and Walter, his daughters Salesia and Tracey, his Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their cherished memories and the considerable impact of his life on our city, state, nation, and the world.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2021.

*Jane Castor*  
Mayor