

# In Memoriam



*Bob Buckhorn, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those individuals whose dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and its citizens. One of these individuals was **Mary Alice Dorsett**, a beloved and respected Business Owner, Civil Rights Activist, Community Leader and Author who passed away on Tuesday, November 14, 2017, at age 91; and

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Dorsett was born on February 4, 1926 in Dade City, Florida to the late James Dorsett and the late Nannie Mae Johnson, and she was a highly valued citizen of Tampa, Florida for sixty-six years prior to her relocating to Atlanta, Georgia in 2015 to be closer to family; and

**WHEREAS**, upon graduation from high school in Lakeland, Florida, she enrolled at Paine College in August, Georgia and thereafter attended the prestigious National Trade and Professional Schools for Women and Girls, founded by Nannie Hellen Burroughs who became Mrs. Dorsett's mentor, lifelong friend and who influenced her decision to become a successful business owner and impacted her long-time dedication to civil rights and in advocating on behalf of the needy; and

**WHEREAS**, a true trailblazer, Mrs. Dorsett was the owner of Dorsett's Tax Service and she was the first African American to operate a bail bonds company and an employment agency, Dorsett Bail Bonds and Dorsett's General Employment Agency which assisted many people find jobs without having to pay a fee, and Mrs. Dorsett was the first African American to run for public office in Hillsborough County when she ran for the District 70 Seat in the Florida State House of Representatives in 1966; and

**WHEREAS**, dedicated to the community she loved, Mrs. Dorsett was proud of being called a "radical" and was considered an influential civic icon, championing for equality and on behalf of others, and she brought her passion for justice to the community, making a difference and impacting lives, and she utilized her tenacity with her service including founding Faith Mission, as a charter member of the Community Health Clinic and the Health and Education Association, and through her leadership with the Tampa Urban League, National Council of Negro Women, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Grand Union Pallbearer Society, and she wrote the book "*Wings*" in 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Dorsett received numerous honors over her lifetime for her many contributions and dedication to the Tampa community including receiving the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Committee's *Drum Major Award for Human Rights*, Hillsborough County Human Rights Council's *Lifetime Achievement Award* and *Hall of Fame Inductee*, she was named a *Notable American Woman of 2000*, the Hillsborough Tax Collector's North Tampa Office is named in her honor, and her portrait was included in the Champions of Change Exhibit at the Robert W. Sanders, Sr. Public Library; and

**WHEREAS**, known as an inspiration to all who knew her, she will be forever remembered for her deep love of family, friends and young people, her confidence, generosity, integrity, wisdom, strength and devotion to her faith, and although we are grieved at the loss of this extraordinary citizen, her legacy will continue to live on through the impact she had on our community and in all those whose lives she has touched and encouraged.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bob Buckhorn, 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 Mary Alice Dorsett Family, her son Dwayne "Oz", her daughter Countess, Goddaughter Harriett, Grandchildren, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their many cherished memories and the impact of her life on our city and nation.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2017.

  
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Mayor

