

Be Bateman Memorial Tribute by Mayor Bill Brooks

07-15-10

I would like to thank Ben, Diana, Ginger, Roger and of course Ava for the honor and privilege to speak about Be today. I will use this time to celebrate Be's life during the time I knew her.

I met Be in 1995 when I moved to Belle Isle and got to know her very well in 1998 when I began as a commissioner and later Mayor and she was city clerk.

One of my first acts was to schedule a retreat and Be suggested that we should write a vision and a mission statement at that retreat. And looking back now, it is so evident that her hands were in their making.

Our vision is "to be central Florida's premier community where residents can thrive in a healthy environment with the support of a responsive city government.

Our mission is to preserve the quality of life and provide needed services to our residents through sound fiscal control.

She lived that every day in her service to our city.

Over our years together we faced many obstacles and challenges, and she took them all with tremendous grace,

respect for our citizens and with a perseverance to accomplish the task that was second to none.

She could sit and listen to the most grumpy, outspoken, loud, angry person just moan and groan (we don't have anyone like that in Belle Isle don't get me wrong!) and when they left city hall, they were the most informed, understanding sweetest people you ever met! She would just smile and listen to them.

She did that to me too. I would come up with some good ideas and she would smile and say "Mayor, I agree let's do that". And I would have some harebrained ones too (no hair jokes), and she would just smile, and listen and say nothing. Those ideas didn't get implemented.

One of my favorite stories was when I came to her with an idea to have an event with two weeks' notice to pay tribute to our fallen heroes and first responders of 9-11. I asked her to help pull together entertainment (Her sister Ginger remembers singing there) bounce houses, speakers, stages, food and drink. And rather than say, "Gosh Mayor, that is an awful lot", she handed me a list of ten more things for me to do! She said, "Mayor, the speed of the boss is the speed of the crew." She knew how to get things done.

In 2002 we decided to dedicate our annual calendar to our Belle Isle military heroes. Be took the initiative to solicit

nominees from the community and she personally interviewed dozens of war heroes and published their stories and photos in our calendar. Did you know among the residents living in Belle Isle, we have the Army Air Corps veteran who was first to return fire on the Japanese in Hawaii on December 7th 1941 and the Air Force pilot who dropped the nuclear bomb on Japan to end the war? She did.

Be was our walking history book. She participated in many efforts to chronicle the area's past in Belle Isle and in Pine Castle. As Harv Readey put it, "she knew where every skeleton was, and she flushed em out as city manager! That took guts!"

A little over two years ago when we went through an exhaustive search for a new city manager, and interviewed numerous candidates from all around the state and a couple from out of state, we really felt like something just didn't fit. So I walked into Be's office and asked her "Be, why don't you put in for the job?" She said, "Mayor, if you think I could do it, it would be my honor. Do you think I am qualified?" I laughed. I said, "Be, this job has you written all over it. You are exactly what we need right now." Boy, were we right.

Be was a true leader. In our little city, she saw no limit to what we could do. As the saying goes, "A leader is

someone who takes people where they think they cannot go.” She certainly led our staff to great heights.

We had some chuckles with her too.

Former Mayor Charlie Scott shared a story with me that while she was city clerk, she published a notice of a “public” meeting but left out the “L”, so everyone enjoyed ribbing her about that.

While she was city manager for two brief years, she led

The creation of a new police department;

Bought the nation’s first Smart Police car and built a new building for them;

Totally renovated and beautified the Nela Avenue Historic Bridge,

Created two new wonderful parks for our residents,

Privatized our landscape maintenance functions,

Took over building inspections, and

Led us through the process of creating the Cornerstone Charter Academy. We will surely honor her fittingly on opening day August 23rd.

Let me just say Be was truly a dream come true for our city when she became city manager. And she was the heart and soul of our city. Everything she did was with the concern of our residents first, always for the good of our city. And all with no ego or desire for attention or credit. She was the best of public servants.

Be prepared our staff well to continue the great work she started. She left the ship sailing full steam ahead even in extremely tough economic times toward a bright future. We will find a new captain, but it will always be her ship.

During this past week, I have seen the huge outpouring of love, faith and support of friends that surrounds her wonderful family. May the Lord make His presence known to them. May they be filled with the peace and comfort knowing His Grace is sufficient to get them through this together until we all are with her again in Heaven.

We live in a broken world, and we must have faith to help us through our tragedies. II Corinthians 4:17-18 says, "For our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Even our earthly lives are but a flash when compared to the eternal life God assures us is ours. We will be with her

again, and it will be forever, in heaven with God, where Revelation 21:5 says, “God will make everything new.”

It was a gift to know Be Bateman who became God’s new City Manager on July 7th. Belle Isle is a much better place as a result of this one wonderful woman.

May God Bless You All.

Bill Brooks

Mayor, Belle Isle