



News Happening Around Town

January 2021 Newsletter



City of Ocala
Office of the Mayor

Message from the Mayor



"As an Ocala native, I deeply care about what happens in our city. The people and places that make up this town are an important part of our community. Serving as your mayor for nine years is both an honor and a privilege and I remain committed to staying connected to our citizens. My hope is that through this monthly newsletter, you will see the continuous progress of our city as we work together to make this city a great place to live, play and prosper."

Calendar | Upcoming Events

2
Feb.

**City Council
Meeting**
5 p.m.

16
Feb.

**City Council
Meeting**
5 p.m.

Updates from the Police Department

Chief Graham Legacy Walk

On January 13, Zone Health & Fitness hosted a 12-hour walk in honor of the late Chief Greg Graham. Participants each took a turn on treadmill 12, which was Chief Graham's favorite. The treadmill now features a plaque, dedicating it in his honor. The event was a huge success and raised over \$150,000 to benefit the amnesty program at Beacon Point and the Boys & Girls Club of Marion County, two programs that were close to Greg's heart.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Wreath Laying Ceremony

Saturday, January 16, 2021





Attendees at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Wreath Laying Ceremony on Jan. 16

From Around the Community

Message from the Mayor

"My heart goes out to the survivors of COVID-19 and the ones who have lost their loved ones. I'm home recovering from COVID myself after five days in the hospital. See you next month."

Wednesday Market Now Open

The Ocala Downtown Market is now open each Wednesday from 1 - 6 p.m. To provide more culinary options downtown, food trucks will be operating weekly Tuesday - Saturday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Sunday from Noon - 6 p.m.

For updates about the market and to find out what food trucks will be available, make sure to follow the Ocala Downtown Market on [Facebook](#).



World Equestrian Center

The World Equestrian Center (WEC) is ready to welcome spectators to Ocala's newest equine and event facility grounds. The property has five restaurants currently in operation, with three more coming soon. There is something for everyone with options ranging from Mexican food to burgers to Italian food and even a candy shoppe. Go out and enjoy our beautiful Florida winter and one of the things that makes Ocala famous - horses!

Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering recognition to a person or organization. If you or your organization is interested in working with the Mayor's office to receive recognition, please contact Jackie McGuinness at (352)401-3977.

Recent Proclamations

Florida Arbor Day

The State of Florida has one of the oldest Arbor Day celebrations in the nation, established as the third Friday of January beginning in 1886. Trees reduce the erosion of topsoil, cut cooling costs, clean the air, provide habitat for wildlife and beautify our community. Ocala is blessed with an abundance of trees that add to the beauty of our community and the quality of our lives. The Ocala City Council has demonstrated its commitment to preserving this community's trees by passing a special ordinance ensuring that trees will remain an integral part of our city's landscape.

In 2019, the City of Ocala celebrated 29 consecutive years with a Tree City USA designation. This year, the observance of Florida Arbor Day will include the planting of Florida native swamp magnolia trees at Tusawilla Park. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, hereby declare January 15, 2021, to be FLORIDA ARBOR DAY in Ocala, Florida. I urge all citizens to plant Florida native flowering trees to beautify urban landscapes in and around the city.

In honor of William James

January 1, 2021 marked the 100th birthday of William James. He lived by the biblical tenet taught to him by his mother "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and he attributes all his accomplishments to the blessings of the Lord. William's father passed away when he was a young boy, requiring him to leave school to help support his mother and three younger siblings, although he had a keen mind. He started work as a custodian at Howard High School in 1954 and retired in 1986 after 27 years of service to Marion County Public Schools with the distinction of being the first black custodial supervisor overseeing 17 different schools. William was a valued school employee, friend and mentor to countless students and, perhaps inadvertently, an important figure in the county's school integration in the 1960s when his easy rapport with students was a valuable asset to help the first black students attend North Marion

High School. Even though there was trouble and racial discord, for William, the blessing of seeing black and white students under one roof was one for which he had prayed.

As a respected member of the community, William has received numerous plaques and awards, including being an honorary deputy of the Marion County Sheriff's Office (where he served on advisory boards and ministered to inmates at the county jail), being presented with the Frank Pinkston Humanitarian Award in 2003, the Legacy Pioneer Award in 2007, the "William James Start!" walking train on MLK Jr. Avenue dedication to him by the City of Ocala in honor of his decades of contributions to the community, the book "Walking by Faith" about his life authored by Cynthia Wilson-Graham, and being honored as an inaugural inductee of the Legacy Park Community Service Recognition Program.

However, the achievement that pleases this Christian man the most is his attendance record at Mount Tabor AME Church where he was appointed secretary as a teenager, served as a steward, taught Sunday school and has been in the congregation for nearly every service for more than 70 years. William is always gracious with a natural warmth and a rolling laugh that does a heart good and is proud that he has never smoked, drank, cursed, been in a fight or been arrested. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim that William James is a pioneer and an advocate of civil rights, and I urge all citizens to recognize the many ways that William James has demonstrated exemplary service that will resonate throughout our community for generations to come.

Black History Month

Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is observed annually across the United States in February as a celebration honoring the many accomplishments and contributions made by generations of Black Americans and other people of African descent. Gaining a further knowledge and understanding of African American History can strengthen the perception of all citizens regarding the issues of human rights and the struggles to eliminate barriers of racial discrimination.

As we journey towards a more unified nation, let us continue to recognize the contributions of African Americans in history as a reminder for meaningful dialogue and a collective commitment towards the advancement of uniform policies and practices that create opportunities for all citizens. We are thankful for the countless contributions of African Americans in Ocala and throughout this nation during this month and throughout the year. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim February 2021 as BLACK HISTORY MONTH and I urge all residents to work together to make Ocala, Florida a great place to live, play and prosper.

Opioid and Amnesty Information

The Ocala Police Department (OPD) has multiple protocols in place to help alleviate addiction in our community.

All officers in the field are equipped with Narcan® to aid during a response to a possible opioid overdose call. Narcan® is an FDA approved nasal

spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid emergency or overdose. OPD's Opioid Amnesty Program began in January 2018 and continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction of overdose deaths and crime throughout Marion County. If someone is struggling with addiction and needs assistance, upon request by the individual, an Ocala Police Officer will transport them to a local health treatment facility, free of charge. The officer will also take and properly destroy any drugs and/or drug paraphernalia surrendered to them by the individual without the fear of arrest for possession of those items. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of cost or arrest. It is the belief of the Ocala Police Department that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

OPD Numbers*

2021 Year to Date

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Overdoses (OD) | 14 |
| OD Deaths | 1 |
| Narcan® Saves | 9 |
| Amnesty Program | |
| Total Participants | 336 |
| 2021 Participants | 5 |

*Numbers are as-of this writing and are subject to change.

OPD Numbers

2020 Year End

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Overdoses (OD) | 360 |
| OD Deaths | 44 |
| Narcan® Saves | 148 |
| Amnesty Program | |
| Total Participants | 331 |
| 2021 Participants | 145 |

About the Mayor

Kent Guinn assumed the office of Mayor in December 2011 after serving the City of Ocala for 12 years as the Councilman representing District 4. Mayor Guinn is in the financial services business and is a representative of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America as well as owner of the firm Guinn & Company, LLC.

For the past 29 years he has served on the Board of the Children's Home Society Mid-Florida Division which covers North Central Florida. He served on the CHS State Board of Directors for 26 years. CHS is a 112-year-old not for profit child welfare agency in the State of Florida. Mayor Guinn was adopted through CHS.

Mayor Guinn is a 5th generation Ocalan. His family has been in Ocala since 1850. He and his wife Sandra have been married for 39 years and have two sons.

Office of the Mayor
110 SE Watula Avenue
Second Floor
Ocala, FL 34471

Contact Information
352-401-3977
kguinn@ocalafl.org
www.ocalafl.org



City of Ocala
Office of the Mayor