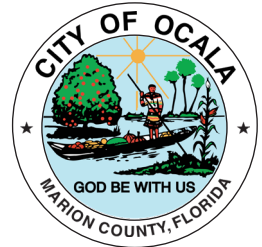




# News Happening Around Town

Nov. 2020 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

**1**  
**Dec.**

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

**15**  
**Dec.**

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

# Updates from the Police Department

## Chief Graham's Five Rules



Weeks have passed since our community lost Chief Graham. During this this time, I have reflected on the life, career and friendship that formed between us over the past nine years of working together. Greg was not only a leader to those he worked with but a servant to our community. In December 2011, I made a call to Chief Graham letting him know that our current police chief had resigned. I asked him if he would be willing to come back to Ocala. In typical

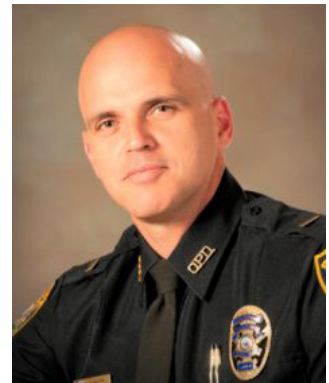
Greg fashion he jokingly responded, "What's the weather like?"; mentioning that his current view was a freezing cold, snowy one. Although we have beautiful weather in Ocala, it was clear from the beginning that Greg would be the right fit for the job. We needed someone that the community could respect, but criminals would fear. Chief Graham possessed all those qualities and more. While the Chief may no longer be with us, he left with us his words to live by known as 'Chief Graham's Five Rules.'

1. Do the right thing
2. In doing the right thing, ask for forgiveness rather than permission
3. If you make a mistake, don't worry about it
4. Treat everyone with respect
5. Have fun

As we transition to a new chief in the upcoming weeks, the Ocala Police Department will continue to honor a Chief that meant so much to them and our community.

## New Police Chief Appointed

At the November 17 City Council meeting, I made my formal recommendation for Deputy Chief Mike Balken to serve as Ocala's next Police Chief, and he was then appointed by the City Council with a unanimous vote. Chief Balken served as Deputy Chief under Chief Graham and has served with OPD for 26 years. He first joined in 1994 and became a major crimes detective in 1998. Two years later, he became a sergeant and then a lieutenant in 2005.



During his time as lieutenant, Balken had oversight of the downtown area while working with special operations, major crimes and internal affairs. He became a captain in 2014 and worked in internal affairs until August 2015,

when he was promoted to the rank of major and was placed in charge of investigations. In July 2017, Balken transferred to patrol, where he worked until his appointment to deputy chief in March 2018.

Chief Balken graduated from the FBI National Academy in 2009 and has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Upon his appointment to chief, Balken thanked those for supporting him, "I love this community. I love Ocala and I will work as hard as I possibly can for this agency, this city and its citizens."

---

## From Around the Community

### MLK First Responder Campus

The MLK First Responder Campus had its grand opening on November 19. The socially-distanced ribbon cutting was attended by City officials and state legislators as well as members of OPD and Fire Resuce. The campus is now officially home to Ocala Fire Rescue's Station 1, a Community Building and Ocala Police Department's West District Campus. See photos from the ribbon cutting ceremony below:







## West Ocala Cook-out

We recently got together and held a cook-out in the West Ocala area as a way to get out and be involved with the community. Members of both OPD and Ocala Fire Rescue came by, and all were welcome. We hope to hold similar events throughout the new year.



## Beacon Point

Throughout his time as Ocala's Police Chief, Chief Graham was passionate about combating the substance abuse issues in our community. OPD's Amnesty Program is a great example of that. Beacon Point, a substance abuse treatment center, will be naming a rehab facility "Chief Graham Recovery Center" in honor of him and his work.

## Spirit of Giving

Chief Graham would always say to me, "What can I do to brighten your day today?" As this year's holiday season is upon us, let's remember to be kind to those around us, show helpfulness and compassion and make an effort to brighten others' day.

# Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering celebration 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

### Floyd Blair Day

Floyd Blair was in the US Army Air Corps Active Reserves, later known as the United States Air Force, from May 1942 until he was discharged in March 1957. He was on active duty during World War II in the European Theater as a fighter pilot with the 404th Fighter Group and the 507th Fighter Squadron flying the P-47 Thunderbolt from April 1944 to April 1945. Floyd Blair's group operated in close support of the ground forces until the end of the war, supporting the Allied breakthrough at St. Lo in July 1944, the drive through Holland in September 1944, Allied operations during the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944 – January 1945) and the establishment of the Remagen Bridgehead and subsequent crossing of the Rhine in March 1945.

Floyd Blair was awarded the Air Medal with three Silver Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross and French Legion of Honor, while the 404th Fighter Group was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation, French Croix de Guerre with Palm and the Belgium Fourragere. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by the virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, hereby proclaim November 14, 2020 as FLOYD BLAIR DAY in Ocala. I call upon all residents of Ocala and Marion County to remember Floyd Blair on this day for the part he played among all the brave men, living or dead, who did so much to open the path to victory and peace.

### Farm City Week 2020

All Marion County citizens depend on farmers to produce the food and fiber necessary for health, safety and quality of life. Agriculture significantly effects our local economy, employing 33,740 people with an economic impact of \$1.7 billion dollars. The equine and cattle industry are also big economic drivers but forest products, with over 400,000 acres of timberland, contributes substantially to economic value. Additionally, agricultural practices result in water recharge that is essential to surface and ground water.

As part of our Farm City Week celebration, Mr. Gus Gray and Mr. Jerry Arthur will be inducted into the Marion County Agriculture Hall of Fame for their contributions to the agriculture industry. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, Florida, do hereby proclaim November 18 – 25, 2020, as "FARM CITY™ WEEK" in the City of Ocala. I call on all citizens, as they gather with their families and friends during this season of Thanksgiving, to remember the value a strong agriculture industry brings to Ocala's economy while also ensuring a healthy diet for all citizens. I would like to remind everyone that producers and consumers share a unique interdependence, for one cannot exist without the other.

## Philanthropy Week 2020

Philanthropy is a hallmark of American character, and it is central to how a community overcomes its challenges. Philanthropic giving has been part of our community's history as long as we have existed, and leaders across the nation are increasingly recognizing service and charitable giving for the vital roles they play in meeting county and city needs.

A federal recognition of National Philanthropy Day occurs in November each year and in 2019, Americans contributed more than \$444 billion to charitable organizations, marking the sixth consecutive year of growth. Nonprofits account for 1 out of every 10 jobs in the American workforce. The lives of every citizen are impacted by nonprofits in some form or another from museums, concerts, houses of worship, community sports leagues and youth enrichment programs to social services that provide food, clothing, housing, training, employment and health care to those less fortunate.

Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, Florida, do hereby proclaim the week of November 16-22, 2020 as PHILANTHROPY WEEK in the City of Ocala. I encourage residents to recognize the positive impact of charitable giving in our city, to thank those who serve and to find ways to give back to the community.

---

## 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\* 2020 Year to Date

<b>Overdoses (OD)</b>	319
<b>OD Deaths</b>	38
<b>Narcan® Saves</b>	132
<b>Amnesty Program</b>	
<b>Total Participants</b>	341
<b>2020 Participants</b>	145

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

# 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