

# **New Bedford's Fort Taber Flag to honor Dr. Herbert R. Waters, Jr. Col. U.S. Marine Corps**

During the month of August, the 36th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of Dr. Herbert R. Waters, a Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps who passed away last year on August 4, 2021 at the age of 90.

Waters was born on October 8, 1930, the son of the late Herbert R. Waters, Sr. and Jane C. (Joseph) Waters. He grew up in the North End of New Bedford, on Hillman St. and attended New Bedford High School where he excelled in the ROTC program. Upon graduating high school in 1948, he attended Providence College where he ran track and cross country. After graduating from Providence College with a bachelor's degree in 1953, he earned a commission in the United States Marine Corps.

According to his obituary, LT Waters, also known as "Bert," became only the 10th black officer in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in the Korean War for 14 months and remained in the Marine Reserves, earning promotions ahead of his peers, eventually attaining the rank of Colonel. His primary duty station was at the Naval Air Station in South Weymouth, MA, where he became the first African American Commanding Officer of the Mass 6 Marine Air Support Squadron.

While serving in the Marine Corps Reserves, Waters continued his education, earning a Master's degree from Bridgewater State College and a Doctorate from Nova University. He began working for the New Bedford Public School system and became a leading figure in education for the next 32 years, with the

majority of his time as Principal of Sgt. William H. Carney Academy.

It was here that Dr. Waters made an indelible mark on his community and helped to shape education, not only in New Bedford but for the entire state. According to his obituary, "Through strong leadership, personal accountability and by introducing pioneering multicultural curriculum and celebrating diversity, Sgt. William H. Carney Academy quickly became the jewel of the entire school district. Presidential candidate and civil rights icon, Jesse Jackson, Governor Michael Dukakis and many other dignitaries routinely visited Carney while educators statewide began modeling Dr. Water's innovative approach to academic leadership."

A Standard-Times article written last year, after Water's death, included quotes from many people who knew Dr. Waters and recalled the impact he made on the staff and students at Carney. NBPS Deputy Superintendent, Karen Treadup, wrote, "The man was great. Carney Academy benefited so much from his leadership, which was anchored in self-discipline, and which he imparted by example to his students. As principal, he engaged students with a sense of deep caring and firsthand knowledge of the challenges many of them faced."

Mayor Jon Mitchel wrote in a statement, "As distinguished as his military career was, he is perhaps best known as the long-time principal of Carney Academy, where he developed a national reputation in urban education for setting high standards for personal accountability and academic performance."

Once Waters retired as Principal of Carney Academy, he went on to open Carney Daycare, providing a safe learning environment for children in kindergarten through grade six.

Waters was extremely proud of his Wampanoag heritage and was a member of the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness. He was known as "Black Eagle" and was a highly

respected elder within the Native American community. He often traveled as a representative of the Wampanoag Nation to powwows across the country including the "Gathering of Nations" in New Mexico, the "Crow Fair" in Montana, the "Seminole Powwow" in Florida, the "Schemitzun" in Connecticut and his beloved Mashpee Wampanoag Powwow in Massachusetts.

He was also an avid runner and pilot. Waters competed in biathlons, half-marathons, countless road races and completed 27 marathons. He also enjoyed flying his personal aircraft "Bulldog," logging several hundred hours, often taking friends and family up in his Piper Cherokee 140.

Dr. Waters was also actively involved in the Cape Verdean community. Former New Bedford Mayor Scott Lang stated, "this fueled the whole idea of driving youth to reach the highest level of success, proving Waters to be a role model in all aspects of the community."

Waters retired from the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves in 1984, earning the National Defense Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal and the Korean Service Medal.

"Dad was a genuine patriot who loved this country, the city of New Bedford, and his friends and family," as family members remembered him. Mayor Jon Mitchell wrote in a statement, "Accomplished aviator, promotor of Wampanoag culture, and marathon runner were among the many roles he somehow fit into his extraordinary active life. His commitment to excellence in everything he undertook and his unwavering devotion to the Nation and the City, will continue to inspire those who had the good fortune of knowing him."

Linda Ferreira, of **Empire Ford of New Bedford**, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford of New Bedford. Flags are raised by the staff at Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum. Those who would like to honor a local veteran in the future can contact

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