

2008
Florida League of Cities
Council Member of the Year
Award Nomination



Dorothy Ross
City Commissioner

Submitted by the
City of Hallandale Beach

Known as Dotty, Commissioner Dorothy Ross has demonstrated excellence and dedication within her profession, community, peers and family. Ross has called the City of Hallandale Beach her home for more than forty years. Twenty-eight of those years she was a devoted and exemplary employee of the City's Police department. Ross graduated cum laude in 1981 from Nova Southeastern University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, followed by a Master Degree in Public Administration from Florida International University in 1986. She is an active alumni member of both Universities. She attends the annual conference for the Association of College Honor Societies, which sets the standards for membership in Scholarship Honor Societies for students ranking at the highest academic levels. She also attends Alpha Phi Sigma, the National Criminal Justice Honor Society that combines annual conferences with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, elects officers from membership universities, and provides awards for winning academic papers, scholarship and grant awards. Ross maintains a "hands on" approach with professors, students, and her community on a local, state and national level.

Ross' passion lies in criminal justice and public service, but she lives by the wise words of Eleanor Roosevelt who once said "you must do the thing you think you cannot do." Those words alone bring tears to her eyes. Ross' daily life is a tribute to those words. She always encourages positive, productive change and challenges those who think they cannot to achieve them. She is a strong advocate for education at all levels and maintains direct personal involvement in the local Hallandale Beach schools, as well as with the technical school in an adjoining city where she has had a long term relationship.

As a woman with excellent educational credentials, Ross recognizes the need to offer other opportunities than standard university and has been a member of the Sheridan Technical Center Advisory Council for the past twelve years and continues to sit as Chair and preside over the Council. When the voters of Broward County approved gaming in Broward County's pari-mutuel facilities, Ross saw an educational and job opportunity. As a Commissioner in the only City in Florida that has two pari-mutuels gaming facilities, Ross spearheaded a new program at Sheridan Technical Center to offer a course on slot gaming and coupled that with her other efforts in the technician training program. Thanks to the vision and innovation of Ross, the new program is the first to be offered in Southeast Florida. The program is expected to expand to other areas of gaming such as tabletop dealing and surveillance.

As a former employee, Mayor, Vice Mayor and current City Commissioner, Ross' goal is to make City government as open and user friendly as possible. Her biggest concern and strongest initiative is cutting back "red tape" and traditional forms of bureaucracy. One of Ross' recent initiatives included the streamlining of the permitting process. Because of Ross' efforts, the Building Department created a brochure and is in the process of creating additional web-based and written material for the general public and residents explaining the permitting process and when and why someone should pull a permit. Additionally, under Ross' direction the Building Department has also implemented a new online system to allow residents to apply for and check the status of their permits.

Although the position of a City Commissioner is considered a part-time job, Ross' actions are anything but part-time. What sets Ross apart from other elected officials is

her desire to better her Community and provide opportunities for those who do not feel they have any role or have any voice in city organization. She leads her life and her job with heart and hard work, rather than by political motivation.

Ross has an open door policy and is always there to lend a hand and help in any way she can. Her commitment to the City of Hallandale Beach and community is demonstrated by her longevity with the City as a resident, employee and Commissioner. Her dedication to education and outreach has been demonstrated by her leadership and initiative to bring to fruition innovative ideas and she has demonstrated the persistence to accomplish the things others may not try. Living by her favorite quote, Commissioner Ross has had many firsts in her career, pushing the envelope on many an occasion, and accomplished that which she thought she could not: First Female President of the Broward County Crime Commission; President of the National Association to Advance Ethical Hypnosis; One of the first women graduates from the Auxiliary Broward County Police Academy; First Administrative Secretary of the Hallandale Beach Police and Fire Pension Fund; and, First Woman Trustee of the Fund.

Among many of her civic endeavors is her active participation in the Hallandale Beach Kiwanis Club. As a Kiwanian, she used her love for community service coupled with her love for horses to spearhead a partnership between Kiwanis and “Horse and Handicapped.” This nonprofit organization is dedicated to providing effective therapeutic horseback riding and other equine-assisted activities for children and adults with physical, cognitive, and emotional difficulties. Ross also represents the Broward League on an important Water Advisory Board.

Of equal importance is her twelve year commitment to service on the Broward County Human Services Community Action Agency. She has served as Trustee on the Board of Directors of Aventura Hospital, Florida and remains active on the hospital's Performance Improvement Council. She also serves as a mentor for local school children and sits as a judge for the different school programs throughout the County. Dottie has always been active in the Hallandale Chamber of Commerce and is an Honorary Board Member of the Hallandale Symphonic Pops Orchestra. Her affiliations are countless and impossible to enumerate.

She is an inspiration to everyone and an advocate for those who are afraid or too intimidated to speak up for their rights. She was recently approached by several residents of a local affordable housing development. The residents advised her that their rent was being significantly increased and the facility was being poorly maintained by the management company. With her compassion and an understanding of HUD, she brought the information to light and sought a resolution. Within days, elected officials from local, state and national offices were getting involved to solve the problem.

As a Commissioner, Ross far exceeds the job description. She has dedicated her life to the City with over 21 years of public service. Her dedication, commitment, motivation, passion, and integrity set her above the rest. Ross' intoxicating energy and life motto encourages those of us around her to do the things we think we cannot do.

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