Mayor leaves legacy of genuine service

BY DANIEL KENNEDY

TRINITY — Still mourning the loss of a council member, the City of Trinity is now grieving the death of its mayor.

Mayor Jesse Hill died March 3 from cancer. The 80-year-old mayor was preceded in death six days earlier by Gene Blackwell, a city councilman.

Hill was in the midst of his second term, having served nearly five years as the city’s mayor. Before that, he served as a member of city council until he was named mayor in 2014 to fill the vacancy left after Trinity Mayor John Teague died in December 2013.

After joining the council the year prior, Hill helped to oversee a steadily growing city business in the midst of a tumultuous time for Trinity.

Two council seats were filled by appointment at the time of Hill’s appointment as mayor. One of the members to fill those current Councilman Jack Carico, said Hill was an exceptional leader.

“Jesse Hill was the first mayor of the City of Trinity that has ever had,” Carico said. “I thought the world of Jesse.”

After serving the remains of his first unexpired term, Hill was re-elected in 2017. City staff said Hill navigated the transition from council member to mayor, easily representing the city well.

Versatility, City Manager Deb Hill was said to be one of the factors that made Hill an ideal choice for the mayor’s term.

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Byerly, a city councilman, served a couple of weeks of school.

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“That’s a lot of food. That’s a lot of God’s work,” Hager said, thanking everyone who helped.

Run 5 Feed 5 also started a grant this past year, giving $400 to Randolph County Schools for guidance counselors or teachers to help students, particularly those who might go hungry.

Allison Mosley, student advocate specialist and dropout preventor at Wheatmore High School, said first-hand how much that grant meant as she provided snacks and a food pan try for students. High school students are busy, and it’s often hard to ask for help.

One student wrote Mosley a thank-you letter for sending his family a grocery gift card and putting money in his lunch account. “I am happy that you had to feed me when I was hungry,” he wrote. He wished he could pay her back, but he said it had made his paycheck last.

After Saturday’s 5K, Run 5 Feed 5 presented COAT a check for $50,000 to help support the Backpack Pals. Reddick said the 60 sponsors and 470 participants made it all possible.

Connie Culler, president of COAT’s Board, said the Backpack program costs a total of $103,000 for nine months. She said that kids do better in school when they’re not hungry. They’re also better physically and spiritually.

Ben Garcia, a member of the track and cross-country team at Randleman High School, won first overall for the second year.

This was Jennifer Helmer’s first time at the Trinity event. She went first overall female, after running a marathon at Fort Bragg the weekend before. She had researched Run 5 Feed 5 and chose the 5K as a really good cause.

Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting won the group competition with 62 participants. Chef Keith Gardner gave them an extra incentive — he will cook a meal for all of them.

Gardner organizes the Tour de Chef bike ride and 5K feast, set for Sept. 21. Part of the proceeds support Run 5 Feed 5. “We’re going to have a sit-down, three-course meal afterwards,” he said.

Trinity High School had the largest school team, with 22.

The 2019 race is over, but the work of feeding children goes on all year. Food can be dropped off at Archdale Wesleyan Church or Grubb Family VMCA. Boxes are available for churches and other organizations to collect food. Volunteers are needed to deliver food on Thursdays this summer. Contact run5feed5@gmail.com or visit www.run5feed5.org.