



City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

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February 6, 2024

To: Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Commissioners

From: Mark G. LeCouris, City Manager

Sub: City Honoring for Calvin "Rudy" Royal

I have been working with the family of Calvin "Rudy" Royal since the end of last year exploring ways to honor this individual. The family has asked the City of Tarpon Springs to honor Mr. Royal for his contributions to his community and the children of the Union Academy Neighborhood. I have attached a biography to this memo for additional information.

My proposal for your approval is as follows:

1. Proclamation in honor of Mr. Royal designating April 27, 2024, as "Rudy Day";
2. Placement of a commemorative plaque on the concession stand building at Dorsett Park to compliment a mural in progress by the Public Art Committee; and,
3. A "Rudy Day" event at Dorsett Park on Saturday, April 27, 2024, sponsored by the City of Tarpon Springs.

I had the honor of knowing Rudy and believe he is truly deserving of these honors for his accomplishments for the community.

To the City Commissioner of Tarpon Springs,

The Royal Family of Tarpon Springs, Florida is requesting April 27, 2024, be recognized as “Rudy Day” and a proclamation be granted in his name, Calvin Royal, Sr., also known as “Coach Rudy.”

For over 30 years he created and coached “The Spongerettes,” an all-woman fast pitch softball team. The team went on to win the State Championships in 1974 and 1976 which took them all the way to Ohio and Pennsylvania. He was also the creator and coach of a men’s basketball team called the “Wagon Wheels.”

His great drive to enhance sports for the young African American youth in Tarpon Springs should not go unnoticed.

Sincerely,

“The Royal Family”

Janet Royal Hood

Arlene Royal Goodwin (US ARMY, Retired)

Sheila Royal Watson (US ARMY, Retired)

Rev. Stanley E. Royal, Sr. (US ARMY, Retired)

Florence Royal Dudley (US ARMY, Retired)

Calvin Royal, II (US ARMY, Retired)

Rachell Royal Mayes (US ARMY, Retired)

Calvin "COACH RUDY" Royal
April 14, 1941 – September 27, 2022

Early in his childhood Calvin Royal cultivated a passion for sports, especially baseball.

During his early years playing sandlot baseball Calvin was given the nickname RUDY.

He

recognized the need for recreational activities amongst the African American community.

He began coaching intramural sports organizing a men's/boys baseball team and a men's

basketball team known as THE WAGONWHEELS. He also organized a women's

fastpitch softball team known as THE SPONGERETTES, that became his passion and

lasted over three decades. THE SPONGERETTES won many tournaments and

represented the state of Florida in the National Championships in Ohio in 1974 and

Pennsylvania in 1976. The community became women's fastpitch enthusiasts. These

teams consisted of generations of local families that played at the field that affectionately

became known as THE RUDY FIELD. COACH RUDY became a household name.

COACH RUDY was a 1959 graduate of Pinellas Highschool in Clearwater, Florida.

In 2021 COACH RUDY was recognized by the City of Tarpon Springs for his

contributions to the community. COACH RUDY quietly passed away on September 27,

2022, and is interred at Rose Cemetery in Tarpon Springs, Fl. He leaves behind a

profound impact on the African American youth in Tarpon Springs and an extraordinary

legacy of mentorship and leadership.