



Newsletter

February 2025

February 20, 2025 — GPHO General Meeting

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the G.P. Historical Museum

“AARP” – ALL ABOUT RUTHE PROGRAM

BY JORJA JACKSON CLEMSON



Ruthe Jackson's daughter, Jorja Jackson Clemson, will tell about Ruthe's love of history and her passion that led to the beginning of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization 50 years ago. Ruthe's passion was contagious and many people were drawn to finding out about the rich and amazing history of Grand Prairie. She brought attention to historic structural sites around Grand

Prairie along with preserving the personal items of early families. Her video interviews are still being enjoyed on YouTube. Join us at the GPHO museum for the history of our organization.



NO CHARGE TO ATTEND THE PROGRAM!!

There will be lunch available for purchase, but you must RSVP. Subway boxed lunches, including either a sliced turkey or a ham sandwich, with chips and a cookie. Drinks will be furnished by GPHO. The cost is \$10.00 per person which you can pay at the door. **PLEASE RSVP to president@gphotx.org** or leave a message at the museum phone number 972-639-3388. **Deadline to reserve your sandwich is Monday, February 17th by 3:00 pm.** Hope to see you there!

For those of you who aren't able to attend our meeting in person, we will be testing the use of Google Meet, which will allow you to attend remotely. It will be "view only"; remote cameras and mics will be disabled. So, those attending the live meeting will not be able to see or hear you. A link will be sent via email the week of the meeting. Click the link and then click "Join the Meeting."

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear Grand Prairie Historical Organization Members,

The year 2025 began with the annual GPHO recognition of Alexander McRae Dechman on January 2. There is quite a bit of information on him in the museum archives. So many long-time citizens of Grand Prairie do not even know his name. If you missed the Dechman Day program at the museum, you can always stop in and find out why we celebrate this important man. The next fun event was the annual Quilt Show. This is always an especially fun time seeing the wonderful artistic work of old and new quilts. Over the next few months, GPHO will be celebrating the upcoming 50th Birthday on August 23, 2025.



We need the help of our members in different ways. Each board member will have volunteer needs in different areas over the next few months. Be ready for an email or phone call and find out how you can assist in making this year as successful as the past 50 years.

See you at the GPHO Museum!

Bonnie Steever Cockrum

2024-2025 GPHO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bonnie Cockrum, President president@gphotx.org
Juanita Wagener, Vice President vicepresident@gphotx.org
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Juanita Wagener, Membership membership@gphotx.org
Kathy Ritterhouse, Newsletter newsletter@gphotx.org
Larry Barnes, Fundraising
Kathy Ritterhouse, Significant Landmarks
Mike Hutchins, Technology

New group dedicated to historic study

The Grand Prairie Historical Organization, founded in the summer of 1975, is dedicated to preserving and passing on to future generations the history of Grand Prairie and the marking of appropriately recognized historical sites, such as the Goodwin Cabin and the Jordan-Bowles Home.

Organizer and president, Mrs. Ruthe Jackson, who also serves as Grand Prairie Bicentennial Commission Chairman, hopes to enlist as charter members

citizens of the city who were a part of the history.

Not much on socializing, but set on accomplishing, the organization plans general meetings only three times annually. Fund raising and historical research projects will occupy most of members' time as active historical preservationists.

Officers serving with Mrs. Jackson are president-elect and program chairman, Mrs. H.V. Taylor; secretary-treasurer, Ray Phillips; and public relations director, Mrs. David E. Read.

Grand Prairie Daily News, Sunday, October 26, 1975

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

The Grand Prairie Historical Organization was founded in the summer of 1975. The first GPHO general meeting was held in the Trimble Room of the Grand Prairie Memorial Library on Saturday morning, October 18, 1975, with Ruthe Jackson serving as the first president and Bobbie Taylor as president-elect. To celebrate the 50th Birthday of GPHO, the Birthday Committee has planned some special events throughout the year of 2025:

- Saturday, February 1, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Dalworth Community citizens interviewed by Ruthe Jackson on "It Happened in Grand Prairie" videos & discussion facilitated by Bonnie Cockrum. At the museum.
- Saturday, March 1, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Recognize RUTHE JACKSON DAY at the museum. Powerpoint presentation by Stephanie Moreno on City of Grand Prairie Landmark Medallions. At the museum.
- Saturday, April 3, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Long-time GPHO member round-table discussion on their memories in Grand Prairie. At the museum.
- Saturday, May 10, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Grand Prairie Trivia lead by Stephanie Moreno.
- Saturday, June 28, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm - Meet at the Liberty Bell for history of the GP bell. 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm - Return to museum for cold drinks and "It Happened in Grand Prairie" video.

50th Birthday Committee Members: Jan Barrett, Martha Pengelly, Stephanie Moreno, Jorja Jackson Clemson, Bonnie Cockrum, ex officio.



HUNG NGUYEN



Hung Nguyen is serving as our Intern this school year. He is a senior at the Grand Prairie Collegiate Institute (familiarily known at GPCI or "gypsy"). Hung can be found researching his project at the museum on Mondays and Wednesdays from about 9:00 am to Noon. He is writing a report on Grand Prairie's transition from a city based on heavy industry (i.e. the airline plant) to one based on entertainment. Besides the report which will become part of the museum archives, Hung will present a video report, "Industry vs Entertainment" at the Museum at 5:00 pm on April 10th.

Hung applied for the internship to learn more about his city and its history. He plans to attend either UT-Dallas or UTA next fall to major in engineering. Besides his interest in history and engineering, Hung also plays the violin.

We appreciate the support of GPISD and teacher Rodney Kaspar for this partnership with GPHO. Thanks also to Kay Dunbar's dedication to our intern program!

G.P.H.O. CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Christmas, A Stroll Through the Life of Dr. Copeland.



were very complimentary. Charlene Erwin, a fairly new member (joined 2022) was excited to volunteer to be a docent and said she could live in the house. Her enthusiasm was felt

On Saturday, **December 7th**, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., GPHO hosted a holiday open house at the historic Copeland Home. The tour of Dr. Copeland's home was up against rainy and cold weather. The morning was spotty light rain but there was a steady stream of visitors (about 22), spaced perfectly coming and going, from about 10:30 am until the last couple walked out of the door about 1:10 pm. The visitors asked questions and were interested in the history. They took photos, asked to have their photo taken with the tree, and



by the visitors as she talked about the dining room and parlor. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated in the evening, and no one ventured out for our open house. The evening docents stayed and visited until the last minute, just in case.

A big **THANK YOU** to the following members and friends:

Nicole Hansen donated the beautiful 9-foot Christmas tree.

Stephanie Moreno donated tree lights, climbed the ladder to put lights on the top, and came back to hang ornaments at the top of the tree.

Jan Barrett helped hang the rest of the lights on the lower part of the tree, hung ornaments and donated ornaments.

Doris Kettelhut donated several vintage ornaments and loaned a beautiful, crocheted tree skirt.

Doranna Corley donated several vintage ornaments.

Sara Dedeluk, City of Grand Prairie Tourism Manager, arranged with City Facility Services to have the lights hung outside and printed and handed out fliers at the tourism table at the Farmer's Market Saturday morning.

Bonnie Cockrum donated the outdoor lights and new tree

lights, donated and loaned ornaments, and brought several decorations to place throughout the house.

John Wylie opened the GPHO Museum from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm.

And to Docents: Stephanie Moreno, Charlene Erwin, Bonnie Cockrum, Larry Barnes, Jan Barrett, and Sarah Moreno.



QUILTED TREASURES ON THE PRAIRIE

The GPHO annual Quilt Show was held at the Museum on January 25th. The beautiful day brought in over 50 people to “ooh and aah” over the 44 quilts that were shared. The visitors were invited to vote on their favorites. People’s Choice awards were awarded in three categories: Vintage/ Antique (before 1950), Modern (1950-Present), and Grand Prairie Quilter. At the end of the show, first, second and third ribbons were awarded in each category, along with two honorable mentions. GPHO volunteers were assisted by Rho Kappa students who helped set up the show on Friday, greet and assist during the show and help break down the show afterward. A video about some of the quilts and quilters is available on the Grand Prairie Historical Organization’s YouTube channel at [Quilted Treasures of the Prairie 2025](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8u35w9GGQ) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8u35w9GGQ>).



FIRST PLACE WINNERS

Left: Claudette Cambron Justin (Antique)
Right: Sharon Schroeder (G.P. Quilter)
Center: Katie Schooling (Modern)



SECOND PLACE WINNERS

Above: Kathy Ritterhouse (Antique)
Left: Kyla Schooling (Modern)
Below: Terri Spain (GP Quilter)



THIRD PLACE WINNERS

Above: John & Bonnie Cockrum (Antique)
Right: Ruth Goodman (Modern)
Below: Paulette Jones (GP Quilter)



Rho Kappa Students

SNIPPETS OF BLACK HISTORY IN G.P.

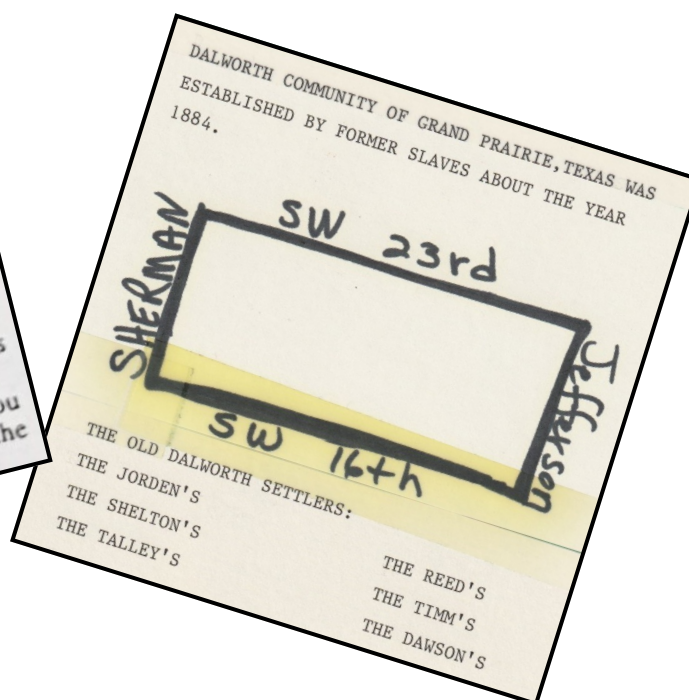
The black community of Dalworth was only about four blocks long — from Southwest 17th Street to Southwest 21st Street along El Paso.

Blacks weren't allowed to build north of El Paso, said Glasco Tallie, a retired teacher who's lived on the same Dalworth lot for 68 years.

"There were so few houses in Dalworth, you could count all of the houses on one hand," he said.

For many years the community was known as Mud Creek, Smith said.

"That was because it was so muddy you had to wear boots and change shoes at the door," Smith said.



Of the 14 black churches in Grand Prairie, the three oldest are Evening Chapel AME, St. John's Baptist and Shady Grove CME.

Evening Chapel began in 1915 in the living room of Tallie's parents, the Rev. G.H. and Cora Ann Tallie, at the Line Community.

"It was organized in my mother's living room. I was about five years old at the time. I remember it very well," said Tallie, superintendent of Sunday School and trustee at the church.

When people started moving from the Line to Dalworth, so did Evening Chapel. The Antioch Baptist Church at Line also moved and changed its name to St. John's Baptist Church.

Since buildings and preachers cost money, the two churches shared a building and alternated Sunday worship services for a while.

"Neither one of us could afford to hire a preacher every Sunday," said Smith.

There was no mail delivery to south Dalworth. When Grand Prairie incorporated, a post office was moved to North Dalworth (north of Main Street between Northwest 15th and 16th streets) which made things a bit easier for the black residents, Tallie said.

"Someone would go get mail and bring it back for the whole area," he said.

The Freetown School in the Line Community was like most rural schools earlier this century, said Glasco Tallie, a former student there.

"It was one room, one teacher. Everybody had to listen to everybody's recitation," he said.

Classes were in the Masonic Lodge and often the teacher was just a community member.

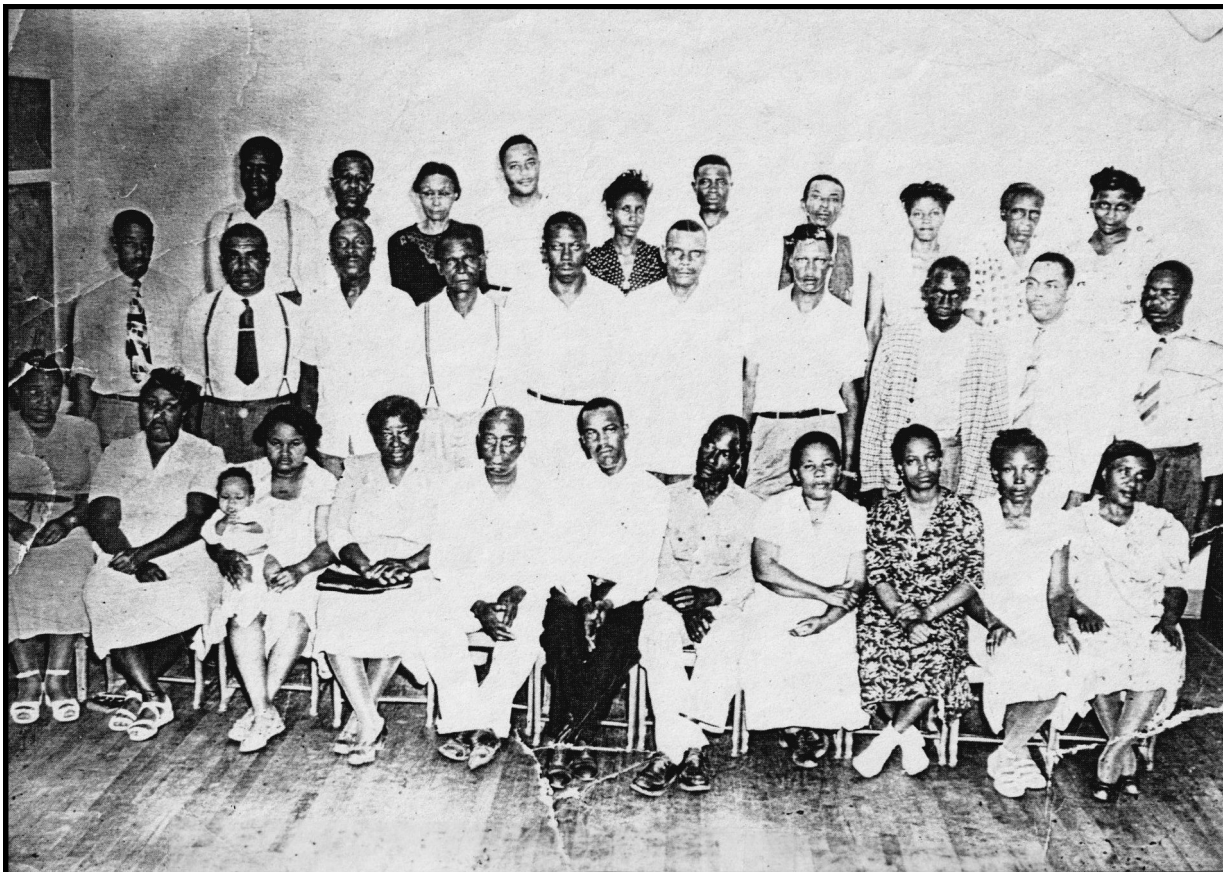
"Miss Margie Harrison taught children because school started so late in year and they couldn't afford a teacher," said Lola Reed Smith. "That was about 1917-1918."

When the community moved to Dalworth, so did the school and the lodge building, now located at Southwest 18th Street at Beaumont.

Tallie and his brother, Sheridan, didn't stop at the seventh grade. In 1927 they became the first students from Dalworth to graduate from Booker T. Washington High School in Dallas.

During the week they stayed with their sister, Hanora, in Dallas and came home to Dalworth for the weekends. During the summer they worked.

Snippets from the article "Black History Month Reason," from the Grand Prairie News, Friday, February 26, 1988.



SOME OF THE DALWORTH COMMUNITY FAMILIES (PAST AND PRESENT) SINCE ABOUT THE YEAR OF 1915. ALSO SOME OF THE OLD DALWORTH SETTLERS ARE IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH!

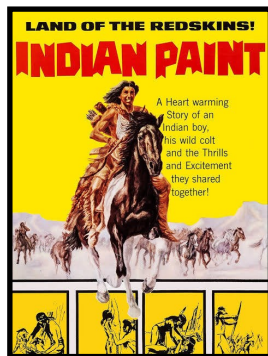
Can you help identify any of these early Grand Prairians?



Dalworth High School Cheerleaders ca. 1960

DO YOU KNOW???

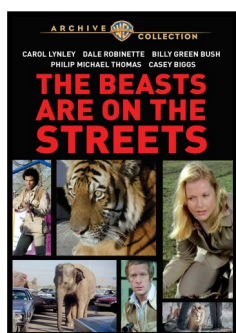
Do YOU know . . . how many movies have been made in Grand Prairie (so far)?? It's hard to believe that **54** movies have been at least partially made in Grand Prairie (according to IMDb (the Internet Movie Database))!



The first movie filmed here in Grand Prairie is probably the one movie everyone knows and remembers – *Indian Paint*. If you lived in Grand Prairie in 1965, there's a good chance you caught a glimpse of the hunky, 18-year-old Johnny Crawford and even that you were in the movie. Johnny Crawford starred as Nishko, a chief's son in the Great Plains, before Europeans arrive. During his rite of passage, he's determined to tame a painted pony, but first he must endure an unbelievable number of challenges. His kindness, bravery, and quick thinking serve him well, but rescue comes from an unexpected source. The movie also starred Jay Silverheels (of Tonto fame). Although *Indian Paint* was primarily filmed in Grand Prairie, parts were filmed in Cleburne and Mansfield.

Despite the age of the film, it is the sixth most popular of the 54 films made in Grand Prairie.

Corky was the second movie with scenes shot in Grand Prairie. The racing movie in which a country boy wants to make it big as a stockcar racer, was released in 1972. Racetrack scenes were shot in Grand Prairie (as well as Atlanta, Georgia, and Crandall, Texas). The movie starred Robert Blake. It's the fourth most popular of all the feature films shot in Grand Prairie.



The third movie filmed in Grand Prairie was that classic: *The Beasts Are on the Street*. Lions and other "beasts" "from" Lion Country Safari featured in the thriller. The plot line was described as "panic grips a small community after a tanker truck crashes through a fence at a wild animal park, freeing dozens of dangerous beasts." Carol Lynley and Philip Michael Thomas starred, with many Grand Prairians as extras. Besides Lion Country Safari and downtown Grand Prairie, Dallas and Arlington were filming locations.

Seek Shelter was the most recent movie filmed in Grand Prairie; it was released on July 30, 2024. It is the eleventh most popular movie filmed here. The plot involves a businessman who is running late to his daughter's ballet recital due to his business flight being grounded in Houston instead of Dallas. Clayton (played by Stanley Nwobi) has to make a sudden change of plans when the sirens and emergency alerts warn of an imminent threat of a nuclear ballistic missile strike near Dallas. His only hope is to seek shelter in a storm shelter on an old farm with a grumpy old Vietnam vet and an old CB radio as their only form of communication beyond the shelter.



To see the list of all 54 movies filmed in Grand Prairie go to the [IMBd.com website](https://www.imdb.com).

Coming Events

February

1 — **Celebrate Black History in Grand Prairie** — 1:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

20 — **General Meeting** — 11:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

March

1 — **Ruthe Jackson Day** — 1:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

20 — **Grand Prairie's 116th Birthday** — 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

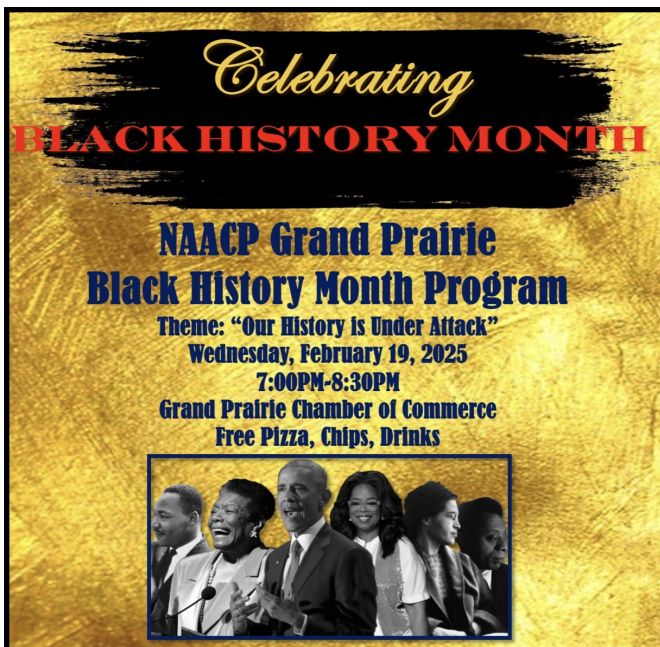
April

3 — **Long-Time GPHO Member Round-Table Discussion** — 1:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

10 — **Presentation by GPHO Intern Hung Nguyen** — 5:00 p.m. — 6:30 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum

May

10 — **Grand Prairie Trivia** — 1:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m. — Grand Prairie Historical Museum



Black History Month is the perfect time to add local author Warren Landrum's book, *The History and Perspective of the African-American Experience in Grand Prairie, Texas: From Then until Now 1852-2023*, to your personal library! Buy it today at the GP Historical Museum!



FOUND IN THE MUSEUM

Don't miss the large display case in the Grand Prairie Historical Museum. The displays change every month (or so) with a different theme each time. Artifacts and photographs that usually reside in the museum archives, as well as visiting items temporarily loaned to the museum, are displayed. The February display case is titled "Black Communities in Grand Prairie — A Proud History." Important African-American residents, businesses, churches and schools are highlighted.



In March, the display case at the museum will feature biographies about notable Grand Prairie women in our community's history. Approximately ten women will be highlighted. Did you know that one of the founding members of the LPGA lived in Grand Prairie? Or that a renown, Grammy-recognized trumpeter hailed from our town? Be sure to check out the display in March and learn about these impressive women!

And, in the "Found Outside the Museum" department, you can view a changing display, of Grand Prairie Historical Museum artifacts, photos, and information at the Grand Prairie Memorial Library. Currently, the Library display case houses information about the planes made in Grand Prairie on the top shelf, yearbooks and school-related artifacts, themed towards the end-of-the-school-year and graduation on the middle shelf, and movies and Grand Prairie movie theaters, themed toward the awards season, on the bottom shelf.



MUSEUM INFORMATION

HOURS

Monday – Saturday: 1 – 4 p.m.

LOCATION

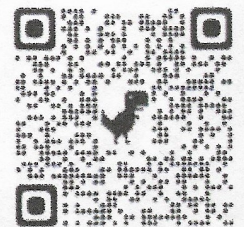
1516 W. Main Street
Grand Prairie, TX 75050

The Museum will be closed on major holidays (when the City of Grand Prairie closes).
If you would like a private tour of the museum, please email museum@gphotx.org or call (972) 639-3388

Two ways to access the GPHO Website!

QR Code for GPHO Website

~ Position the camera so the QR code is in frame.
When GPHOTX.org appears, tap it and you will be taken to the GPHO Website



Or simply click here gphotx.org

and go to the link!

Obituaries of G.P.H.O. Members & Historic Grand Prairians

SAMMIE AUSMUS WALKER

August 10, 1946 – December 4, 2024

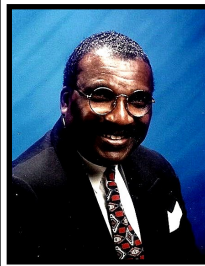


GPHO Life Member, Sammie Walker, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Born in California, Sammie grew up in Grand Prairie. A proud Gopher chairleader, she graduated from GP High School

in 1964. She later earned a bachelor's degree from North Texas University and two master's degrees from SMU, leaving a lasting impact as a teacher and guidance counselor in Grand Prairie, Highland Park, & North Lake College. Sammie was a founding member of the G. P. Women's Club and the Junior Women's Club, a Secretary of Children First Counseling Center, and a past Secretary of the GP Historical Organization. She was an active member of St. Andrews Episcopal/ Anglican Church and St. Alban's Anglican Church. She worked with her husband and the Walker family to operate the Walker Marina at Joe Pool Lake and lovingly cared for her mother-in-law, Mildred Walker. Sammie is survived by her husband, Don, and her children, Lezlie Walker Waller and Stephen Walker, her Walker in-laws, and four grandchildren, along with numerous extended family and friends. See her full obituary at obits.dallasnews.com.

DELMAS FRANK MORTON

February 13, 1931 – November 29, 2024



Delmas Morton, longtime GP resident and GPISD educator, passed away on November 29, 2024. Delmas was a 40-year educator with the GPISD, serving close to half that as Principal of Stephen F. Austin

Elementary. The GPHS Alumni Association awarded him the 2005 Outstanding Educator Award, and the GPISD honored him by renaming Lee Elementary Delmas F. Morton Elementary a few years ago. Delmas was very active in the Grand Prairie Community serving as the long-time Boy Scouts of America Scoutmaster for the Dalworth Community's Troop 151, serving as a youth football coach in the GP YMCA youth football league, and serving in various other volunteer capacities over the years. He was a loyal and dedicated long-time member of the GP Episcopal and Anglican communities for close to 60 years. He was active in both St. Joseph's Episcopal Church and St. Andrew's Church. He served a tour of duty in Europe in the U.S. Army in the early 1950s. He is survived by his son, Brunswick. See Delmas' full obituary at [dignity memorial.com](https://dignitymemorial.com).

welcome

New Members

Carol Ann Hindes

Patricia (Trish) Horak

Jay Johnson

Jonathan Stegmann

Rebecca Stegmann

Andrew Walczak

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION
1516 W. MAIN ST.
GRAND PRAIRIE, TX 75050

Mission Statement

The mission of the Grand Prairie Historical Organization (GPHO) is to preserve and share the history of Grand Prairie, Texas, by researching, collecting, properly preserving, and archiving items that tell the history of Grand Prairie and its citizens. The Organization will share the history with others through avenues throughout the city by committed volunteers who will provide a standard of excellence in support of the organization.

Help the Grand Prairie Historical Organization preserve the PAST by joining for the FUTURE.

