

Theresa Walker ✦

Senior of the Year ✦

✦ Annual Awards Luncheon

Saturday ✦ May 31, 2025 ✦ Noon

Lou Walker Senior Center
Sponsored by DeKalb For Seniors, Inc.

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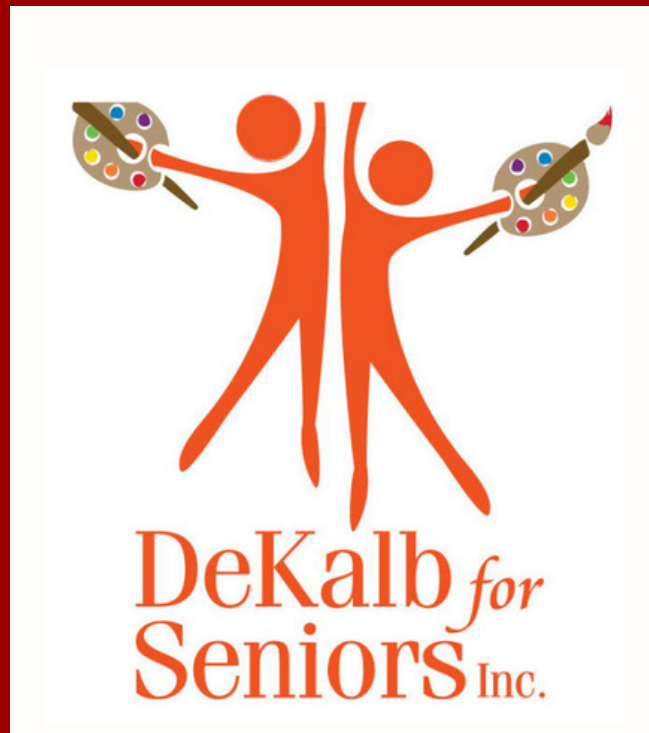
Words from Mildred Cohen – 2024 Senior of the Year

Entertainment - Donnie Long

Senior of the Year Award

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Closing Prayer



WELCOME

Welcome to the Theresa Walker Senior of the Year Awards Luncheon. DeKalb for Seniors is proud to celebrate the nominees at this year's luncheon by honoring influential Seniors who are community-builders in DeKalb County.

Now in its 22nd year, DeKalb For Seniors, Inc. serves as the fundraising arm of the Lou Walker Senior Center with the aim of assisting the center in fulfilling its mission for seniors in DeKalb County. DFSI is comprised of a volunteer board of directors who provide support and advice to generate necessary resources. Our goal is to advocate for seniors and the center while assisting in programming and funding for items not covered by the center's budget.

DONNA DEES



May 31, 2025

It is with great pride and heartfelt appreciation that I extend greetings on behalf of DeKalb For Seniors, Inc. as we gather to honor the remarkable individuals being recognized at this year's Theresa Walker Senior of the Year Awards Luncheon.

These awards celebrate more than personal achievement—they honor a legacy of strength, service, and dedication that continues to shape and uplift our communities. Each honoree embodies the spirit of Theresa Walker, whose passion for senior advocacy and community engagement laid the foundation for this meaningful event.

At DeKalb For Seniors, Inc., our mission is to support, empower, and celebrate adults aged 55 and older. We believe in recognizing the wisdom, contributions, and resilience that our seniors bring to every aspect of life. Today's celebration reinforces that belief and reminds us all of the vital role seniors play in building a more compassionate and connected society.

To each award recipient, we salute your unwavering commitment and outstanding service. Your lives are testimonies of purpose and perseverance, and we are honored to stand with you in celebration.

With deep respect and gratitude,

Donna Dees

President

DeKalb For Seniors, Inc.





Lou Walker Senior Center
2538 Panola Road
Stonecrest, GA 30058
Direct (770) 322-2900
(770) 322-2901

www.louwalkercenter.com

May 23, 2025

DeKalb for Seniors, Inc.

2538 Panola Road

Lithonia, GA 30058

Dear DeKalb for Seniors, Inc.

I am writing to express my support for DeKalb for Seniors, Inc., and the important work they do for Lou Walker Senior Center and our community. Your commitment to improving the lives of older adults through services, companionship, and advocacy is truly commendable.

DeKalb For Seniors, Inc. is dedicated to addressing the unique needs of seniors. Your commitment to providing social and emotional support through the LWSC Caregivers group, promoting aging in place, reducing social isolation, and fostering a sense of community has not only improved the quality of life for seniors but has also created a compassionate and supportive environment and has made a tremendous difference in the lives of many.

As someone who values the well-being and dignity of our seniors, I am grateful for the positive impact this organization has on our community. Your efforts help ensure that our seniors receive the care, respect, and support they deserve.

I look forward to continuing our partnership and working together to advocate for the well-being and empowerment of seniors in our community.

Sincerely,

Ericia King

Ericia A. King, MSM, MA

Lou Walker Senior Center, Director

Office: 770-322-2961 | Fax: 770-322-2901 | Cell: 470-543-0755

Email: eking@dekalbcountyga.gov www.dekalbcountyga.gov



THE LOU WALKER SENIOR CENTER

You are always welcome at the Lou Walker Senior Center! The Lou Walker Senior Center was created for active older adults who are 55+ and reside in DeKalb County, Georgia

VISION

- **To create a senior-friendly community where seniors are valued and respected.**
- **All sectors of the community come together to meet the needs of seniors.**
- **Seniors have the opportunity to serve and be served.**
- **Seniors live healthy lifestyles with a focus on prevention**
- **The community has easy access to information and services.**
- **Seniors have access to efficient, coordinated and comprehensive services that enhance their quality of life.**

MISSION

The mission of the Lou Walker Senior Center is to maximize independence and enhance the quality of life for the growing number of seniors in the community through serving as a focal point for information and services. To work together to deliver a “world class” program of services with emphasis on integrity, fairness, open communication and accessibility



THE HONORABLE

LARRY JOHNSON

Commissioner Larry Johnson was elected as the DeKalb 3rd District Commissioner in November 2002. With the overwhelming support of the community, he won with 92 percent of the vote, making him one of the youngest Commissioners to ever be elected to serve on the Board of Commissioners. He was re-elected for his 6th term with a landslide victory over his opponent.

He has dedicated his life of public service to bringing people together of all races, ethnic groups, and economic backgrounds. His leadership is exemplified in services that benefit seniors, youth, economic development, infrastructure, and health. He spearheaded the “DeKalb Walks...For the Health of It,” an initiative that he designated walking as the official exercise of DeKalb --- the only locality in Georgia or the U.S. to do so. His commitment to health further captured the attention of former First Lady Michelle Obama, which subsequently caused him to be involved with her national “Let’s Move!” campaign.

Commissioner Johnson graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a bachelor’s degree in Community Health. He later earned a master’s degree in public health from the University of Northern Colorado.

Commissioner Johnson is married and has one daughter.

DeKalb for Seniors

Board of Directors

Donna Dees – President
William Jones – Treasurer
Renee Cail
William Jones
Phyllis Kitchens
Anthony Toney
Kenyatta Walker

DONORS:

**PLANNING
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Latricia Leonard
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VOLUNTEERS:
Janet Braimah
Sybil Richmond
Ruby Lewis
Gwen Walker
Pat Jones

THERESA SHERIDAN WALKER

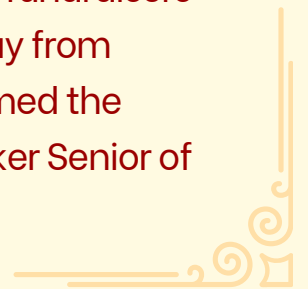
Theresa Walker was born Theresa Sheridan on March 19, 1945 in Chicago. She graduated from Tolleston High School in Gary, Indiana where she played the flute in the concert band and participated in several clubs. After attending Ball State University in Indiana and working for a time with Gary Public Schools, she married Louis Walker in 1976 and moved to Atlanta. Together they raised four children: three sons and one daughter.

After working in public relations for a handful of Atlanta businesses, Walker and her husband set out on their own business endeavor. They founded Paragon Productions, a public relations firm, in the late 1980s.

In 1997, she and her husband cofounded the Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce, intent on building connections within the African-American business community. They dabbled in a few other business ventures throughout the years.

The Lou Walker Senior Center, which opened in 2005, was her husband's dream but Theresa Walker made it a reality after his death in 2004. It was her proudest accomplishment. She had long worked to improve the lives of seniors and her advocacy efforts only increased into her retirement and later years.

Mrs. Walker served on the DeKalb For Seniors Board of Directors for several years and was instrumental in many of the major fundraisers and activities. In October of 2013 Mrs. Walker passed away from cancer. In honor of her memory, DeKalb For Seniors renamed the Senior of the Year Silver Awards Gala to the Theresa Walker Senior of the Year Awards Luncheon





Thank you to our BRONZE SPONSORS

- *Debra DeBerry,
DeKalb County
Clerk of
Superior Court*
- *JD & Conneva
Hall*

**LOU WALKER SENIOR
CENTER
COUNCIL OF EXCELLENCE**

**SPECIAL EVENTS
COMMITTEE**



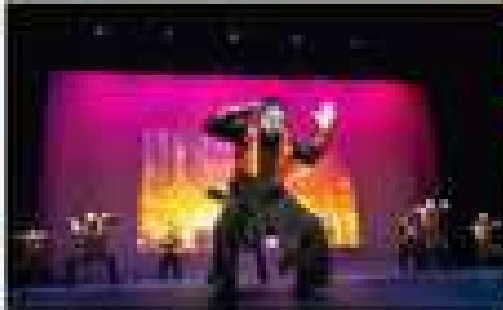
**CONGRATULATES NOMINEE
THOMAS POWE**

***for his tireless efforts and contributions to the
DeKalb County Senior Community***



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BID WHIST CLUB

Congratulations to all
Senior of Year Nominees



Congratulations

To the
**Theresa Walker Senior of the Year
2025 Award Nominees**

It has been our pleasure servicing the
Seniors at the Lou Walker Senior Center.
We look forward to a successful event!



Conneva and J. D. Hall



SENIORS IN ACTION TRAVEL CLUB

SALUTES AND CONGRATULATES

DEKALB FOR SENIORS, INC.

AND THE
2025 SENIOR OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



COME TRAVEL WITH US
WE MEET 2ND THURSDAY EVERY MONTH AT 3PM
VICTORY ROOM



CREATING RESOURCES

For Our Senior Center

MAKE A DONATION

DeKalbForSeniors.org

Mission: To provide support and
advice in order to generate the
resources necessary to assist the
Lou Walker Senior Center in
fulfilling its mission for DeKalb
County seniors.

Big Cheers for Our Lou Walker Champions!

We're thrilled to celebrate some of our very own Lou Walker Seniors who showcased their talent, strength, and spirit in the DeKalb Senior Olympics – and qualified to compete at the Senior Nationals this July in Des Moines, Iowa!

Let's give a loud round of applause to our Olympians and send them off with all the support and good vibes as they go for the gold!



Uncle Bishop's Catering

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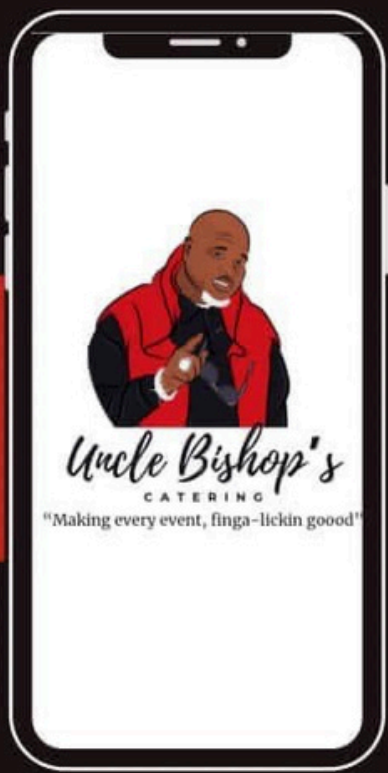
CONTACT INFORMATION

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unclebishopscatering@gmail.com

Phone:

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES!

from the *WARMING HEARTS QUILTING GUILD*

The Guild meets on the 3rd Thursday each month from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Lou Walker Senior Center

We are accepting new members interested in quilting!

You do not have to be a member of center to join our happy band!





Betty Ware Christian

Betty Ware Christian, nominated by Rev. Dr. James Clements, hails from Camp Hill, Alabama, and has dedicated her life to education, service, and faith. After graduating from high school, she went on to attend Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland—one of the nation’s prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Betty married Rev. Dr. Silas Christian, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army and a professor at Virginia State University. As a military spouse, Betty traveled extensively, using every opportunity to champion the value of education, especially within Black and Brown communities.

Her passion for teaching led to a remarkable 42-year career in education, spanning multiple states and school systems. She began in Alabama with the Head Start Program, continued in the Hopewell Public School System in Virginia, and later taught in DeKalb County Public Schools in Georgia. Even after her official retirement in 2007 from Shadow Rock Elementary School, her dedication brought her back to the classroom—retiring once more in 2012.

After settling in DeKalb County, Betty joined Shy Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, where her commitment to community outreach flourished. Through the church’s One Church One School partnership, she tutored and mentored students at Martin Luther King Middle School in Atlanta. She also played a key role in the church’s literacy initiative, helping individuals achieve their GEDs and empowering them toward greater opportunity.

Her life reflects a legacy of learning, leadership, and love.

Idella Stone



Idella Stone, nominated by Marolyn Jones, is an 83-year-old virtuous, God-fearing woman who has always been ready for life's duties and challenges. She was married to her beloved spouse, Mr. J. D. Stone, for 50 years and since his passing, 10 years ago, she has carried on the family name. As a Homemaker and mother of 5 adult children, she continues to provide warmth, security, love and great laughable moments to each one of her offspring.

Additionally, to carry on her legacy, Idella has 8 grandchildren and one great-grandchild to train, instruct and prepare so they can make their mark in society. Known for her warmth and kind-heartedness in both difficult and prosperous times, she continues to be the joy of her children's lives.

As a young woman, Idella always loved and prayed for her family, and she continues to this day. She believes deeply in the Lord and has always encouraged her children towards a deeper faith in God. Because of her strong faith, in 1985, she became instrumental in the founding and chartering of the Calvary Hill Baptist Church Congregation currently located on Rock Springs Road in Stonecrest, Georgia. There she helped to establish and launch the Ladies Seminar Women's Ministry which continues to this day, in its 40th year, providing annual educational programs. As she remains a member, she participates on the Hospitality Committee of the Women's Ministry, which greets and inspires teens, as well as young and mature women to be examples and role models of the Proverbs 31, Virtuous Women.

Among her favorite pastimes are gardening, holiday (Christmas) baking and avid reading. At present, she still reads the newspaper from cover to cover. Idella knows and has seen trying times, but she has weathered them with much grace, wisdom and wit. She is to be honored for staying the course to victory and valued for her contributions to the social fabric of our world.

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies “.

Proverbs 31:10



Merrill White

Dr. Merrill Elizabeth White, nominated by Veronica Bailey, is a dynamic and vibrant 78-year-old whose life continues to be marked by purpose and passion. Born in Columbia, South Carolina, Dr. White holds a B.A. in Spanish from South Carolina State University, a master's degree in Psychology from Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York, and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Her educational journey laid the foundation for a lifelong mission to transform lives.

As a licensed Clinical Psychologist, Dr. White made a profound impact through her work at Rikers Island in New York, where she founded the Child Wise Program. This initiative provided psychological and diagnostic services to help reconnect incarcerated parents with their children. Recognizing an urgent need to support families of children with disabilities, she also became deeply involved in the foster care system—personally fostering over 135 children. She served as Vice President of the New York State Foster and Adoptive Parent Association and later continued this work in Georgia as President of the DeKalb County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

Dr. White's unwavering commitment to family and community led her to establish Support Systems to Promote Higher Self-Esteem, Inc., a nonprofit organization offering family preservation programs across New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Today, Dr. White remains actively involved at her local Senior Center, where she teaches African American History—a subject she is passionate about. “I have a burning passion for my people to know their history,” she says.

A world traveler at heart, Dr. White also directs Global Travel for Adults and Students, a program that helps fund educational travel for students and parents. Her journeys have taken her to France, England, Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Egypt, South Africa—and next week, she's heading to China!

Thomas Powe



Thomas Powe, nominated by Carolyn Harmon, is a vibrant and active senior residing in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Born on December 7, 1945—Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day—his life has been marked by a strong commitment to service and community.

Raised in Cleveland, North Carolina, Thomas attended the historic R.A. Clement School, built on land donated by Rufus Alexander Clement, a descendant of formerly enslaved people, and funded by the Rosenwald family. Today, as President of the R.A. Clement Alumni Association, Thomas is dedicated to preserving the school's legacy. He leads efforts to restore the original structure and raises scholarship funds for graduating high school seniors.

Thomas earned his B.A. in Education from Johnson C. Smith University and a Master's in Education from the University of South Carolina. He went on to enjoy a successful career with the Southern Company in the field of Information Technology, retiring in 2018. Throughout his career, he was recognized for excellence with numerous top performer and appreciation awards.

A seasoned speaker and leader, Thomas is an Advanced Toastmaster (ATM) through Toastmasters International. This experience helped prepare him for leadership in his local Homeowners Association, where he championed residents' interests at county commission meetings on critical issues like rezoning and infrastructure improvements.

As Chairperson of the Special Events Committee on the LWSC Council of Excellence, Thomas coordinates a wide range of engaging activities for seniors—including bus trips, Friday Bingo, and themed events such as Apollo: Seniors Got Talent, Country and Western Jamboree, and seasonal celebrations like the End of Session Wind Down.

DEKALB FOR SENIORS

DeKalb For Seniors, Inc. (DFSI), a volunteer Board of Directors with the mission of providing support and advice in order to generate the resources necessary to assist the Lou Walker Senior Center in fulfilling its mission for DeKalb seniors. Their goal is to assist the Center in areas of programming and funding for those items not covered by the center's budget and to be an advocate on issues for the seniors and the center.

Our organization goals:

- **To enable seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible;**
- **To enhance the dignity, independence, and quality of life for seniors:**
- **To foster interaction among and between seniors and the community.**

Some of the ways DFSI has supported the center:

- **Payment for programming**
- **Purchase of Baby Grand piano**
- **Annual sponsorship of Healthy DeKalb events**
- **Pay for 20 member scholarships each year**
- **Sponsorship of annual Volunteer Recognition events**
- **Transportation for Senior Week at the Capitol and Board of Commissions meetings**
- **Sponsor events with funding and resources**
- **Support the Caregiver Support Group and Conference with resources, funds and meals**
-

To date, DFSI has saved the county over \$1 million through volunteer hours, donations, and purchases.

DEKALB FOR SENIORS



DONATE



w w w . d e k a l b f o r s e n i o r s . o r g

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REMEMBER

“Caring for seniors is perhaps the greatest responsibility we have. Those who have walked before us have given so much and made possible the life we all enjoy.” – Senator John Hoeven



In Loving Memory



Cola Mae Turner

Saying goodbye to someone we love and cherish is never easy. Our beloved Cola Mae Turner departed this life on April 29, 2025, at the age of 83.

Ms. Cola was a remarkable woman whose presence brought joy and inspiration to everyone around her. She served as the instructor for the Crochet by Numbers class and had recently rejoined the center, filled with enthusiasm and ready to share her talents once again.

A devoted caregiver to her husband, she was also an active participant in the Caregivers Group, attending monthly meetings with compassion and grace. Her radiant smile and joyful spirit made her a beloved presence - someone you were always glad to see and never wanted to leave.

The memories Cola leaves behind remain etched in our hearts - a lasting tribute to the beauty of her spirit and the richness of the legacy she leaves behind.

Theresa Walker

Senior of the Year
Annual Awards Luncheon

Saturday ✦ May 31, 2025 ✦ Noon

Lou Walker Senior Center
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