

NEWS RELEASE

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DeKalb mourns loss of Bessie Chronopoulos

The City of DeKalb is mourning a former mayor and longtime alderwoman whose public service was matched only by her love for the city.

Bessie Chronopoulos passed away Sunday at her home on DeKalb's south side. She was 72.

Chronopoulos served as Fifth Ward alderwoman from 1975 until she was elected mayor in 1997, becoming the third woman to hold the office. She served as mayor until 2001.

Even after her term as mayor, Chronopoulos remained politically active in city government, speaking passionately before the City Council on important issues.

Mayor Jerry Smith says Chronopoulos always had the city's best interests at heart.

"Bessie Chronopoulos' passing will leave a large void in many circles in the City of DeKalb. She has been a champion for helping to make this community the very best it can be. Bessie not only advocated for the city as a whole, but was passionate about activities in her Fifth Ward, which she represented for many years as its alderman," said Mayor Smith. "For most of us, our City Council meetings will never be the same without Bessie. She was never hesitant to attend, and to voice her sentiments about issues that interested her...and there were many of them, for sure."

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City Manager Bill Nicklas, who also served in the position during Chronopoulos' time as alderwoman and mayor, says she was a strong advocate for her constituents.

“On behalf of the mayor and council, I want to express our deepest sympathy to family and friends of Bessie Chronopoulos who passed away Sunday,” said Nicklas. “Bessie was an ardent advocate on behalf of the people she represented. She served faithfully as an alderperson and as mayor in the City of DeKalb and was passionately advocating for concepts that were important to her up until a matter of weeks ago. For decades she advocated for what mattered to her constituents.”

Community service for Chronopoulos did not end at city matters. The NIU alumnus and retired teacher was an election judge and active member of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church in DeKalb. She worked tirelessly with the church's Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society to organize the annual Thanksgiving bake sale, Greek Fest and other church activities.

Chronopoulos will be remembered at Monday night's City Council meeting.

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