

March 18, 2020

Dear Mr. Witherspoon,

I'm writing this letter to you regarding your Winter 2020 "Tampa Retired Fire and Police Association" bulletin. I am the widow of retired member John Nelson Parker who recently passed away on 12/14/19. I read the death notice and went on to read the Communications section where he was given recognition for his work in making sure that the TFD and TPD retired employees were receiving all of their hard earned pension benefits. You are the first person to give my husband credit for his time, labor, grit and determination in his pursuit of justice.

My husband was a loyal and faithful firefighter for 25 years with TFD. He served 18 years as an officer with the Firefighters Union Local 754 and many more years with the retired group as well. When he discovered a benefit that was being denied the retirees by the Pension Board, he brought it to the attention of the Board of Retirees who promptly turned their backs on him so as not to upset the Pension Board. My husband was a man of integrity and knew what was happening was wrong. With the help of a wonderful lawyer, who also recognized the injustice, he began a lawsuit that took 9 long years to reach resolve. Every firefighter and police officer benefitted from his hard work and tenacity yet still they fought paying the lawyer for his services. We are grateful the Supreme Court of Florida ruled in his favor. Only one member of the board backed my husband in this battle. Dennis Ribaya dedicated himself to helping and supporting him all those 9 years. He remained his friend to the end having spoken to him just days before John passed away.

Only a few firefighters, police officers and widows sent gratitude after receiving their benefit. My husband never took on this endeavor for recognition, he did it because it was the right thing to do. He quietly suffered the loss of support from lifelong friends and board members from an organization he loved serving for most of his life.

So... my purpose for this letter is to thank you so much from my family and I. It meant alot for us to see just a few lines in print that someone cared enough to recognize his hard work.

Most Sincerely,

Barbara Ann Parker
Lisa Jessen
Pamela Brown