



Thomas Coward

December 23, 2017

Coward, Thomas Community Leader and Pioneer, Thomas Coward, passed away December 23rd, 2017 at North Florida Regional Medical Center. Mr. Coward was a member of Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He received his Bachelors of Science Degree from Lincoln University, and his Master of Science Degree from Tuskegee University. He was the first African American to be elected to the Alachua County Commission in the State of Florida since the Reconstruction Era. Commissioner Cowards Civic service impacted citizens on a local, State, and National level. He helped to establish the National Forum for Black Public Administrators and the National Association of Black County Commissioners. He was a retired Educator, first Dean of Students at Buchholz High School; a Realtor, and the first black man to earn a brokers license in Alachua County. Mr. Coward served the community in many capacities through his involvement with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, the Elks, and the Cotton Club Museum and Culture Center. He is survived by his wife; Dona Coward, Gainesville, FL, daughter; Marva Coward, Tallahassee, FL, and sister; Joanna Coward Cruse, Lakeland, FL. Funeral Services for Mr. Coward will be held, 1:00pm, Saturday, December 30th, 2017 at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Rev. Destin Williams, Pastor, Pastor John Cowart, Officiating; burial will follow in the Forest Meadows Memorial Park East. Arrangements entrusted to Chestnut Funeral Home, Inc., 18 N.W. 8th Avenue, Gainesville, FL. Mr. Coward will repose in the Chestnut Memorial Chapel on Friday, December

29th, 2017 from 2:00pm until 6:00pm, and on Saturday at the Church from 12:00noon until the hour of Service. Fraternal Rites will take place immediately following Public Viewing; Phi Beta Sigma- 6:30pm and University City Lodge of the World #1218-7:00pm. Family and friends are asked to meet on Saturday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Coward, 1024 S.E. 12th Avenue, Gainesville, at 12:15pm to form the Cortege. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to Thomas Coward Scholarship Fund Epsilon Omicron Sigma Chapter, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., P.O. Box 12291, Gainesville, FL, 32604 or the Historic Cotton Club and Cultural Center. A CHESTNUT SERVICE