

BEFORE THE
STATE OF FLORIDA
COMMISSION ON ETHICS

In re WILLIAM FERRELL JR.)
)
)

)

2017 CE Form 1

ORDER DECLARING FINANCIAL
DISCLOSURE FINE UNCOLLECTIBLE

This matter came before the Commission on Ethics meeting in public session on Friday, April 21, 2023, in the matter of William Ferrell, Jr. Section 112.3145(8)(g), Florida Statutes, assesses an automatic fine of \$25 per day on each person who is required to file an annual Statement of Financial Interests (CE Form 1), but whose form is not timely filed, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

1. William Ferrell, Jr. served as a member of the Fort Myers Nuisance Abatement Board and, as such, was required to file a 2017 CE Form 1, Statement of Financial Interests, no later than September 4, 2018.

2. William Ferrell, Jr.'s CE Form 1 was received late, resulting in an automatic fine of \$350.00.

3. Under Section 112.3145(8)(j), Florida Statutes, any fine that is not waived by a Final Order of the Commission, and remains unpaid more than 60 days after the Notice of Payment Due is transmitted, must be submitted to the Department of Financial Services as a claim, debt or other obligation owed to the state.

4. Under Section 17.20(3)(b), Florida Statutes, an agency may request an exemption when assignment to a collections agency would be inappropriate. The agency must provide a written request, explaining the reasons the agency believes the account should be precluded from collections.

5. In March of 2023, internet research confirmed the passing of William Ferrell, Jr. on October 9, 2019.

6. On its own motion, the Commission determines that the \$350.00 fine assessed against William Ferrell, Jr. is uncollectible and requests that the Department of Financial Services consider it to be exempt from collection.

DONE and ORDERED by the State of Florida Commission on Ethics meeting in public session on Friday, April 21, 2023.

Date Rendered

Glenton "Glen" Gilzean, Jr.
Chair

GG/dw

cc: Claims for Collection, Department of Financial Services

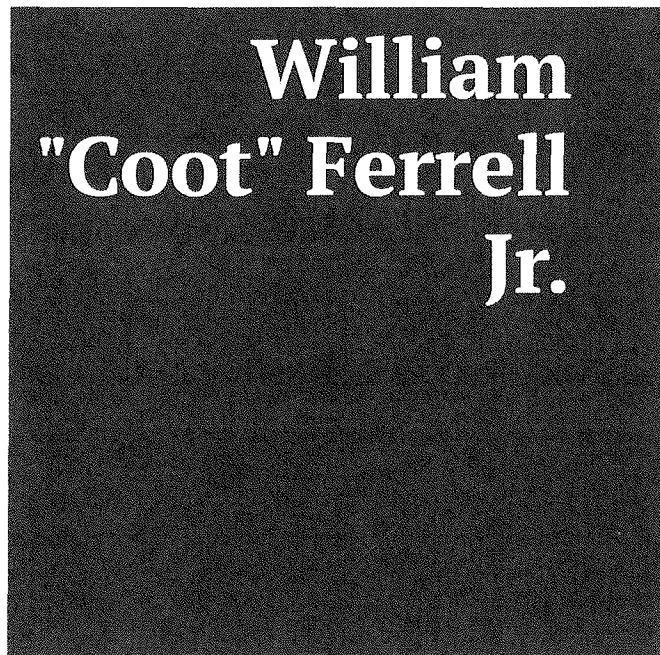
William Ferrell Jr.

5100 Eastern Blvd., Ft. Myers, FL 33907-1000
Fort Myers, FL 33907-1000



William Ferrell Jr. Obituary

With heavy hearts, we announce the death of William Ferrell Jr. (Fort Myers, Florida), who passed away on October 9, 2019 at the age of 90. Family and friends can [send flowers](#) and condolences in memory of the loved one. Leave a sympathy message to the family on the memorial page of William Ferrell Jr. to pay them a last tribute.



[Send Flowers](#)

[Share](#)

FUNERAL HOME

[Hickson Funeral Home Inc](#)
3308 Dr Martin Luther King Blvd
Fort Myers, FL

RECORDS

[View more records for Ferrell on Ancestry.com®](#)
Sponsored

WILLIAM FERRELL OBITUARY

William "Coot" Ferrell Jr.
Ft. Myers

90, 09-Oct, Hickson Funeral Home Inc.

[Read Less](#)

Published by The News-Press from Oct. 10 to Oct. 11, 2019.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

LOCAL

First black officer to retire from the Fort Myers Police Department dies at 90



Melissa Montoya

The News-Press

Published 9:36 a.m. ET Oct. 17, 2019 | Updated 10:03 a.m. ET Oct. 17, 2019

William Ferrell Jr., a U.S. Army veteran and the first black police officer to retire from the Fort Myers Police Department, has died. He was 90.

Ferrell, who was affectionately known as "Coot," died on Oct. 9, at HealthPark Hospice Center. He died of kidney failure, his son, Bill Ferrell III, said. Memorial services are planned for the elder Ferrell on Friday and Saturday. His funeral procession is expected to cut through downtown to pass by the Fort Myers Police Department on Widman Way.

Ferrell began policing heavily segregated Fort Myers in 1966 when black officers were unable to patrol white communities. And if they came across a white person acting up in a black neighborhood, they had to call a white officer for back up.

In 1996, Ferrell spoke to The News-Press about policing as a black officer.

"That's just the way it was back then," he said, recalling how blacks were asked to enter businesses through the back entrance.

His son said Ferrell was an honorable man who cared deeply about Fort Myers.

"I think that most people know this and some may, but my dad truly was an admired person who took on a job in law enforcement when it was very difficult for a man of color," said the 62-year-old. "But because dad didn't see color it didn't matter to him."

In memoriam: Remembering the extraordinary Robin Brown: physician, author, researcher, adventurer, friend

In memoriam: Remembering the Fort Myers writer who might have penned the Great American Novel – had he lived

Ferrell was born on Sept. 2, 1929 in Ellaville, Georgia. He graduated from Dunbar High School in 1950 and shortly after enlisted in the United States Army as a maintenance supervisor during the Korean War. He joined the Fort Myers Police Department on Sept. 2, 1966.

Ferrell retired from the Fort Myers Police Department in 1992, after spending more than 25 years with the agency. During his time there, he received the Ned Foulds Officer of the Year award in 1986, the George Sanders Distinguished Law Enforcement award in 1991 and many other accolades, according to a memo from the police department. In September, Ferrell's family accepted the key to the city on his behalf from Fort Myers Mayor Randy Henderson.

From our 1992 archives: Officer won't stop 'living his dream'

The elder Ferrell's retirement didn't last long. He returned as a substation supervisor and a Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, the police department said.

Ferrell had a lot of love for his community and wanted to live in the area he patrolled, his son said.

"Mom often wanted to move," he said, but his dad, "wanted to stay and spent all of those years where he was part of the community. Dad wanted to stay in the area that he worked in for so long."

Since his father became sick, Ferrell's son, who is also in law enforcement, said police officers from around the country came to visit and show the family support.

"Dad really got it right," he said. "He left a legacy."

He said his father was the kind of police officer that other cops approached when they needed advice.

"I learned a lot from him, both on the job and about being a good person," said Bill Weaver, a Lee County Sheriff's deputy that worked alongside Ferrell in Dunbar.

Weaver started with the sheriff's office in 1977 and worked in Dunbar as a narcotics agent.

"It was an open drug market back then," Weaver said. "We worked together going after those people and trying to do as much as we could to get them out of the community."

"There's nobody that knew anyone out there better than him," Weaver said.

Weaver said he learned a lot about respect from Ferrell.

"One of the things that I learned from him was you always treat people right," Weaver said. "It doesn't matter what color they are. You gave them respect, you always got it in return.

"That's probably the reason I could work out there by myself; I was always respectful of people," said Weaver, who is white.

Weaver retired from the sheriff's office and was vice president of Bill Smith Appliances & Electronics for 27 years before returning to law enforcement in 2015. He is now a school resource officer for the sheriff's office.

When he went back to the academy, Weaver asked Ferrell to present him with his certificate, Weaver said.

"He had so much wisdom," Weaver said. "It was phenomenal. I don't think I ever met a man like him."

Even though Ferrell has a place in history, he was reticent to discuss some of his experiences, Weaver said.

Weaver said he had to drag stories out of him about the racism he faced as one of the first black officers in Fort Myers.

"It wasn't anything that he wanted to talk about," Weaver said. "He would tell stories from time to time and you had to get him in an arm lock."

Ferrell served as a field training officer during his time with the police department.

One of his trainees was Fort Myers Councilman Johnny Streets, a retired Fort Myers police officer.

"Coot is one of the ones who put me in the police department," Streets said. "Coot was the best training officer we ever had."

Streets said Ferrell was hired during a time when black officers were "second-class officers" made to work only in the area's black community.

"Those guys had to take a lot," Streets said of Ferrell and the group of black officers that worked with him. "They took that but they also taught us how to be gentlemen on the streets."

Lee County Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, also a retired Fort Myers police officer, said he worked with Ferrell on what was known as the "Anderson Avenue beat." That was its name

before the road was renamed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Ferrell was well-respected and trusted in Dunbar, Pendergrass said.

"We used to walk the neighborhood," Pendergrass said. "He told me how to communicate with people out on the streets."

Ferrell mentorship was sought by those in leadership roles as well.

Fort Myers police Chief Derrick Diggs said Ferrell was one of the first people to reach out to him when he became chief in 2016.

"I appreciate his candid conversations that helped me get acclimated to Fort Myers and the history with the police department and the history with the community," Diggs said. "He kind of looked after me."

"In the short time that we had a chance to know each other, I considered him a mentor," Diggs added.

Larry Hart, Lee County tax collector and also a retired Fort Myers police officer, said Ferrell was a trailblazer who broke down many barriers for others at the department.

Today, about 11 percent of the Fort Myers Police Department force is black, according to records kept by the department.

"He's someone that influenced some of us to go into law enforcement," said Hart, who was trained by Ferrell in 1979 and became the first black chief of police for the city in 1995.

Ferrell was a police officer 24/7 who went home and left his door open to help others after his shift was over, Hart said.

More: Fort Myers police department hires former FBI agent to be inspector general

"It's such a loss to lose someone, but his legacy will live on," Hart said.

Ferrell is survived by his wife of 63 years, Lila Ferrell, and his two sons, Kenneth Lamar and Bill Ferrell III.

His memorial service is planned for Friday from 6 to 8 p.m. at St. John First Missionary Baptist Church at 2044 Brown Street. His funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at McGregor Baptist Church at 3750 Colonial Boulevard.