



February 24, 2022

**Mayor Art Woodruff Reflects On The 10-year Anniversary
Of The Passing of Trayvon Martin**

Ten years ago, on February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin tragically died. Family, friends, the community, the Nation, and indeed the world felt the senselessness of Trayvon's death. Though his death was not caused by law enforcement, it shined a light on the struggles between the community and law enforcement, both in Sanford and across the Nation. Trayvon's death forced Sanford to take a hard look at itself and face issues that had been overlooked for years.

For the Nation, a nerve was struck. Too often, a person's death and the response to it depends on the color of one's skin. Sanford found itself at a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. A moment that proclaimed Black Lives Matter and that confronted a society in which, for some, Black lives did not matter as much as others did.

Through the leadership of community members, clergy, elected officials, city staff, and law enforcement, Sanford moved to the forefront of an endeavor to bridge the communication and trust gap between police officers and the public. Years of continued work by our community proves that change can in fact happen. Sanford has grown from a city that sparked protests around the Nation, to one that now serves as a model and inspiration to communities across our country.

Ten years after Trayvon's death, the senseless loss of his life is no less weighty. Although we acknowledge that the world changed for the better following his tragic death, we also recognize that our work in the City of Sanford is not complete. Sanford's Race, Equity, Equality, and Inclusion Committee is working on the next steps in our continuing efforts to build trust and strengthen all relationships within our community. We hope that our results will show others what can be accomplished in unity, equality, and with respect.

To memorialize the events of 10 years ago, Sanford's Race, Equity, Equality, and Inclusion Committee will commission a permanent marker display to be placed at Fort Mellon Park. The park was the site of peaceful rallies and protests following Trayvon's death and is a daily gathering place for our diverse population. It is our hope that by continuing to remember our past, we will build a better future.

Respectfully,

Art Woodruff
Mayor

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Sheena Britton
District 1

Kerry S. Wiggins, Sr.
District 2

Patrick Austin
District 3

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District 4

Norton N. Bonaparte, Jr.
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