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Walkertown council member dies at 79



Warner is remembered as outspoken but polite

By Wesley Young

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Horace Warner, a member of the Walkertown Town Council, died yesterday at Forsyth Medical Center after a long battle with prostate cancer.

Warner, who turned 79 last Wednesday, had served on the town council since 1997. Outspoken as one of the council's most conservative members, Warner gained the respect of political friends and opponents alike for his manners.

"I don't know of anybody I will miss more than Horace," said Mayor Doc Davis, a longtime friend. "He was a giant of a man. He stood for the right, and he stood for the rights of the people. He wanted to preserve the small-town atmosphere, provide the services for the people and keep the taxes as low as possible."

Warner lived in Walkertown except for a stint in the Navy during World War II and as a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was the director of purchasing for Bassick-Sack Inc., a Winston-Salem manufacturer of hardware furniture, when he retired in 1988. Warner and his wife, Virginia, have two daughters.

Warner was elected to the town council in a year that voters swept three incumbents off the council. As time passed, Warner was on the losing end of many 3-1 votes.

While then-Mayor Tom Southern and a majority of council members pushed for a sewer system for the town, Warner dug in his heels.

"He was very concerned about the affordability to certain elderly citizens around town," said Harold Warner, Horace Warner's twin brother. "He was very conservative, not only with his money but other peoples' money. He didn't want it wasted."

The sewer system started operating in 2003, but Horace Warner had the last laugh, politically: voter anger over the sewer assessments led to a Warner-friendly council majority after the 2003 election.

Dot Duggins, a former council member who opposed Warner on many issues, including the sewer system, said that Warner was "always a gentleman" despite disagreements.

"Horace truly cared about Walkertown - I have no doubt about that," Duggins said.

Harold Warner said that his brother experienced the first clues last summer that he might be experiencing problems from the prostate cancer that had been treated hormonally 12 years earlier. He believed he was well enough to serve, though.

"He felt like things were going along," Harold Warner said. "He was looking forward to longevity. He had a recurrence in November after the election. About three weeks ago it became apparent that this was serious. The last week he had begun to face reality."

Those who watched Warner on the council said that he always tried to vote the way his constituents felt.

"I think Horace's dedication was that he felt like he could serve people that didn't get a voice in things," his brother said. "He gave a lot of his time behind the scenes listening to people."

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