

City of Fort Lauderdale
Exemplary Former City Employee

**PROCLAMATION HONORING
FREDDIE "GENE" DEMPSEY
AS EXEMPLARY FORMER CITY EMPLOYEE FOR 2017**

- WHEREAS,** *Freddie "Gene" Dempsey was born on February 17, 1959 in Bay Minette, Alabama, attended Baldwin County High School, and earned a Bachelor's degree in Forest Management at Auburn University; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Gene Dempsey relocated to Florida in 1986 to work for the Florida Division of Forestry and, over the next 10 years, served as a Forester in Orlando; the City of Hollywood's Urban Forester; and the Urban Forestry Coordinator for the Everglades District; and*
- WHEREAS,** *In 1996, Gene Dempsey was hired as the City of Fort Lauderdale's first full-time Urban Forester, and over the next two decades, elevated urban forestry in Fort Lauderdale to a new level by initiating a street tree planting requirement for all new development, implementing the City's Florida-Friendly Landscaping® code, helping the City achieve its Certified Wildlife Habitat certification, participating in the development of the LauderScape Florida-Friendly workshops, coordinating annual Arbor Day events, and regularly presenting at numerous school Career Day events; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Gene Dempsey maintained Fort Lauderdale's prestigious Tree City USA designation while significantly enhancing the City's tree canopy through an array of policies, programs, and activities that included expanding the Adopt-A-Tree Program, adopting a hazardous tree removal policy, collaborating with the Utility Advisory Board to improve utility tree trimming, conducting community tree plantings and giveaways, and launching the Save-A-Tree, Plant-A-Tree program to encourage sustainability; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Considered a leading expert in his field, Gene Dempsey was accredited by the International Society of Arboriculture as both a Certified Arborist and a Certified Municipal Specialist, and was accredited by the Landscape Inspector's Association of Florida as a Certified Landscape Inspector. He served on the Executive Board of the Florida Urban Forestry Council from 1999 to 2006, and the Board of Directors for the Landscape Inspectors Association of Florida from 1997 to 2011; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Gene Dempsey was a contributing writer to numerous professional trade publications and the founder of Gene's Green Scene, an innovative blog focusing on urban forestry and environmental sustainability. He was a devoted member of West Broward Church of Christ where he taught Sunday School and, for 15 years, served as the speech competition coach for the church's Lads to Leaders program; and*
- WHEREAS,** *Gene Dempsey's passion for forestry, his quiet, yet determined demeanor, and his genuine warmth and compassion for others stand as a shining example of what it truly means to be a community builder. His memory will live on in every seedling he planted; his spirit will envelop every life he touched; and his soul will be reflected in the glorious blossoms of every tree that blooms.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA:

- Section 1:** *That Freddie "Gene" Dempsey is hereby selected and honored as Exemplary Former City Employee of the City of Fort Lauderdale for 2017 in recognition of his many accomplishments and valuable contributions to the City of Fort Lauderdale and that the City Commission of the City of Fort Lauderdale hereby publicly recognizes and acknowledges these achievements and contributions and does hereby express its heartfelt appreciation to Freddie "Gene" Dempsey.*
- Section 2:** *That a keepsake honoring Freddie "Gene" Dempsey as the 2017 Exemplary Former City Employee shall be presented to his family and a plaque shall be placed in the lobby of Fort Lauderdale City Hall.*
- Section 3:** *That a copy of this proclamation recognizing Freddie "Gene" Dempsey as the 2017 Exemplary Former City Employee shall be presented to his family as a further token of the sincere gratitude and appreciation of the City of Fort Lauderdale.*

DATED this *the 7th day of November 2017.*



Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler

A small circular logo of the City of Fort Lauderdale, featuring a stylized sun and water waves.