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Former Bath trustee Gloria Drennon passes away unexpectedly



Gloria Drennon

By J.V.W. Miller

BATH — Behind the genteel Southern manner and the musical accent of her native Memphis, Tenn., Gloria Drennon was a smart, resolute, dedicated and passionate government official, who worked tirelessly for the Bath community she called home.

A Bath Township trustee for three elected terms of office — for 12 years beginning in 1985 — Drennon, 68, passed away suddenly Dec. 8.

“Mrs. Drennon led Bath Township with honesty, integrity and a genuine interest for its residents and employees,” said Bath Township Administrator Bill Snow. “Her concern for Bath Township was demonstrated daily by her actions as a township trustee. She was a compassionate person who always tried to find a solution to township problems. Mrs. Drennon will certainly be missed by all of us who were associated with her.”

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Born in Winona, Miss., Drennon grew up in Memphis, Tenn., and had lived in Bath since 1972. Drennon graduated *summa cum laude* from Rhodes College (formerly known as Southwestern) in Memphis and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. An active volunteer at Akron General Medical Center, she was past president of the Bath Volunteers for Service and had served on numerous boards in the community.

Drennon was also an active member of Bath Church, where she sang in the choir and had served on the Diaconate (Deacon), the Wedding and Stewardship committees.

The Bath Safety Forces (fire and police) were a focus for Drennon when she was a trustee, and she served as the trustee liaison with those departments for most of her three terms. She was instrumental in many cooperative efforts with other township projects as well, including the joint fire station operation with Copley Township and the development of several **intergovernmental mutual-aid response contracts**. Bath Fire Department had selected Drennon as an honorary member.

During her work as a township trustee, Drennon excelled in zoning, annexation and fiscal management, especially so given the somewhat tumultuous times during which she served. Merger issues, annexation of township property, Joint Economic Development District agreements, growth and development, as well as land-use issues faced the Bath community. Drennon's leadership helped to guide the construction of the Bath Center Safety Building and the purchase of land for the Bath Nature Preserve, formerly part of the 1,500-acre Raymond Firestone estate.

Current Trustee Elaina Goodrich, for whom Drennon was a mentor on the board, said "Gloria was an extraordinarily

bright woman who took her duties at the township very seriously, and her positive influence will long be remembered.”

“Mrs. Drennon was a quality and sincere person,” said interim Police Chief Richard Munsey. “She had a genuine interest in Bath Township and its employees. She strived during her tenure as township trustee and after her three terms to make Bath Township a better place for the residents and employees.”

Fire Chief James Paulett, said Drennon had a way of making the people around her feel special.

“She was very personable and genuinely interested in people,” said Paulett. “As an employee, you wanted to please her and to do a good job.”

Drennon also served on the Northeast Ohio Four County Organization (NEFCO), the Summit County Health Board, the Summit/Akron Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council.

Perhaps Helen Humphrys, a Copley Township trustee and administrative assistant for Bath Township, said it best when she characterized Drennon as a “grand lady.”

“Having worked with her on many levels in government,

you knew Gloria always gave her best,” said Humphrys. “She held Bath Township very close to her heart in her work as a trustee and afterward.”

Humphrys added that Drennon did her job “the old-fashioned way.”

“She came to work every day and everything she did reflected her love of the township and its employees,” Humphrys said.

Surviving Drennon are her husband, Raleigh Drennon III, of Bath, who said of his wife of 44 years that she never spoke a harsh word about anyone — except about him and only when he was speaking harshly of others. Drennon is also survived by their son, Raleigh Drennon IV (Kirsten), of Wichita, Kan.; stepdaughter Caroline Haines (Daniel), of Boca Raton, Fla.; and her four grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

A service took place Dec. 13 at Bath Church, with interment at Moore’s Chapel Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the Building Fund at Bath Church, 3980 W. Bath Road, Akron, OH 44333, or to the Bath Safety Forces, 3864 W. Bath Road, Akron, OH 44333.

Finally, Bath Service Director John Peltier talked about Drennon’s dedication to the residents of Bath and how

she believed they deserved quality from their government and community officials.

“I personally will miss Mrs. Drennon, and she will not be forgotten, especially by me,” said Peltier. “I wish I could say thank you one more time.”

So do a lot of us.

— *Diane Fencl contributed to this report.*