



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

Jim Shuler, Director
Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

3408 Covington Highway • Decatur, Georgia • 30032-1513
Telephone: (404) 508-7147 • Fax: (404) 508-7341

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CONTACT:

Jim Shuler, Director
DJJ Communications
(404) 508-7238

JimShuler@dj.j.state.ga.us

DEPT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE MOURNS PASSING OF MR. ELBERT SHAW JR. DALTON RYDC NAMESAKE & VOLUNTEER YOUTH COUNSELOR DIES AT AGE 91

(DALTON - GA) It is with great sadness that the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice announces the passing of long-time friend and supporter of Georgia juvenile justice, Mr. Elbert Shaw, Jr. of Dalton, Georgia. At 91, Mr. Shaw was known for his giving spirit and his lifetime investment in the lives of DJJ youth in custody.

His hours of volunteer work with youth at the Dalton Regional Youth Detention Center earned him the honor of Georgia House Resolution 21, which resulted in the re-naming of DJJ's secure facility in Dalton as "the Elbert Shaw Jr. RYDC" in 2007.

"Over the years, Mr. Shaw was the recipient of many such honors," said DJJ Commissioner Avery Niles. "In fact he received the Presidential Volunteer Award for dedicating more than 2,500 hours of volunteer time serving our youth at the Dalton RYDC."

Mr. Shaw's involvement with the Dalton facility dates back to 1976 when he started Tuesday night church services for the youth. Those evening church services lead to Shaw's one-on-one counseling time with the RYDC youth. Eventually that counseling time lead to his service on the RYDC Advisory Board. Mr. Shaw faithfully focused his personal time on Georgia's youth at the facility three days a week.

Bobby Hughes, who today is DJJ's Director at the RYDC, described Elbert Shaw's commitment to the Dalton detention center as 'faithful and selfless'. "He invested himself into the lives of our youth and staff," said Director Hughes.

"Mr. Shaw contributed much more than I could say. He was a humble man and did what he did for all the right reasons," said Hughes. "...And Mr. Shaw was always quick to offer his favorite response to any and all accolades: 'To God be the Glory'."

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"Elbert Shaw's commitment to his community didn't stop at the fence line of the Dalton RYDC," said Commissioner Niles. "He also provided school supplies, food, clothing and comfort for many of our youth once they returned to the community after their release from the RYDC. He made the RYDC his ministry."

Staff members said Mr. Shaw also talked his church into providing those youth with their own personal Bibles for when they left DJJ custody and he even covered the cost of church camp for some.

Director Hughes said Mr. Shaw was equally concerned about the lives of Corrections Officers at the Dalton facility and treated staff there like family. "Whenever Mr. Shaw heard that someone on staff or their family was ill or injured, it was Elbert Shaw who was first to show up at their house with a casserole to feed them, and words of love and prayers to help heal them," Director Hughes said.

"Mr. Shaw visited at hospitals and showed up at funerals and was like a member of the family. He shared his time, his love, and his message. He was good to all of us," said Hughes.

Elbert Shaw, Jr. passed away on Sunday. Funeral services will be held on Thursday, January 24th at 11:00 AM at Christ Church Presbyterian of Dalton. Burial will be in Whitfield Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends in the Fellowship Hall of the church immediately following the service.

The volunteers and staff from the Dalton RYDC have been asked to serve as honorary pallbearers.

"That was Mr. Shaw's final request," said Director Hughes, "for the Elbert Shaw RYDC Corrections Staff to serve as honorary pallbearers at his funeral."

On Thursday, that cadre of DJJ pallbearers will make a tiny down payment on the lifetime debt owed to the Dalton volunteer who invested his giving spirit and undefeated faith to bring rehabilitation and hope to generations of young Georgians detained in state custody.

(END RELEASE)