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## OUR VIEW

# Appreciate those who gave, now are gone

They served their community, sticking their necks out there and leaving themselves open and vulnerable to criticism and worse. Whether we always agreed with their decisions or their politics or their stands or the things they did or said, they still deserve our gratitude and appreciation for the public service they offered and which came to an end this past year.

The so-called "Great Resignation" of 2021 brought a slew of retirements, step-downs, and moves on to other challenges. There were also, as always, deaths among those of prominence, some unexpected or shocking and all sad to someone. Our locals joined national lists that featured Hank Aaron, Bob Dole, Larry King, Rush Limbaugh, Colin Powell, and Betty White, to name just a few we lost last year.

Two-term Duluth Mayor Ben Boo, who also was representative of District 8B in the Minnesota House for a decade, died Dec. 1 at 96.

Former Vice President and Democratic nominee for the White House Walter Mondale died in April. The giant of Minnesota politics was 93. His legacy is preserved in Duluth after a stretch of U.S. 53 from Central Entrance to near West Superior Street was renamed "Walter F. Mondale Drive" in 2007.

Duluth City Councilors Joel Sipress and Zack Filipovich announced in the spring they wouldn't seek reelection after two terms and eight years of service each.

St. Louis County Attorney Mark Rubin retired at the end of September after more than four decades in public service.

Assistant Chief Clint Reff retired after nearly 25 years with the Duluth Fire Department. He was among more than 10 firefighters who retired at the end of the year.

Anna Tanski announced in November her departure from Visit Duluth, the local tourism agency where she had served as president and CEO since 2014. Her departure followed a controversial city of Duluth decision to cut Visit Duluth's tourism-tax allotment in favor of a marketing and promotions firm from Edina, Minnesota. Tanski is the new head of festivals and events for Catalist Story Institute, a Duluth-based nonprofit arts organization.

Beyond politics and government, Pam Kramer retired in 2021 after a career of working to improve and



Boo



Rubin



Filipovich



Sipress



Mondale



Reff



Labovitz



Tanski



Kramer



Goldfarb



Witherspoon



Schumacher



Jorgenson



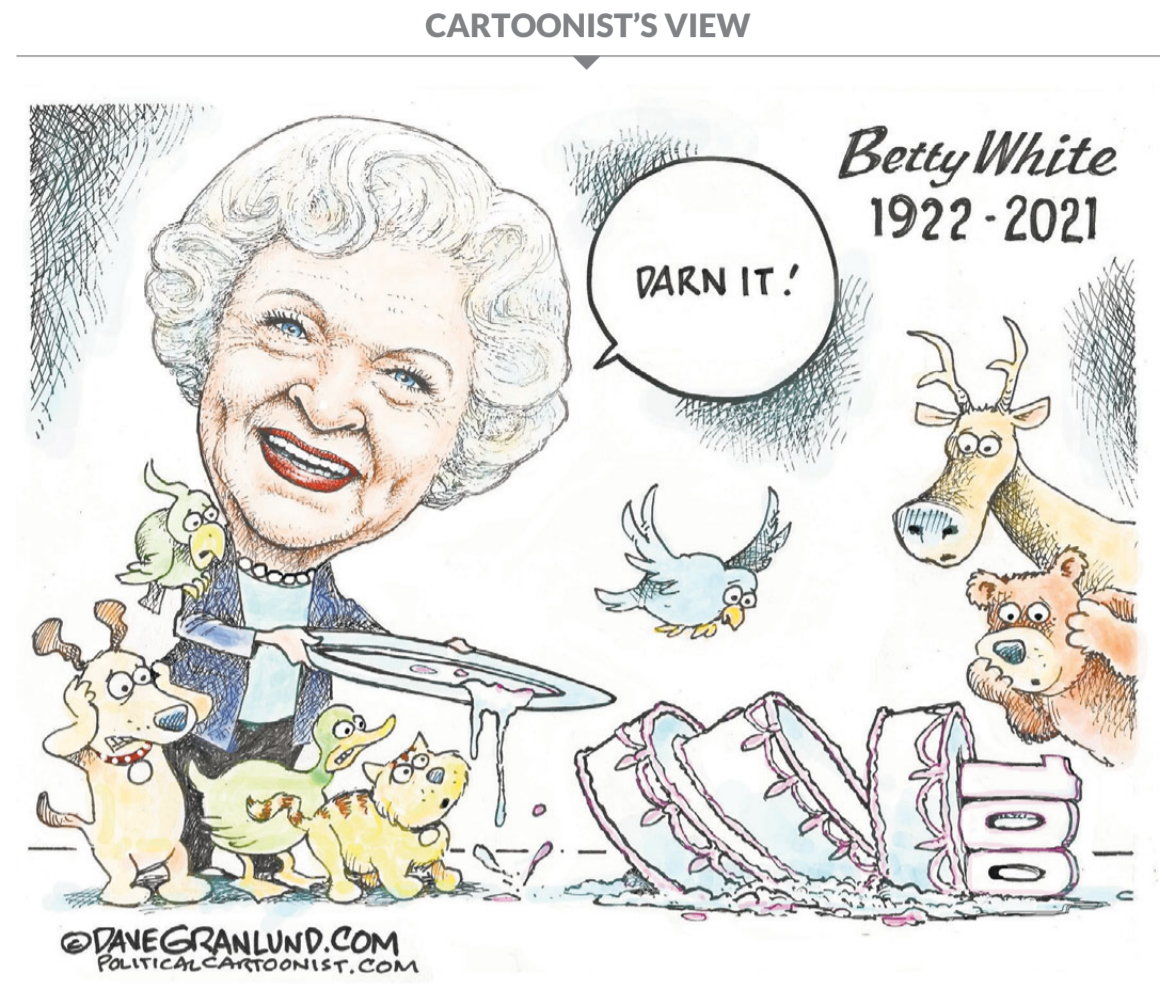
Ross



Black

revitalize Duluth's aging neighborhoods, including as manager of community development and housing for the city of Duluth and then as executive director of Duluth's Local Initiatives Support Corporation, or LISC, outlet.

In addition, actor and singer-songwriter George Gerdes — the snarling Swedish villain in the Northland-filmed Disney



## CARTOONIST'S VIEW

Betty White  
1922 - 2021

DAVE GRANLUND.COM  
POLITICAL CARTOONIST.COM

Dave Granlund/Cagle Cartoons

movie "Iron Will" — died on New Year's Day 2021. He was 72. And Tony Guerra retired after two decades as a manager of disaster responses for the American Red Cross in northern Minnesota.

In business and academia, Maurices President and CEO George Goldfarb announced his retirement in February and his new role as chairman emeritus for the Duluth-based clothing company. Gordy Lundquist, who founded Gordy's Hi-Hat in Cloquet in 1960, died in July. He was 93. Bonnie Jorgenson retired at the end of summer as head of school at Duluth Edison Charter Schools, where she served more than two decades. David Ross quietly retired at the end of July after 24 years as president of the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce. Lynn Black announced in November his retirement this coming summer after 12 years as chancellor of the University of Minnesota Duluth. And Dave Jensch stepped down as vice president and general manager of KBJR-TV and CBS3 after more than four decades in local news.

Additionally, Duluth entrepreneur Joel Labovitz, who spent his career encouraging and cultivating economic development — and for whom the Labovitz School

of Business and Economics is named at UMD — died in February. He was 92.

In sports, The Lester Park Golf Course closed this year after nearly 90 years. UMD Hobey Baker Memorial Award winner Tom Kurvers, a Stanley Cup champion with the Montreal Canadiens and assistant general manager with the Minnesota Wild, died in June. He was 58. "Miracle on Ice" Olympic hockey star Mark Pavelich of Luvsen died in March. He was 63. And, after 36 years behind the bench, Duluth East boys hockey coach Mike Randolph resigned, citing pressures from parents and a lack of administrative support. The Duluth School District said Randolph had been under investigation in the spring after complaints were filed against him.

Elsewhere in the community, Duluth ski pioneer George Hovland — a member of the U.S. cross-country team at the 1952 Winter Olympics in Oslo and more recently the owner of Snowflake Nordic Center — died in May at 94. Longtime West Duluth neighborhood activist Helen Lind died in July. She was 91. Park Point fixture and boats enthusiast Capt. Tom Mackay died in November at 77. Duluth author Claire Schumacher, who also founded the Proctor

Historical Museum and interviewed interesting people as a volunteer for PBS, died in November. She was 92. Stephan Witherspoon stepped down in 2021 after four years as president of the Duluth chapter of the NAACP and now helps run a family-owned soul-food restaurant.

We all have our lists of those who played roles big and small in our lives and in our communities, who left us this past year, and who we can recall now on the occasion of the passing of another New Year's. Some of the lists were longer this year because of the persistently deadly and not-over-yet COVID-19 pandemic.

It's no small commitment, this taking your turn in the public eye and in public service, whether as an elected official or in some other high-profile leadership role. Our communities depend on and need those who take on the responsibility and who are willing to sacrifice time with family, leisure activities, and other pursuits.

May they all be remembered fondly and revered in these first days of a new year. May they be thanked and appreciated. And may they inspire others to also step up, to put themselves out there, to be willing — for the good of community.

## LOCAL VIEW

# Turn out in Duluth to demand fair elections

By Meg Litts and Mary Faulkner

Please join the League of Women Voters of Duluth on Thursday at noon for the "We the People January 6th Day of Remembrance and Action." This vigil marking the one-year anniversary of the violent demonstrations at the U.S. Capitol will take place at Duluth City Hall. The Universal Unitarian Congregation of Duluth is co-hosting the event, and Grandmothers for Peace and Veterans for Peace Chapter 80 also endorse it.

The "We the People January 6th Day of Remembrance and Action" has three important goals: to demonstrate our community's commitment to a democracy that works for all people, to condemn efforts to subvert free and fair elections, and to call for the passing of legislation to protect and strengthen voting rights.

The League of Women Voters of Duluth is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages



Litts



Faulkner

the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

In Duluth and in Minnesota, we pride ourselves on our high rates of voter turnout and our safe and secure elections, which include same-day voter registration. In 2020, even with the challenges of a pandemic, Minnesotans voted in record numbers: 79.95% of eligible voters cast ballots. Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon declared that 2020 was "Minnesota's third election in a row winning the voter turnout percentage crown."

Despite these local and statewide efforts, however, our voting rights are under assault; 19 states passed 33

laws restricting the right to vote this past year, and more may be on their way in 2022. Meanwhile, some lawmakers have proposed gerrymandered legislative maps allowing them to choose voters instead of voters choosing their elected officials.

One way to advocate for voting rights is to call on the Senate to pass two landmark pieces of legislation.

The Freedom to Vote Act would expand voting rights by expanding early voting and same-day and online registration, creating standards for upholding voter rolls and authorizing voter registration at new-citizen naturalization ceremonies.

And the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore and strengthen aspects of the bipartisan Voting Rights Act of 1965, enabling Americans to protect themselves from voting laws that discriminate based on age, race, ethnicity, and other factors.

These important bills together would help protect

our right to vote, end partisan gerrymandering, counter undemocratic and dangerous election subversion efforts, and help eliminate the undue influence of dark money in our elections.

Our democracy is currently facing a crisis. Efforts are underway to sabotage our elections with fear and disinformation. There are partisan practices intended to overturn people's votes, often targeting communities of color.

There will be more than 200 peaceful vigils across the country similar to Duluth's marking the anniversary of the violent demonstrations at the U.S. Capitol. We ask you to join us at Duluth City Hall, 411 W. First St., to stand united in saying that this sort of attack must never happen again — and that voters decide the outcome of elections.

Meg Litts is president and Mary Faulkner is vice president of the League of Women Voters of Duluth (lwvduluth.org).

## Readers' Views and Local Views

Letters to the editor are a critical part of the community dialogue, and the News Tribune attempts to publish all letters of opinion meeting our requirements.

Letters are limited to 300 words, must be the original work of the author and must be exclusive to the News Tribune. Letters are edited for style, space, accuracy and civility. Letter writers are limited to one published submission every 30 days.

With rare exceptions, the News Tribune does not publish poetry; letters that are anonymous, libelous or attack other writers; consumer-complaint letters; thank-you letters; or letters generated by political or special-interest campaigns.

We will consider exclusive Local View columns of 600 words or fewer. Authors should possess unique insights, and their commentaries should demonstrate greater knowledge of their subject than letters.

Email submissions to: letters@duluthnews.com.

Mail to: Readers' Views, Duluth News Tribune, 424 W. First St., Duluth, MN 55802.

Fax to: (218) 720-4120. Include a full name, address and daytime phone number. Only names and hometowns will be published.