

# 'The Dean's' Legacy Lives On From Page 4

other staff members had grown under the careful, caring supervision of Walker. There was not a dry eye in St. James Church.

But beyond this immediate family is his Cleveland, black extended family - the thousands who benefitted from his ongoing crusade to open the doors of opportunity and to stamp out and kick down the walls of bigotry.

A young woman from Troy, Ala., wrote to me after she saw my television documentary and said that neither her school library nor the public library in Walker's hometown of Selma, Ala., had any information on him. This stu-

dent at Troy University had chosen Mr. Walker as the subject of her journalism history class. "I know you think it is ancient that in this day and time white schools like the one I attend...still fail to have information on blacks who have achieved and worked hard in their chosen field for 30, 40, some for 50 years, and are still not recognized for their contributions," the young woman wrote.

Walker was a Republican - like Frederick Douglass - who brought honor to his party and opportunities to many blacks of his political persuasion. But he was not narrow and vengeful toward blacks in the

Democratic Party.

He spearheaded a campaign to make Carl Stokes, a Democrat, Cleveland's and America's first black mayor. As the first black cabinet member to an Ohio governor, he persuaded Republican Gov. James A. Rhodes to persuade the state legislature to create a district so that Democrat Carl Stokes could be elected to the U.S. Congress. When Carl Stokes was elected mayor in 1967, his brother Louis Stokes - a Democrat - ran for Congress in 1968 and won.

Unlike the small minds of the Hornes', he knew that the cause of black people transcended petty party politics. Being the

pragmatist that he was known to be, he realized that it was impossible for a black Republican to win in heavily Democratic Cleveland.

W.O. Walker tackled many adversaries in his long lifetime. He led the fight for jobs for blacks in Cleveland stores and utility companies.

Walker created a short-lived pool of black Washington correspondents and formed the Black Press Archives at Howard University. As far back as 1939, he was elected to the Cleveland City Council.

After college, he worked as secretary to the director of the Pittsburgh Urban League until a job opening

at the Pittsburgh Courier in 1919 gave him his first break into the newspaper business.

After finishing Wilberforce University in 1914 and Oberlin Business College in 1916, young William Walker, in 1920, became the city editor of the Norfolk Journal and Guide. In 1921, he founded the Washington Tribune. Later, Walker fought a successful battle against racial discrimination at Washington Union Station where blacks were forbidden to eat.

In 1932, the 36-year-old dynamo took charge of a debt-laden Cleveland Call and Post which grew out of a merger of the financially

troubled Cleveland Call, founded by Black inventor Garrett A. Morgan, and the Cleveland Post. He became the heart and soul of that newspaper.

September 19, 1896, ushered in a new chapter in the life of a people. On that day, W.O. Walker was born. This product of our black institutions should rightfully hold the lofty position of Dean of the

Black Press. William Otis Walker learned the strength of the printed word - and used it.

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