

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings made the following [statement](#) on May 18, 2012, honoring the life of Dr. Effie C. Grear:

M. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Dr. Effie C. Grear, who died on May 16, 2012. Dr. Grear, a widely known and greatly beloved figure in her home town of Belle Glade, Florida and the other communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee, dedicated more than 50 years of her life as an educator. She earned her B.A. in Music Education from West Virginia State University, her M.A. in the same major from The Ohio State University, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

Highlights of her career included organizing the first bands at Florida A&M University High School in Tallahassee and Smith-Brown High School in Arcadia, Florida. She later became Band Director at Lake Shore High School in Belle Glade and then Assistant Principal at that school. After moving to the Assistant Principal position at Glades Central High School, she eventually became Principal in 1976, a position she held until retiring in 1976.

Dr. Grear had a long record of community involvement as a member of the Advisory Boards of Glades Central High School's Criminal Justice Academy and the Glades Community Development Corporation, the Florida and National Associations of Secondary School Principals, the Palm Beach County Criminal Justice Commission, and the Association of School Curriculum Development. At the time of her passing, she was serving as a Commissioner on the Health Care District of Palm Beach County and its representative to the Glades General Hospital Advisory Board.

Among her many awards and honors are Belle Glade, Florida Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year (1982), Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award from the Urban League of Palm Beach County (1988), Palm Beach County NAACP Community Service Award (1989), and the Florida Association of Women's Clubs Hattie T. Dorah Woman of the Year Award (1990). In 1991, she was named Florida Secondary School Principal of the Year. The following year, Dr. Grear was honored with the Ida S. Baker Distinguished Black Educator Award by the Governor and the Cabinet in Tallahassee.

In 2000, the Palm Beach County School Board recognized her long record of service to the boys and girls of the Glades area by naming the athletic field at Glades Central High School

after her. That same year, I honored her myself with my Educational Leadership Award for Commitment to Boys and Girls in Palm Beach County, Florida. She was recognized again by Palm Beach Community College in 2004, when they gave her their Community Leadership Award during their annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance.

M. Speaker, Dr. Gear was married to the late William A. Gear, the first African American to serve as a City Commissioner in Belle Glade, Florida. The couple had two children, Rhonda Gear, a Registered Nurse, and William Gear, Jr., a digital technician with Bell South Corporation and former Belle Glade City Commissioner. Dr. Effie Gear enjoyed enormous respect among everyone in the educational field and all those familiar with her devotion to children and her love for her community. She was a good friend and mentor to many and she will be dearly missed.

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