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Former Utah Governor Olene S. Walker Passes Away
Utah's 15th and First Woman Governor
Leaves Legacy in Service, Family, Education and Community Development

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, Nov. 28, 2015— This morning, Utah's 15th and first woman governor, Olene Smith Walker, passed away from natural causes in Salt Lake City, Utah. Born November 15, 1930, she recently celebrated her 85th birthday with family. Walker served as governor from November 5, 2003 to January 3, 2005.

Beyond her accomplishments in public service, Walker most valued her enduring bonds with family and friends. She had a strong academic background and was focused on improving housing, education, health care and community development. One of her most notable achievements was the creation of the Read with a Child Early Literacy Initiative designed to encourage adults to read with children for at least 20 minutes per day, with a goal to ensure Utah's young students could read at or above grade level by the end of the third grade. She worked to keep education as the highest funding priority and to provide a nurturing environment for Utah's students. Walker made affordable housing a priority across the state. Utah's housing fund bears her name, the Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund. She also led efforts to propose comprehensive reform of Utah's tax code.

While serving as Utah's first woman lieutenant governor (1993-2003) with Governor Michael O. Leavitt, Walker spearheaded many important initiatives including education programs, budget security measures, healthcare reform and workforce development. She led the Healthcare Reform Task Force that resulted in establishing the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), ensuring affordable healthcare for Utah's children. Walker also served as Chair of the Workforce Task Force, resulting in the development of the Department of Workforce Services. Out of concern for the homeless, Walker bolstered volunteer efforts at Salt Lake City homeless shelters during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Walker was elected to the Utah House of Representatives (1981-1989) where she also served as majority whip. Walker shepherded dozens of bills to passage, but few would have more lasting impact than the creation of Utah's Rainy Day Fund to protect state programs during times of economic downturn. Walker considered it her most important legislative accomplishment. She chaired the National Conference of Lieutenant Governors and was president of the National Association of Secretaries of State. She was the first lieutenant governor ever to serve as the president of that organization.

A trailblazer for women in politics, Walker created the Olene S. Walker Institute of Politics & Public Service at Weber State University (WSU) in 2012 to help foster in students and the broader community the public service and political engagement that motivated her decades-long career in Utah politics.

On September 25, 2015, Utah's YWCA honored Walker with the Mary Schubach McCarthy Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2007, WSU presented Walker with the Emeriti Lifetime Achievement for Setting

New Standards. She received an honorary degree from WSU in 1997. In 2004, the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce presented her with the ATHENA International Award. *The Salt Lake Tribune* named Walker its 2003 Utahn of the Year. Walker's career also included serving as an education consultant for the U.S. Department of Education (1970-1973), director of the Salt Lake City School District Volunteer Program (1974-1979), founder and director of the Salt Lake Education Foundation (1980-1989), and Community Development director for the State of Utah (1989-1992). She acted as chairwoman of the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, the Utah Housing Coordinating Committee and the Governor's Commission on Child Care. Walker, whose family moved 10 times in 13 years before she and her husband, Myron, settled in Salt Lake City in 1963, served as PTA president of every school her children attended.

Following her term as Governor, the Walkers spent two years in New York City as missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Walker continued her active involvement in numerous political and community organizations, including Count My Vote and Real Women Run. At the age of 80, she was serving in her church as Primary President in the Bloomington 7th Ward, Utah.

Walker was born in Ogden, Utah. She received her bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Brigham Young University, Stanford University and the University of Utah, respectively. She married Myron, self-proclaimed Utah's First Lad, in 1954 and had seven children, 25 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are pending and will be announced at a later time.

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