

The Academy Continues to Honor C.H. Walker

In June of 1947, the U.S. War Assets Administration announced the “sale” of Highlands Lake Hotel at 100% discount. “Sold” to the Florida Sanitarium and Benevolent Association, which we now call Florida Hospital of Orlando, the property transfer came with the provision that \$150,000 be quickly raised in order to convert the hotel into a much-needed community hospital for the area. Eight months later, January 6, 1948, Walker Memorial Sanitarium Hospital was dedicated.

Charles H. Walker was a well-known and highly admired leader who organized the fund-raising efforts in the county. Involved in the citrus industry in Central Florida for more than 40 years, he was considered the father of the cooperative movement of that industry. He spent a lot of his time in Tallahassee advocating for citrus legislation.

Even though he died before the hospital project was completed, Mr. Walker’s reputation was a prominent force in the campaign and insured its success.

Because of Charles H. Walker’s leadership in helping to establish a community hospital, more Adventists arrived to aid in the conversion of the hotel to a medical facility. So a school for their children was started in 1947 and its name honors the man who spearheaded the fundraising campaign and contributed to the growth of Highlands County.

That first school was simply a room in the World War II military wood barracks located next to the hotel/hospital. It is said that there were 4 students and the one teacher’s name was Mrs. Foote.

Later on, both the Adventist Church and the Adventist Walker Church school occupied the building across Lake Lillian which had been a casino/country club.

After that building was razed, our present church was built on the same site in 1979.

OUR CHURCH SCHOOL GROWS THROUGH THE YEARS

- 1947..... 1 teacher, 4 students
- 1950-51.... 2 teachers, First 9th grade class added
- 1951-52..... 10th grade added, 25 students (10 years)
- 1962..... 3 teachers, 40 students
- 1963..... 7 acres bought on Avon Blvd. for school site
- 1967..... 63 students
- 1968..... Gym & stage built at Academy
- 1973..... Over 100 students enrolled
- 1974..... New classroom wing built
- 1982..... Kindergarten class started
- 1983..... Day Care Center started on Stratford Road
- 1984..... 8,000 square feet elementary wing completed
- 1985..... Day Care Center moved onto WMJA campus
- 1995..... 8,500 square foot elementary wing finished (library, computer lab, music), Mural painted on wall
- 2002..... 1st WMJA Senior class graduates
- 2007..... PreK rated #1 in the county
14 Seniors graduate
21 Eighth graders graduate
WMJA rated #1 in technology in Southern Union
“60 and Still Strong” Yearbook theme in 2007
- 2010..... Acquired additional land from Florida Hospital
- 2012-2013.. **Our church school – 66 years of Christian education**

Enrollment: 227 Teachers & Staff: 25

From a April 25, 1947 News Article

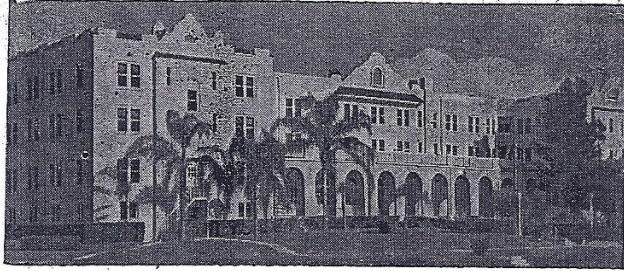
Charles H. Walker	Elected President of Ridge Area Hospital Association and General Campaign Manager
Guignard Maxcy <i>(Sebring, FL)</i>	First Vice President
Richard Archbold <i>(Lake Placid, FL)</i>	Second Vice President
Lee Crews <i>(Lake Placid, FL)</i>	Secretary
S.F. Longbottom <i>(Avon Park)</i>	Treasurer

Executive Committee for Fundraising the \$150,000 needed for the conversion of the Highlands Lake Hotel property into a hospital:

- Ford Heacock of Sebring
- E.G. Todd of Avon Park
- Tom Brown of Frostproof
- W.W. Whitehurst of Wauchula
- Jack Sims of Lake Placid
- C.R. Tysen of DeSoto City
- Mrs. Katherine Waggamann of Lorida
- O.J. March representing Highlands County Farm Bureau

This leaflet was summarized with information from Roland Lee and Jim Deal, volunteers at the Avon Park History Museum and Cindy and John Gross, longtime residents of Avon Park. Cindy’s father, Charles Grover Metcalfe was the nephew of Mr. C.H. Walker. Mrs. Gross supplied several photos.

Compiled by Jeannette Zesch



You Are Invited To Attend
 The Dedication and Formal Opening of the
Walker Memorial Sanitarium & Hospital

Tuesday, January 6, 1948
at 3:00 o'clock p.m.

Music by High School Bands of

Sebring : Avon Park : Lake Placid

Dedication Address

Hon. Claude Pepper

United States Senator

Unveiling of Plaque — In Memory of Charles H. Walker

Hon. Nathan Mayo

State Commissioner of Agriculture

**Conducted Tours of Inspection Under Direction of Hospital
 Attendants, Following Dedication**

PLACE: Highland Lakes, 3 Miles North of Avon Park on State Road 17

Men Who Make Florida



C. H. WALKER

*Photo from a
 1938 Miami
 Herald
 newspaper
 article about
 Charles Walker's
 positive influence
 in all parts of the
 state of Florida
 for the citrus
 business. News
 article loaned
 by Cindy and
 John Gross of
 Avon Park.*



Mr and Mrs C. H. Walker



*E.F. Hackman, of Atlanta, President of Southern Union
 Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; Claude Pepper, U.S.
 Senator; Nathan Mayo, State Agriculture commissioner
 January 6, 1948 Dedication Ceremony*

**Walker Memorial
 Academy
 Alumni Sabbath
 April 13, 2013**



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 www.WMAegles.org