

preservation *today*

OUR BLUE HEART:

**Paying tribute to the history,
beauty, and importance of the
Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves**

PLUS: What's Up in Downtown Miami? • Flashback to Impact • Save Calusa, and more!

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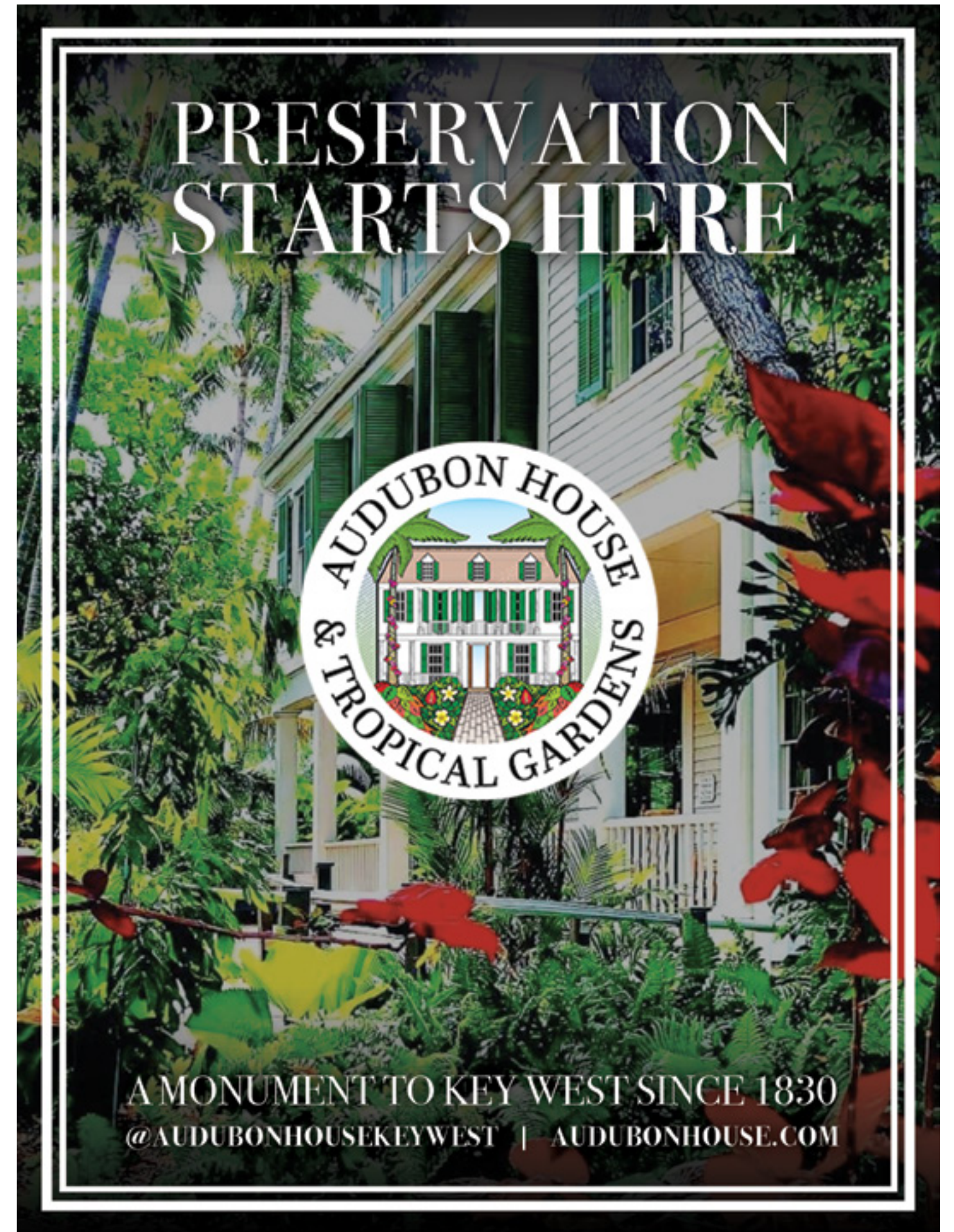
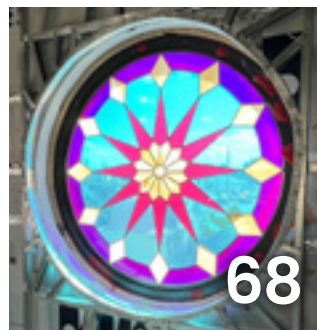
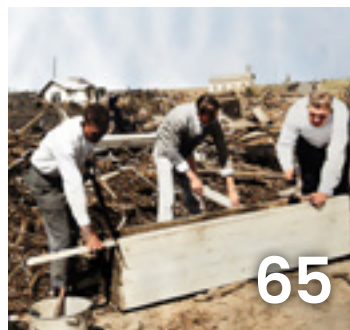
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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



As Miami evolves at a very rapid pace, Dade Heritage Trust’s advocacy efforts are seemingly more important than ever. From the restoration of historic multi-family buildings to preserve affordable housing to the restoration of the Lula Hattersley Cottage in the Lummus Park Historic District and documentation of Miami’s historic neighborhoods, Dade Heritage Trust continues to demonstrate the importance and benefits of architectural, cultural, and environmental preservation.

I have had the honor of serving as president of DHT’s board of directors for a total of six years. During that time, we have received grants from Miami-Dade County, the National Park Service, the Simkins Charitable Foundation, Jane Goodman, and the State of Florida to further the initiatives mentioned above. In addition, DHT’s highly successful and engaging K-12 education program has received generous funding from the Peacock Foundation, Kirk Foundation, The Miami Foundation, the Dr. John T. MacDonald Foundation, the Kislak Foundation, the Batchelor Foundation, the Admire Family Foundation, the Jackson Health Foundation, the Dunspaugh Dalton Foundation, the Wolfson Family Foundation, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Miami DDA, and Trish and Dan Bell. These funders see the importance of the programming we bring to students from various backgrounds in a diverse Miami-Dade County.

DHT’s board and staff are dedicated to preserving and showcasing places that matter in Miami: buildings, neighborhoods and parks that tell stories and, when preserved and celebrated, create a shared sense of history and community.

Vinson Richter

Vinson Richter, President

Vinson Richter is the founder of several successful general contracting firms with projects that span more than 40 years in South Florida. These construction projects include historic, commercial, professional, medical, technical, public, and entertainment properties. A native Floridian born on Miami Beach, he is a graduate of the University of Florida, School of Building and Construction, and a member of Sigma Lambda Chi. Mr. Richter serves on the Virginia Key Advisory Board, Dade Heritage Trust, Builders Association of South Florida, and Building Owners and Managers Association. He is a member of the Advisory Council of the M.E. Rinker School of Building Construction at the University of Florida, the Miami-Dade Advisory Board for Bank Atlantic, and is a Professional Affiliate member of the Miami Chapter, American Institute of Architects.



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Preservation Today is published to highlight and promote the efforts of Dade Heritage Trust, a 501c3 non-profit organization with a mission to preserve Miami-Dade County’s architectural, environmental and cultural heritage. Members and sponsors of Dade Heritage Trust receive a complimentary issue of Preservation Today. DHT’s programs, exhibits, events and publications are made possible in part by membership dues and contributions. A one-year membership includes one issue of Preservation Today, discounts on DHT sponsored events and programs and complimentary admission to over 300 museums and institutions in the Southeastern United States.

For membership information, call 305-358- 9572, email chris@dadeheritagetrust.org or visit dadeheritagetrust.org to join online. Your support is greatly appreciated.



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Dona and Tom Spain proudly support Dade Heritage Trust

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the cultural and architectural treasures of Miami!

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DIRECTOR’S NOTE



As Executive Director of Dade Heritage Trust, I have the pleasure of interacting on a daily basis with people who care about our community. From non-profit partners to individuals and elected officials who see the benefits of historic preservation, DHT is responsive to a wide network of friends and supporters in Miami-Dade County and beyond.

Due to the efforts of our PR team and a dynamic Board of Directors, DHT has been recognized nationally for our preservation of affordable housing initiative and our multifaceted education program that introduces students and educators to historic venues across our community. By using our mission to help address community issues, DHT is serving as an example that other preservation organizations can follow.

Rarely does a week go by without calls or emails requesting guidance on preservation issues. We hear from individual property owners, businesses, teachers, organizations, and even government employees seeking assistance. It is rewarding to be able to help, and it’s always a pleasure to connect people with others who can also assist. These welcome inquiries confirm that a sensibility for protecting and preserving history is alive and well in our community.

Dade Heritage Trust’s goal, through education and advocacy efforts, is to keep moving that spirit forward and to enhance preservation’s role in making a better Miami-Dade County for all.

Christine Rupp

Christine Rupp, Executive Director

DADE HERITAGE TRUST STAFF

DHT Staff at the 1855 Wagner Homestead in the City of Miami’s Lummus Park

Left to right: Eileen Zelaya, Christine Rupp, Michele Zakis, Leslie Rivera and Lucia Meneses



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rediscovering
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OUR BLUE HEART:

Paying tribute to the history, beauty, and importance of the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves

By Susan Cumins

Biscayne Bay—

whose economic, ecological, and historical importance are vital to Miami's quality of life—is not a resource we can take for granted any longer. To ensure the health of this treasure for future generations, the Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB), Miami-Dade County's Bay Friendly Program and the Cortada Foundation have teamed up to launch the 50th Anniversary Project for the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves (BBAP), called **"The Flow: It's all connected,"** a county-wide water quality movement meant for all to participate in. The coalition's multi-phase project will, among other initiatives, emphasize how everything we do on land affects our water quality, and encourage change.

That point is key because, as Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava confirms,

"The Bay is really the blue heart of our community. It fuels our economy, our recreation, our visitors, our health."

Generations ago, canals were dug to drain land for agriculture and real estate development. The natural flow of clean fresh water from the Everglades was cut off from reaching Biscayne Bay, and replaced with canals that disrupted its hydrology and impacted the salinity and water quality. By the 1960s and '70s, prior to the Clean Water Act, the Bay's once-crystalline waters were in bad shape from pollution. Fishermen were finding fish with lesions and disease; water quality was poor and plagued with algal blooms. When severe pollution destroyed seagrass beds and led to widespread fish kills, commercial and sport fishermen insisted that state and federal legislators act to stop the pollution. "As we went into the '70s, Dade County had long been overlooked by the state for our fair share of support for natural resources and funding," recounts former Florida Senator Bob McKnight (D., Dade/Monroe), who was 1980–82 Vice Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee. "Our Dade

delegation closed ranks and insisted on the designation of Biscayne Bay as a State Aquatic Preserve with full support and funding."

What began as a moderate environmental protection effort in the Florida Legislature has evolved into a wide-ranging movement for effective resource management. The movement was rekindled in 2016, when pollution loads reached levels severe enough to cause seagrass die-offs, and a deadly combination of high temperatures led to fish kills. The number of nonprofit advocates now focused on protecting Florida's waters (see page 11) corroborates this.

Fifty years after the 1974 designation of the BBAP, the Bay again faces challenges. An aquatic preserve is meant to be protected by a management plan, but BBAP's management policies have been ignored, overlooked, and openly violated. Clearly the 50th anniversary in 2024 is a critical moment to activate community-wide initiatives that will foster environmental awareness and stewardship among municipalities, residents, visitors, students, and businesses.

The consensus among Miami's environmental advocates is that constant vigilance is essential and that, because we have overcome horrific conditions in the bay before, we can overcome them again. Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB), a nonprofit evolved from the 1970s-era Biscayne Bay Foundation, is led by descendants of Miami-Dade's earliest environmentalists.

"If we want to enjoy and benefit from the Bay, we must rise up and protect it again,"

says Bruce Matheson, president of FOBB and an original member of the Biscayne Bay Foundation.

Charles Munroe, a descendant of Ralph Middleton Munroe, who built The Barnacle on Miami's bayfront in 1891, supports BBAP's 50th anniversary celebration and its theme, "A call to action through art and education to improve the water quality of Biscayne Bay."



Monroe endorses “The Flow: It’s All Connected” project and urges federal, state, and municipal agencies to redouble their protection enforcement, given threats from population growth and climate change. He sees Biscayne Bay as “our great public park and the engine of our county’s economy.”

FOBB board member Paul Schwiep is an attorney whose work has protected the Everglades and the Bay from recurring threats. He comments that “nature can be forgiving, but it is critical for future environmental advocates to recognize the importance of a healthy Biscayne Bay to South Florida’s quality of life. I am encouraged by the 50th Anniversary Project’s emphasis on how our everyday actions on land affect what happens in Biscayne Bay.”

Public awareness is vital for managing shared resources like Biscayne Bay, each neighborhood’s common treasure. All the surrounding communities see it as their bay. The 50th Anniversary Project will unfold in schools, libraries, and neighborhoods county-wide and is structured in phases starting in 2024. Miami-Dade County inaugural artist-in-residence Xavier Cortada will work with FOBB and the county’s Bay Friendly

program to create this engaged art project, one that is “designed to help all residents understand how water flows across the county’s canal sheds so they can work to make theirs the cleanest watershed leading into the bay.”

Laura Reynolds, Vice President of the Friends of Biscayne Bay, points out that,

“If we are to be successful in restoring the bay we must ALL row in the same direction and focus on collective water quality improvements. Rather than silo our efforts, we encourage everyone to get involved in returning Biscayne Bay’s waters to a healthy state.” ■

For details on how to sign up and get involved, www.friendsofbiscaynebay.org or email: friendsofbiscaynebay@gmail.com

Images courtesy of Friends of Biscayne Bay

Community Advocacy to Protect Our Blue Heart

By Maggie Winchester-Weiler, M.Sc.

As we celebrate Miami’s ecological jewel, Biscayne Bay, this picturesque subtropical estuary offers so much to the 2.8 million local residents and the millions of visitors who enjoy it each year – stunning views, frequent manatee and dolphin encounters, and endless recreational opportunities.

Miami both enjoys and capitalizes upon the aesthetic, ecological, and economic benefits that the Bay offers, but this comes at a cost. Developers build up to the Bay’s edge, so we can enjoy the views, but this causes pollutants and sewage to drain into its waters. We spend memorable weekends at its waterfront parks or anchored near mangrove islands, but our trash fouls shorelines and harms wildlife. We continue to litter the mainland with waste and pollution, forgetting that whatever we leave on land will be washed into the Bay, no matter how distant it may seem. In short, we are loving Biscayne Bay to death.

Like many Florida ecosystems, Biscayne Bay faces threats caused by the density of those living on and around it. Sewage from old, cracking pipes, nutrients from improperly functioning septic systems, land-based pollutants like fertilizer and herbicides, and debris from poorly managed stormwater systems all contribute to the Bay’s deteriorating health. The staggering

quantity of physical debris and nutrient pollution, coupled with poor, continuously declining water quality result in dramatic fish kills, rapidly disappearing seagrass, and starving manatees.

Ocean Conservancy, the nation’s oldest non-profit dedicated to tackling the biggest issues in marine conservation, has been working to address marine debris and water quality issues in Florida for the last 40 years. To address the declining health of Biscayne Bay, Ocean Conservancy has worked on Bay – friendly legislation, studied the abundance and impact of marine debris on the Bay, led local coastal cleanups, and worked with businesses and communities to reduce single-use plastics.

Fortunately, Ocean Conservancy isn’t alone in these efforts. A host of dedicated individuals and groups across Miami are working to understand these challenges and make the necessary changes to restore the Bay’s health through advocacy and education. Below is a list of some of the non-profits and coalitions in addition to Ocean Conservancy that are contributing to the restoration of the Bay’s important ecosystem. To support this work, consider supporting or volunteering with Ocean Conservancy or any of the following organizations that are working to save the Bay.





Policy and Organizing

• **Ocean Conservancy** is the nation’s oldest non-profit focused on marine conservation, with almost 40 years of marine debris research and reduction to its credit. In Miami, the focus is reducing single-use plastics and promoting zero-waste initiatives through policy change, education, and community outreach. Since 2020, Ocean Conservancy has facilitated monthly convenings of Biscayne Bay stakeholders in order to coordinate conservation efforts across the county.

oceanconservancy.org/protecting-florida

• **Biscayne Bay Marine Health Coalition** is a collaboration of stakeholders, NGOs, and activists. Their “About Us” video tells how they started Biscayne Bay Restoration in 2016. They formed the county-led Biscayne Bay Task Force whose report became the guiding document to Bay recovery, created the county’s Chief Bay Officer position (held by Irela Bague, a member of the original steering committee), and set up a permanent Biscayne Bay Watershed Management Advisory Board. Sign up for their newsletter and join the WhatsApp Group to learn about the 2024 Biscayne Bay Marine Health Summit. biscaynebayfl.com

• **Miami Waterkeeper**, part of the global Waterkeeper Alliance, advocates for swimmable, drinkable, fishable water for all. Miami Waterkeeper has focused on policy changes around septic tanks, fertilizer, and port dredging. Their “1,000 Eyes on the Water” program trains residents to identify and report water-related issues, and their Junior Ambassador program works to educate the next generation. miamiwaterkeeper.org

• **Oceana** is an international organization focused solely on oceans, dedicated to achieving measurable change through specific, science-based policy campaigns with fixed deadlines and articulated goals. In South Florida, they promote local policies to reduce single-use plastics through campaigns like “Skip the Stuff” and support zero-waste initiatives. oceana.org

• **The Surfrider Foundation** is a network of chapters that serves as first responders to local threats in coastal communities nationwide. Florida Surfrider campaigns focus on reducing single-use plastics and keeping waters clean. The Miami chapter concentrates on removing marine debris from coastlines and restoring shorelines. miami.surfrider.org

• **Tropical Audubon Society (TAS)** is a science- and solutions-based nonprofit conservation organization driven by its grassroots community and principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Because a healthy Bay is crucial for wildlife, humans, and the region’s economic prosperity, TAS advocates engage with local, state, and federal organizations and agencies to restore and protect it. tropicalaudubon.org

• **Everglades Law Center** is focused on land use and sustainability, waters and wetlands protection, endangered species, and wildlife and public lands protection. This nonprofit law firm depends on grants and individual contributions to fund the work of its lawyers and advocates. evergladeslaw.org

• **Hold The Line Coalition** is a diverse, non-partisan group of organizations and individuals dedicated to preserving a livable South Florida by protecting green space, limiting sprawl, and encouraging smart development. Goals depend on keeping the Urban Development Boundary in place and directing investments to local neighborhoods. holdthelinecoalition.org

• **VoteWater.Org** is a grassroots organization founded by residents of Stuart, Florida, in 2014. The founding premise is that local policies, more than science or engineering, are the solutions to stopping destructive discharges to our coasts and restoring the Everglades. [Votewater.org](https://votewater.org) surveys political candidates on clean water issues and uses those responses to help voters make educated decisions. votewater.org

• **Sierra Club** is a national organization with chapters working to enjoy nature’s wild places, encourage sustainable practices, and educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the natural environment. The Miami chapter’s mission is to protect South Florida’s natural places, teach others to respect the fragile environment in which we live, and promote responsible use of the region’s ecosystems and resources. They also encourage people to be sustained by a plant-based diet and minimize or mitigate their personal environmental footprints. sierraclub.org/florida/miami

Education & Community Outreach

• **VolunteerCleanup.Org** is for anyone who wants to get involved in marine debris issues. Its website makes cleanups “a thing” by connecting people hosting cleanups with volunteers. Third-party groups can use the website to recruit volunteers who get weekly notifications of cleanups near them. It provides an eye-opening experiences to show how bad the problem is, how all this plastic gets in the water, and what individuals, businesses, and government must do about it. **VolunteerCleanup.Org**

• **Debris Free Oceans** is a Miami-based organization that inspires local communities to responsibly manage the lifecycle of plastics and waste as part of a global initiative to eradicate marine debris from our beaches, reefs, and oceans. **debrisfreeoceans.org**

• **Big Blue and You** is the first ocean conservation nonprofit founded by African American women and is a passionate proponent of intersectional environmentalism and decolonizing the natural world. They believe that equitable access to outdoor spaces is critical to engaging BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) because people must experience what they are asked to protect. **bigblueandyou.org**

• **Blue Scholars Initiative** engages students in marine biology, marine ecology, and watershed concepts to strengthen understanding of humanity’s stresses on these ecosystems. Students experience and investigate the rich biodiversity beneath the surface, conduct citizen science, and develop a passion for the environment. The goal is to inspire the next generation of ocean stewards to solve these pressing and difficult issues. **bluescholars.org**

• **International SeaKeepers Society** promotes oceanographic research, conservation, and education through direct involvement with the yachting community. Offering educational resources and hands-on marine science experiences to students is the primary focus. In Miami, SeaKeepers provides local researchers and educators with platforms for science and education to protect and preserve Biscayne Bay. **seakeepers.org**



• **Clean Miami Beach** is dedicated to keeping the community and natural habitats free of garbage and pollutants, especially single-use plastics. The goal is to teach residents and educate youth to reuse, re-purpose, and reduce the consumption of plastic. Clean Miami Beach seeks to provide Miami-Dade with healthy outdoor activities, ways to connect with nature, stable social interactions, a platform for education, community service hours, and mentorship opportunities. **cleanmiami beach.org**

• **Dream in Green**’s mission is to empower individuals, especially youth, to take the lead in responding to climate change and other environmental challenges facing South Florida since 2006. They help schools, households, local governments, and businesses reduce their environmental footprint. Through community partnerships, they develop, implement, and oversee educational programs and workshops that promote environmentally sustainable behaviors among all age groups, particularly K-12 students. **dreaminggreen.org**

• **MORAES of South Florida**, an environmental research organization based in Miami, was founded to inspire and retain local marine ecologists. It offers a streamlined path to involvement through applied research, publishing, volunteering, and education outreach. Its goal is to protect South Florida’s marine resources through collaborative community involvement and stewardship. **soflomoraes.com**

• **The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center** is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental education. It encourages greater citizen participation in protection of the natural environment by connecting the community to the world through nature and the arts. **biscaynenaturecenter.org**

• **The Everglades Foundation** is an authoritative source for scientific research on the Everglades. The Foundation’s scientists are dedicated to unearthing facts and conducting practical analysis to help local, state, and national leaders make well-informed decisions. By coupling sound science with policy expertise, the Foundation is an influential player in the fight to preserve and restore one of the world’s unique wetlands. **evergladesfoundation.org**

• **FillABag** was founded in Key Biscayne, Florida, in 2018 with a small grant from The Miami Foundation’s Public Space Challenge. By activating FillABag stations at beach paths, they empower people to turn ordinary beach walks into meaningful cleanups by providing reusable buckets to fill with trash during a stroll. **fillabag.co**

• **Clean This Beach Up Corp** is a registered nonprofit dedicated to creating awareness and educating the public about the negative effects of plastic pollution. Programs include weekly cleanups, educational programs, and wellness activities. **cleanthisbeachup.org**

• **Sereia Films** is a seafood education nonprofit. Humans’ seafood choices matter for the future of ocean health. Through video storytelling, community events, beach cleanups, and presentations, Sereia Films educates communities about the problems—and solutions—facing our oceans. **sereiafilms.org**

• **The Xavier Cortada Foundation**’s mission is to use socially engaged art to create experiences that educate, inspire, and mobilize communities to take action against climate and ecological crises. Since 1994, Cortada’s community-driven artwork has led to 25-plus acres of ecological restoration, generated participatory eco-art projects in Miami-Dade County public schools and libraries, and amplified marginalized voices worldwide through collaborative message murals. **cortada.com/foundation**



Biscayne Bay Research Efforts

• **University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences** has several laboratories and researchers that work on understanding and monitoring the health of Biscayne Bay, including marine biologists Chris Langdon, PhD, and Diego Lirman, PhD. **marine-biology-ecology.earth.miami.edu**

• **Florida International University’s Center for Aquatic Chemistry and Environment (CREST)** focuses on assessing the health of Biscayne Bay through ecosystem monitoring and research. Pollutants devastate ecosystems, including their plants, animals, and people. CREST, a National Science Foundation Center of Research Excellence in Science and Technology, tackles one of the most complex challenges—environmental contamination. **crestcache.fiu.edu**

• **Bonefish & Tarpon Trust (BTT)** is working in the Florida Keys and South Florida to determine and address causes of declining fish populations. BTT has defined a series of research steps that will lead to actionable knowledge to improve the Keys flats fishery. BTT advocates for actions that will protect and restore the fishery and habitats. **bonefishtarpontrust.org**

Maggie Winchester-Weiler is the Florida Program Specialist for Florida Conservation at Ocean Conservancy, and is based in Miami, FL. She has a background in marine research and science communication, earned a Master of Science degree from University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and is an adjunct faculty member for Shoals Marine Laboratory where she teaches an undergraduate course on Shark Biology and Conservation. With Ocean Conservancy, Maggie works on marine debris reduction efforts and water quality improvement through education and community outreach, with a focus on Miami.

Designation of Biscayne Bay

Application in Progress to Add Biscayne Bay to National Register of Historic Places

By Susan Cumins

To recognize and celebrate the deep history, significance, and economic power of Biscayne Bay, Miami-born Joseph Z. Fleming and his daughter, environmental activist Katherine Fleming, are assembling an application to list Biscayne Bay on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), administered by the National Park Service.

For more than a hundred years, members of the Fleming family have lived on Biscayne Bay. Attorney Joe Fleming has put in decades of pro bono work to protect its waters and historic sites. Kate Fleming shares her father's deep appreciation of the beauty and importance of everything around its shores and below its surface. "We hope that placement on the NRHP will raise awareness and help protect this vast network of natural, historic, and cultural treasures that has been our home and inspiration for so long," they affirm.

The pair began the highly detailed application process in 2022, undaunted by the requirement to "research, outline, synthesize, and interpret the historical record on one or more historical themes to which the property relates throughout its historic uses, activities, associations, and physical characteristics."

The proposed listing on the Register, when completed in the next few years, is expected to contain hundreds of pages because Biscayne Bay's significance

encompasses each of those categories. Assembling the required materials involves the indispensable work of other groups and participants too numerous to name here.

Kate is founder and CEO of Bridge Initiative, a nonprofit that connects art and science to broaden environmental awareness. Among its projects is an interactive website biscayne-bay.bridgeinitiative.org with locator maps, images, and facts about Biscayne Bay designed to educate the public and inspire appreciation and preservation of its treasures.

Executive Director Christine Rupp applauds the pair's decision to undertake the application process. "Dade Heritage Trust's work has long focused on the natural and built environment surrounding Biscayne Bay. Its cultural, social, and economic aspects have contributed to life in our communities from prequest to the present day.

The Bay is at a tipping point now regarding water quality, the health of its seagrass and coral, and aquatic life in general.

It is heartening to know that Joe Fleming and his daughter, Kate Fleming, are dedicating their significant energy and expertise to this prestigious ceremonial designation." ■



Photo above: A 1983 photo shows Joe Fleming and daughter Kate during the Surrounded Islands installation by celebrated artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. After years of planning, 11 islands in Biscayne Bay were encircled with bright pink fabric for two weeks. Joe Fleming served as lead counsel in federal court proceedings enabling the implementation of the "Surrounded Islands Project for Biscayne Bay" and worked with attorney Jay Landers to obtain the local, county, state, and federal permits involved. Christo's artwork left no traces on the environment yet created an indelible cultural memory for the community and the art world. **Photo courtesy of Kate Fleming**

The Power of Citizen Advocacy

By Susan Cumins

By challenging a developer's up-zoning request, West Kendall activists won a victory for residents and imperiled wildlife



How Calusa activists' clear communications and widespread support led the Court to deny a developer's zoning-change bid.

With careful documentation of protected wildlife and powerful strategic communications, Calusa residents and supporters, acting as Save Calusa, overcame a real estate developer's proposal to build a gated development of 550 luxury homes on their prized green space. Community participation at Miami-Dade County Commission meetings and photographic proof of Tricolored Herons (*Egretta tricolor*)—nesting, hatching pale blue eggs, and nurturing chicks on the property—helped seal the outcome. In February 2023, the Florida Third District Court of Appeal—in response to Save Calusa's litigation—reversed a November 2021 up-zoning decision by the County Commission. In reversing the commission's approval, the court cited a lack of proper public notice.

Subdivided in the 1960s, Calusa occupies about one square mile in unincorporated southwestern Miami-Dade County. In 1968, the County granted the community a 99-year covenant under which Calusa Country Club and Golf Course operated from 1969 until its operator closed the course to the public in 2011. Despite the land's charter as parks and recreation, local investor Facundo Bacardi, of the

rum empire, purchased the 168-acre tract in 2003 for \$2.7 million. He sold it for \$32 million in 2021 to a joint venture with GL Homes (and retained a partial interest), confident of receiving the required zoning.

The well-heeled developer had offered financial settlements to homeowners ringing the former golf course if they'd sign waivers to release the existing covenant and not oppose their rezoning request.

The payouts were accepted by 123 of the 146 owners who ringed the green space. But excluded from the conversation were around 2,000 Calusa families, plus thousands in adjacent neighborhoods. When, in November 2021, the Miami-Dade County Commission approved the developer's request to build 550 high-end gated residences, Save Calusa's community advocates filed a lawsuit and rallied widespread public support that resulted in a reversal of the rezoning approval.

Photo on opposite page: Great Egret with hatchlings in nest at the Calusa Rookery. Photo courtesy of Dennis Horn



Map showing Calusa Country Club, 9400 SW 130th ave Miami, 33186
Source: Google Maps

Amanda Prieto, who had moved to Calusa with her family in 2019, recalls how she went to a commission meeting in January 2020 and realized that Calusa’s resident activists were weary after 10 years of working to stop the proposed development. With more than 20 years in program management and educational technology, Prieto volunteered to use her time and communications background to move the cause ahead.

With her neighbors’ trust and oversight, they founded Save Calusa, a community-based non-profit organization. The 501(c)(3) accepted donations to cover filing fees, t-shirts, yard signs, a bus to transport advocates to zoning hearings downtown, and more. Save Calusa’s supporters included residents of nearby areas who would be subject to increased traffic and pressure on school enrollment, as well as county-wide advocates for green space and wildlife habitat.

“It was a fight worth fighting,” said Prieto. “It’s about the right of people to know what is going on and having a voice in local decision making.”

A fact-packed website, **SaveCalusa.org**, kept advocates and the public informed and countered misleading statements by the developer’s team. “Because members of the public are limited to one minute of speaking time at commission meetings, we had to voice our concerns through our website, op-eds, petitions, and media coverage,” Prieto noted. The strategic, transparent public information about Save Calusa’s goals caught the attention of Miami attorneys David Winker and Richard Grosso, who donated or reduced their fees to provide advice and assist with court filings.

The COVID-19 lockdown gave Calusa activists an additional nesting season to document the presence of Tricolored Herons, listed as threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Environmental consultants hired by the developer had conducted their survey outside of nesting season, and naturally found no endangered wildlife living on the property at that time. But in late 2022, staff at the County’s Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) independently verified what Calusa residents already knew. Their volunteers had captured compelling images of the imperiled herons nesting and raising hatchlings at Calusa’s rookery.

Tropical Audubon Society members confirmed that Wood Storks (*Mycteria americana*) and other endangered or threatened species foraged at the rookery, too. Calusa resident Ron Magill, Zoo Miami’s communications director, had personally photographed Tricolored Herons nesting there. At a hearing, he reminded commissioners that “you can buy consultants, but you can’t buy wildlife once it’s dead.”

“We asked the County to prevent razing trees, filling lakes, and displacing wildlife on land that was never intended to be developed,” added Prieto. “Zoning should not be determined by the highest bidder.” Save Calusa’s community activists demonstrated what persistence and determination can accomplish. ■




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THE COLUMNS OF *Halissee Hall*



By Casey Piket

Casey Piket is a Miami historian and author. For more on Mr. Piket, please see the Meet and Greet story on page 65.

Located near downtown Miami along NW 10th Avenue, nestled between the 836 Expressway and a modern office building that's host to Atlantis University, stands what appear to be ruins from a bygone era. Two gate posts seem to have been misplaced not only from their original fortification, but also from their time period. These columns once anchored the entrance to one of the area's most prominent residences, constructed during the City of Miami's formative years by John Sewell, one of its illustrious founding pioneers.

When Sewell embarked on constructing his estate in an area that, in 1912, was considered the outskirts of town, he insisted on leveraging native resources. At the time, Dade County pine trees and oolitic limestone were plentiful in South Florida. The trees were felled, and rock was quarried, to provide building material for many of the early structures constructed in Miami.

Just as Sewell had envisioned a grand design for his residence, he also crafted a plan for an elaborate entrance to his estate, built at the

The Columns of Halissee Hall

terminus of a long winding road more than a quarter mile from the front door of his residence. All that remains of that grand entrance are the two gate columns found along today's NW 10th Avenue.



Who Was John Sewell?

When Henry Flagler agreed to construct a luxurious hotel and help to lay out a city in what would become Miami, he turned to 29-year-old John Sewell to get the project started.

When he and his brother, Everest G. Sewell, arrived along the shores of the Miami River in March 1896, they were joined by a group of 12 Black workmen who John referred to as his "Black Artillery." He supervised his crew to clear land for the street layout and Flagler's luxurious Royal Palm hotel.

One of the reasons Sewell referred to his crew as an "artillery" was that he could point them at any challenging task and they would get the job done. Clearing the land was difficult, but between his crew of workers, and the occasional use of dynamite on more-persistent foliage, Sewell was able to accomplish what was expected of him and his crew - effectively and on time.

When it came time to vote on incorporation, Sewell again marshalled his Black Artillery, at this point numbering more than 100 workmen, to cast their ballots to organize as a city, so that the municipality could avoid having to first incorporate as a town. The State of Florida required at least 300 votes to organize a municipality as a city. Had Sewell's workers not cast their votes, Miami would not have reached the minimum number of voters needed to incorporate as a city.

In 1899, Sewell petitioned city officials for \$3,000 of their budget for street construction so that his workers would stay employed and in town to cast their votes, thus helping to determine the location of the Dade County seat. Once again, the votes cast by Sewell's workers ensured that the Magic City won the right to become the county seat over West Palm Beach. This ensured that



Halissee Hall in 1921

Dade County’s operations would shift from Juno to Miami. Members of the Black labor force who worked for the Florida East Coast organization, and reported to John Sewell, were instrumental in the development and evolution of Miami during the city’s formative years.

In addition to his role as a supervisor and representative for the Florida East Coast company, Sewell and his brother, Everest, started one of the first retail establishments in Miami. They conducted business on Flagler Street for decades, selling men’s clothing and shoes as Sewell Brothers store. John was elected as the third mayor of Miami and served in that role from 1903 to 1907. As the city grew, so did John’s profile and wealth. By 1912, he was determined to construct a residence that reflected his affluence.

Halissee Hall

By the onset of the second decade of the 20th century, John Sewell acquired a 46-acre tract of land two miles west of the County courthouse and near Miami’s first subdivision known as Highland Park, where he planned to construct his dream home. His land overlooked the Royal Palm Hotel’s nine-hole golf course and included an elevation known as “Knob Hill” for its 15-foot height above the surrounding prairie. It was at the crest of this hill that Sewell constructed the residence he called Halissee Hall, named for the Seminole Indian term for new moon.

His three-story abode, which covered a ground space of 58 by 108 feet, was built primarily of native rock quarried in Miami. The native limestone was a favorite building material for many pioneers who constructed homes during this time. The stone provided a native durability and local authenticity in any structure where it was used. An article in the Miami Metropolis said the entirety of the city was visible from Halissee Hall’s promenade level, and viewers would have an unobstructed view of happenings along the Miami River from the third floor. The highest point of the home eclipsed the treetops of the surrounding pine woods.

Construction of the home began on John Sewell’s 45th birthday – July 20, 1912 – and was finished by the end of June 1913. The residence cost \$100,000 and was the largest home in Miami when it was completed. John was very proud of the structure, particularly because he had been able to construct it with native materials. In addition to building a fine residence, John also constructed an entrance gate that matched the opulence and ruggedness of his home.

The Grand Entrance

While the home’s grounds were being prepared in July 1912, John Sewell hired a stonecutter by the name of Felix to build a pair of matching columns to anchor what would become the grand entrance to Halissee Hall. The posts were designed and constructed to use the same oolitic

limestone material of as the residence. Once Felix completed his work on the support structures, a gate was affixed to the posts and provided a very distinguished entry to the nearly quarter-mile private driveway paved with crushed white limestone, that led to the front steps of what would become Sewell’s three-story estate when it was completed months later in 1913.

A few years after the Sewells moved into Halissee Hall, when the Federal Courthouse and Post Office edifice was being constructed in 1915, Sewell got word that the general contractor was about to discard a pair of ornamental shields. The architect of the courthouse structure included in his design two ornate matching shields that featured an American eagle and 13 stars to represent the original colonies of the United States. When the contractor responsible for mounting the decorative ornaments on the courthouse found flaws in the first pair, he ordered them hauled away to the dump.

Given that the shields were made of the same type of limestone used to construct his gate posts, Sewell was more than happy to take the ornamental items off their hands and adaptively reuse them on his gate columns. In an article published in the Miami News in 1968, author Smiley Nixon wrote that the flawed shields showed only 11 stars, two short of the intended 13 needed to represent the original colonies. However, if one were to closely inspect the shields on the posts today, it does appear that, at one time, all 13 stars were present on those mounted on the entranceway columns.

The more likely explanation, by comparing the shields on the columns to those on the side of the courthouse building, was that the background for the stars should have been a smooth surface allowing all 13 stars to project from the center of the shield, whereas the pair recommissioned by Sewell had a textured surface. The stars in the top row of Sewell’s columns appear to blend in with the background versus how they appear to stand out on the shields at the original federal courthouse building. Regardless of the reason, John Sewell was more than happy to add the discarded ornaments to his property.



Lucia Meneses, Emmett Moore, Juan Murellat, Casey Piket and Caroline Dickensheets met to discuss DHT’s proposed column preservation efforts.

Remnants of John Sewell’s Legacy

Over the years, Halissee Hall had been a private residence, police academy, hospital administrative offices, and a cancer center as part of the Jackson Memorial Hospital complex. It still stands today on the grounds of the hospital campus and serves an important role in patient care. The building was historically designated in 1983.

For many decades, what is left of the gateway sat vacant along SW 10th Avenue, just south of the 836 Expressway. When the expressway was constructed in the early 1960s, the columns were separated from the house for which they once provided an entranceway. The long driveway is long gone, as is the gate that the columns supported, but the oolitic limestone posts remain as vestiges of a forgotten era, and more specifically, a reminder of a forgotten Miami icon.

When John Sewell published his autobiography, Miami Memoirs, in 1933, he described himself as the “Daddy of Miami” while explaining that “Julia Tuttle gave the land, and Henry Flagler the money but I started Miami.” Although the claim appears bombastic and self-serving, John Sewell’s role as a founding pioneer was monumental in the early development of Miami. It would be fair to claim that he may have been one of the most prominent founders of the Magic City who was not named Flagler, Brickell, or Tuttle. ■

FLASHBACK TO IMPACT:

Elevating Community Heritage Through Preservation

By Tamara McDonald, J.D.

Historic Preservation Specialist,
Miami-Dade County

Preservation is not a one-size-fits-all practice and what works for one designation may not necessarily suit another.

At the close of 2023, Miami-Dade County's Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), in its ongoing commitment to support equity in preservation, is looking back at its recent work to identify historic resources county-wide and extend its historic designation and preservation methodology beyond traditionally architecture-based historic designations.

In 2020, OHP began a multi-phase survey effort to identify and document historic resources built from 1941 to 1981. The first phase of the project, slated for conclusion in September 2023, prioritized communities facing challenges like redevelopment pressure, gentrification, housing affordability, and flooding. This first phase also prioritized identification of resources related to Miami-Dade's historically excluded history. The survey has provided recommendations that have been incorporated into a framework for additional survey phases and supplemental projects to continue to identify and recognize resources reflective of Miami's diverse community.

OHP's recent work has used traditional survey methodology and new perspectives in support of community-informed preservation. This dynamic approach has helped OHP identify sites of cultural

significance to residents that reflect stories and histories associated with communities that had been traditionally excluded in preservation and has found OHP staff engaging the community through in-person and virtual events, and coordinating with residents and property owners to complete new historic designations.

While traditionally historic designations have been largely based on architecture-centered criteria, OHP's ongoing work to elevate places of equal historical importance has given its preservation process a new trajectory. Looking to historic figures and events that contributed to Miami's diverse heritage, OHP is working to support preservation of sites that contribute to Miami's cultural heritage. As a result, in 2022, OHP staff undertook two owner-initiated residential designations that exemplify a continued legacy of community advocacy.



*The Clark Residence,
now and ca. 1960*

Located in the North Shore neighborhood, this is a mid-20th century Ranch-style single family residence associated with the vibrant life of Vernon H. Clark and LaClyde Clark. Mr Clark was a community leader noted for his continued advocacy and work through the civil rights movement and his lifelong impact in local and state politics.





*The Jackson
Mosley-Johnson
Residence,
now and ca. 1941*

This modest traditional-style single-family residence is located in the historic Brownsville neighborhood. The residence is associated with the lives and accomplishments of Ida Belle Jackson-Mosley, Ruth Johnson, and Wesley Garrison. Its preservation highlights a story of ambition and determination at a time when racial segregation ushered in a swift transition of the surrounding community from predominantly White residents to Black residents.



Continuing to expand designated resources to incorporate sites that are historically and culturally important, in 2023 OHP, in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Parks Recreation & Open Spaces, celebrated the local designation of Camp Matecumbe.



*Camp Matecumbe
Gymnasium,
now and ca. 1962*

Originally a summer camp for the Catholic Church, and by the 1990s a Boys Town Camp for youth, the first buildings at Camp Matecumbe were constructed around 1956. A poignant point in its history is attributed to the period from 1961 through 1964 when the site was used during Operation Pedro Pan and became a temporary home for children relocating out of Cuba during the early days of the Castro regime. Comprising several structures, it includes a well-remembered gymnasium that illustrates the growth and change set in motion by the Cuban diaspora and the Cold War.



Through community-informed preservation work, OHP continued its community outreach by partnering with Miami-Dade Public Library and HistoryMiami Museum for a History Collaborative event in early 2023, as well as an informational presentation in partnership with Miami-Dade County Building Department's permits office.

OHP proudly serves as a continued resource for property owners in maintaining historic sites. From multifaceted rehabilitation work initiated at sites like Georgette's Tea Room in the historic community of Brownsville, and the Bethel House in South Dade, to routine window replacements and roof repairs needed to maintain residences within the County's eight historic districts such as North

Shore Crest and Richmond Heights, OHP continues to support preservation of historic resources through use of the Miami-Dade County's Resilient Rehab and the Secretary of Interior standards, and continued coordination with property owners to realize successful rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties.

Finally, OHP is pleased to announce a second resource survey of Goulds that launched in October 2023. This newest survey phase occurs in direct response to community feedback, and Phase I survey recommendations will support the identification and documentation of historic resources and elevate the stories and history of South Dade's oldest communities. ■

To learn more about historic resources and how the County and the Office of Historic Preservation can assist you in preserving historic structures and sites, visit www.miamidade.gov/historicpreservation or contact the **Office of Historic Preservation at 305-375-4958 or historicpreservation@miamidade.gov**.

Liberty City

Historic Survey

By Megan McLaughlin

In the summer of 2022, Dade Heritage Trust received a grant from the Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resources to conduct a historical resources survey of Liberty City. Plusurbia was hired to conduct the survey work through the summer of 2023. Approximately 450 properties in Liberty City were documented as part of the survey. The area selected was located in the City of Miami, between NW 62nd Street and NW 71st Street, and between NW 12th Avenue and NW 17th Avenue.

Photo above: Alonzo “Pop” Kelly was the Black real estate developer who sold lots and homes in Liberty City between 1922 and his retirement in the 1950s. In the 1930s, Kelly moved his family from Overtown to New Liberty City, where they moved into a new home at 1475 NW 67th Street. In the 1970s, Miami-Dade County established Alonzo Kelly Park next door to his house. It was the first public park in Liberty City. Alonzo Kelly’s home has since been demolished. (Image Source: City of Miami Historic Tax Photos)

This area is known as “New Liberty City” and it was first developed in the 1930s in conjunction with the opening of Liberty Square public housing, one of the first New Deal public housing projects for Black residents in the United States. The scope of work included photo documentation, archival research, and analysis of the history of the neighborhood, its residents, and its architecture. Steven Brooke provided professional photography of key locations in the neighborhood. The neighborhood remains largely intact, comprised primarily of single-family homes, “Main Street” type buildings along NW 15th Avenue, and churches.

THE EVOLUTION OF LIBERTY CITY IN MIAMI

In the late 1800s, the land on which Liberty City was developed was a mix of White homesteads and Flagler’s corporate-owned land. The area was the western fringe of Lemon City, which was a relatively mixed-race community. By 1911, at least 80 acres were sold to Black families who developed the land as family truck farms. These families included Edward and Katie Sampson, Edward and Mary Strother, John and Mary Perry, and widow Emma Louise Richardson. In 1922, these 80 acres were developed as the first Liberty City subdivision for Black homeowners. A young Black girl, Miss Bloneva Kelly, daughter of Alonzo Kelly, chose the inspiring place name, and the names of the pioneer Black farmers were incorporated into the street names.

In the racially segregated community of Miami, particularly during the intense real estate pressure of the 1920s, Blacks had few options for where to live. The Black population grew exponentially in the 1920s, but real estate options for Blacks shrank due to White speculative investment pressure. Black families remained crowded into the same limited boundaries of Colored Town while Whites-only subdivisions sprang up all over Dade County. Blacks were continually penalized by discriminatory government policies, such as racial zoning and lack of public infrastructure. They were terrorized by the Ku Klux Klan and the police if they dared to cross the color line or failed to conform to accepted standards of behavior for their race. At that time, the police force was all-White and was filled with KKK

members, including the chief of police, Leslie Quigg. Within this context, Liberty City grew rapidly as an alternative to Colored Town. By 1925, there were reportedly 1,500 Black residents living in the area.

By 1930, the 160-acre Knight family homestead was purchased by the Liberty City Development corporation, which provided the opportunity to expand Liberty City to the east and provide much-needed housing for Black residents of Greater Miami. The centerpiece of Liberty City was the Liberty Square public housing project, built under the Roosevelt administration between 1936 and 1938. Liberty Square was a highly sought-after address, with community amenities, large areas of open space for recreation, landscaping, a community center, and playing fields. Coming out of the Depression years, Liberty Square public housing was a dramatic improvement over the typical living conditions in Overtown, which lacked public amenities such as parks and open space, and where families were crowded into wood frame shotgun shacks, often without electricity, running water, or indoor bathroom facilities.



NW 15th Avenue was a vibrant “Main Street” for Liberty Square and the Liberty City community in the 1940, ‘50s, and ‘60s. The Miami Times, Miami’s longest-running Black newspaper, moved its offices and printing press from Overtown to 6740 NW 15th Avenue in the 1950s. (Image Source: City of Miami Historic Tax Photos)

As a result of the careful planning, design, and management of Liberty Square and New Liberty City, the Black community that resided there thrived through the late 1960s. Residents of the neighborhood were either residing in the well-maintained public housing, or they were owners of modest single-family homes. Miami's Black millionaires built mansions directly across the street from Liberty Square, inspired by the utopian public housing community. Their elaborately designed homes formed "Millionaire's Row" along the north side of NW 67th Street. Liberty Square and the surrounding neighborhood of Liberty City was a proud address for the decades that followed. The neighborhood was filled with Black-owned businesses and busy churches and schools. Black families moved to Liberty City for the opportunity to own their own homes and to start their own businesses. They were willing to sacrifice and move five miles north of Miami's city center, from their original neighborhood of Colored Town, to pursue their piece of the American Dream.

Once families moved to Liberty City from Overtown, they "stayed the course" leading stable and rich community-oriented lives. Families typically lived in the same houses, kept the same jobs, and attended the same schools, churches, and social clubs throughout the course of their lives. As a result, neighbors in Liberty City were highly connected with one another. Through these strong social bonds, the residents of Liberty City were able to work together to overcome the injustices and hardships of segregation. What is more, through their efforts as hard-working homeowners, business owners, tax payers, and registered voters, they were able to positively influence the Civil Rights movement and achieve more equality for their families and their community.



The "Old Liberty City Schoolhouse" was built by 1922 at approximately 1700 NW 62nd Street, the site of today's Charles Drew K-8 Center. It was one of the first schools to serve the Black community in the area. (Image Source: State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory)

NW 15th Avenue was a vibrant "Main Street" for Liberty Square and the Liberty City community in the 1940, '50s, and '60s. A Dairy Queen is remembered fondly at 7070 NW 15th Avenue; today this is the location of the popular Miracle Fry Conch Fritters. (Image Source: City of Miami Historic Tax Photos)



Black families who moved from Overtown to Liberty City were seeking an opportunity to own a single-family home with land, and the opportunity to raise their children in a safe environment. Typical homes in the 1930s and 1940s were wood frame construction with a front porch. Landscaping included tropical fruits such as coconut palms, mangoes, avocados, and dragonfruit. (Image Source: City of Miami Historic Tax Photos)

In the late 1960s, shifting government policies destabilized the neighborhood. The completion of I-95 and I-395 in 1967 resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of Black residents of Overtown; many of those residents were relocated by the County government to public housing in Liberty City and other established Black communities throughout Dade County. A year later, the first race riot broke out in Liberty City; three Black youths were killed in the violence. In 1968, the Fair Housing Act officially ended racial segregation in housing, allowing upper middle-class Black families to leave Liberty City and purchase homes in previously White-only neighborhoods. During the 1970s and 1980s, Liberty City experienced increasing disinvestment as residents and businesses moved away in pursuit of opportunity elsewhere. As a result of this disinvestment, the neighborhood remains relatively intact, with most of the original historic homes, commercial buildings, and churches still standing. ■



Photo above: The "Race Wall" located in a median along 12th Avenue between NW 62nd Street and NW 67th Street was designated as a historic site by the City of Miami in 2006. The Race Wall was constructed in 1939. It was built to physically separate the Liberty Square public housing project from a White residential area to the east. (Image Source: Steven Brooke Studios, Inc.)

Photo on right: NW 15th Avenue was a vibrant "Main Street" for Liberty Square and the Liberty City community in the 1940, '50s and '60s. This commercial block at 6829 NW 15th Avenue included retail shops on the ground floor and apartments on the second floor. (Image Source: City of Miami Historic Tax Photos)

Megan McLaughlin is the director of preservation projects at Plusurbia. She is an AICP-certified planner and has over 15 years' experience in the fields of historic preservation, urban design, and urban planning. Megan is an experienced researcher and writer on the topics of historical urban development, architecture, and communities. Her passion is bringing attention to Florida's unique history, and crafting planning and zoning strategies to protect the character of existing neighborhoods. She and her husband, Juan Mullerat, stay in shape by restoring historic buildings and chasing their three kids.



The Ellis and Anne Lindsey Residence at 1335 NW 67th Street was designated as a historic site by the City of Miami in 2009. The Lindseys were millionaires who made their fortune through businesses that included a complex bolita organization. They displayed their wealth when they constructed this large home on Millionaire's Row in 1947. Ellis Lindsey was shot dead on his own doorstep in 1948. Anne continued to live in the home for many years and she was a leader of Miami's elite Black social circles. (Image Source: Steven Brooke Studios, Inc.)



Docomomo-US

IN MIAMI



Streams of modernity: postwar to postmodern

By Jean-François Lejeune, PhD

Professor, University of Miami
School of Architecture

with Charlotte von Moos

Image above: Philip Johnson. Entrance of the
Miami-Dade Public Library, Downtown Miami. 1983.
Installation by Edward Ruscha, Words

Founded in the United States in 1995, Docomomo-US (Do-cumenting / Co-nserving / Mo-dern / Mo-vement) is a non-profit international organization led by a national board of directors and staff. The organization represents a union of regional chapters that share its members' knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, modern architecture and design. Docomomo-US advocates for a world where people value modern heritage—architecture, landscapes, and design—and use it to shape vibrant communities.

Committed to the principle that modern design merits the attention and preservation given to earlier periods, Docomomo-US and its Florida-based division maintain a continuous and constructive dialogue with national, state, and local preservation authorities and organizations, as well as with building owners, developers, and designers in many disciplines. Discussions with designing architects are based on the conviction that creative design and preservation go hand in hand. Docomomo-US promotes the exchange of knowledge about this important legacy, which extends from the planned city and the iconic monument to the house next door.

Following its successful conference in New Haven, Docomomo-US will host its 2024 symposium in Miami, more precisely, at the School of Architecture on the Coral Gables campus of the University of Miami, May 29 to June 1, 2024. The conference, hosted by the Florida chapter, will focus on two architectural fronts. The first will be the postwar period, when the Miami area witnessed a surge in population growth and construction of new buildings (from hotels to Pacesetter houses), with several regionalist responses to the International Style flourishing in tandem. Miami became a laboratory to explore new urban patterns, new building types, evolving aesthetics, and emerging environmental consciousness. The 1980s marked another critical moment, with the rise of postmodernism—marked in South Florida with a combination of modern vernacular, simplified Mediterranean, and futurist-inspired structures ranging from single-family houses to condominiums. In that sense, South Florida is the perfect location to explore streams of postwar modernity as well as the much-less-investigated postmodern landmarks. Many of these are under

threat of demolition, as they are often not old enough to be designated as landmarks by local historic preservation boards. One critical example is the Dade County Cultural Center by Philip Johnson and John Burgee (1980–84).

The conference will promote a broader understanding of the accomplishments of postwar to postmodern architecture and culture in regionally specific contexts such as South Florida and the Caribbean. Among the themes to be debated will be tropical brutalism, postwar campus planning in the (sub)tropics, postwar tourism, “Criminal Modern” such as urban renewal and Interstate System infrastructure, the “Pink Revolution” or modern architecture and popular culture in South Florida, polychrome modern, and the integration of the arts. Considering Florida’s highly contested legislative initiatives (such as the law HB423), participants will discuss the impact of climate change on the future of coastal communities in general. They will analyze how the forces of real estate development, often with local and state government support, might be taking advantage of new climatic conditions to limit the people’s ability to preserve their heritage—as happened in Coral Gables, where Browning Parker’s 1965 Pacesetter house was demolished in November 2023.

Open to architects, planners, academic members, students, as well as neighborhood groups and urban activists, the aim of the conference is to offer a platform for discussion and debate on ways to foster a culture of “identity instead of demolition” in South Florida. ■

Details and updates can be found at
docomomo-us.org/events/national-symposium

Charlotte von Moos is a practicing architect and researcher. Together with Florian Sauter, she is co-founder of the architectural practice Sauter von Moos based in Basel, Switzerland and Miami. The studio engages in work on all scales, both in theory and practice. Von Moos holds a master's degree from the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, where she taught with Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron at ETH Studio Basel for many years. She co-edited *achtung: die Landschaft* and is the author of *In Miami in the 1980s: The Vanishing Architecture of a 'Paradise Lost' and Some Fragments*. Von Moos was a visiting professor at the Technical University of Munich, workshop leader at Porto Academy, and Design Critic at Harvard GSD. Since 2018, she is an assistant professor at the University of Miami School of Architecture.

Jean-François Lejeune graduated from the University of Liège (Belgium) and holds a PhD from TU Delft School of Architecture and the Built Environment. He is professor of architecture, urban design, and history at the University of Miami School of Architecture. Beyond 20th-century vernacular modernism in Spain and Italy, his research focuses on South Florida and Cuba. Related publications include *The Making of Miami Beach 1933–1942: The Architecture of Lawrence Murray Dixon* (Rizzoli, 2001), *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (2005), and *Cuban Modernism: Mid-century Architecture 1940–1970* (with Victor Deupi). His exhibitions include *The Florida Home: Modern Living in Miami, 1945–65* (with A. Shulman, 2004), *Interama: Miami and the Pan-American Dream* (with A. Shulman, 2008), and *Cuban Architects at Home and Exile: The Modernist Generation* (with Victor Deupi). He is a founding member and current treasurer of Docomomo-US/Florida.

The Cycles of History:

Bike Walk Coral Gables Uses Pedal Power to Present Preservation

By David Henderson

It is essential to educate the public about historic preservation and significant resources in the community. Bike Walk Coral Gables, Inc. and the Coral Gables Museum have found a unique way to combine the celebration of local history with active transportation through our monthly bike tour program.

The tree-lined streets of Coral Gables form an excellent network of connections between important buildings, beautiful spaces and historic sites. These streets are a perfect classroom to educate the public about historic preservation, safe bicycling and the community partners that help make Coral Gables a special place.

Since 2012 Bike Walk Coral Gables has presented over 120 bike tours led by subject matter experts on topics including the architecture of Marion Manley, the beauty and utility of the tree canopy, and the history of the Pinewood cemetery. The average tour group is approximately 30 participants. Tours cost \$10 for the public and \$5 for members of the Coral Gables Museum.



Organized bike tours achieve multiple goals as a strategy for educating the public about scenic and historic sites. Using a bicycle to travel around the city is inexpensive and generates little noise and no air pollution. The cost to present each tour is low and the effect on traffic and the surrounding properties is minimal. Secondly, the tour program brings together public and private partners involved in history, art, health, public space, local business and recreation. This year's schedule included a tour of blooming Royal Poinciana trees to support the Tropical Flowering Tree Society's annual Royal Poinciana Fiesta. Lastly, bike riding is a healthy activity that is accessible to everyone. It is common for a participant to say that one of our tours was their first bike trip in years. We hope that participants will be inspired by the experience and look for other opportunities to enjoy comfortable rides for pleasure or practical transportation.

The Coral Gables Museum plays three critical roles in the success of the bike tour program. The museum is the starting and ending point for most

tours. Their building, at 285 Aragon Ave, is close to public parking, provides water and bathrooms, and is surrounded by restaurants for post-tour dining. On-line tour registration is managed through the museum website and the museum also provides promotional support through their social media accounts. Bike Walk Coral Gables coordinates with the museum's exhibit plan to find opportunities to complement gallery exhibits with related tours. For example, the 2023 exhibit "A True Artist – Phineas Paist & The Early Architecture of Coral Gables" was supplemented by a bike tour of buildings designed by Mr. Paist.

A bike tour is a simple but effective way to educate people about historic resources in the context of their community. Bike Walk Coral Gables and its partners, including Dade Heritage Trust, have worked hard to bring history to the people through its monthly bike tour program. Combining active transportation with historic preservation is a fun and healthy way to make bike riders into history buffs and preservationists into pedallers. ■

**For more information on Bike Walk Coral Gables visit: bikewalkcoralgables.org
The list of upcoming 2024 bike tours and registration is available at: coralgablesmuseum.org/events**

David Henderson serves on Bike Walk Coral Gables' Board of Directors. Mr. Henderson was the Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator for the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) from 1999 to 2019. He has degrees in Economics and Urban and Regional Planning and is a member of the American Planning Association and the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals.

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) initiative continues to grow and serve Miamians in need of healthy housing

DHT +



NOAH

DHT now owns three historic multi-family apartment buildings in Little Havana that offer affordable housing

By Christine Rupp, Executive Director

In 2020, through a partnership with Miami-Dade County, Dade Heritage Trust purchased a 4-unit 1938 multi-family Art Deco building in Little Havana to preserve the building and preserve the naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) it offered.

NOAH is defined as housing that is voluntarily affordable, meaning the landlord receives no vouchers or subsidies, mainly due to the sub-standard living conditions the buildings provide. When DHT purchased the Art Deco

building at 1401 SW 5th Street, inspections revealed termites, roaches, leaky plumbing, leaky windows and non-functioning appliances. This all changed with a complete rehab including new roof, new impact windows, new kitchens, new baths, new flooring, new AC and restoration of Art Deco details. With lush native landscaping around the property, the building is a shining example of a beautiful restoration project that provides lovely and healthy affordable housing.

The partnership with Miami-Dade County requires Dade Heritage Trust to purchase, rehabilitate, and historically designate a multi-family residential building that is in need of restoration and maintain the levels of affordability as required under housing guidelines.

Seeing the success and the positive impacts of the SW 5th Street project, Miami-Dade County has granted DHT additional funding over the last three years to continue the preservation of NOAH initiative.

In December 2022, DHT closed on an 8-unit property at 1269 NW 5th Street. This 2-story Mediterranean Revival central-hallway apartment building is a classic Little Havana property. Constructed in 1928, it was called the Totowa Apartments and featured a garage building for the tenants that decades ago was converted into four living units. The previous owners removed and plastered over original windows and removed some of the lovely architectural detailing that adorned the front entrance. In addition, the City of Miami had placed unsafe structure violations on the property for non-permitted work by the previous owner and failure to complete the required 40-year building certification. Again, inspections uncovered termites, roaches, and some plumbing and structural issues. DHT's team of architects, engineers, and contractors is working diligently to ensure that those violations are cured and restoration is set to begin this year. The large corner lot that is included in this property will be used to create a tiny urban forest of native plants, offering shade and habitat for birds and butterflies in an area largely devoid of trees.

Not letting any construction dust settle, DHT purchased an additional property to preserve and restore— another Art Deco gem we refer to as The Keyhole Building at 523 SW 7th Avenue. This 6-unit property has a very distinctive design and was once featured on the cover of Dr. Paul George's Little Havana Walking Tour Guide. Plans for The Keyhole include a total restoration and re-landscaping of the charming and unique 1940 property.

From the perspective of Dade Heritage Trust's board of directors, the preservation of NOAH represents some of the organization's best work and it will continue. DHT is using historic preservation to solve one of Miami-Dade County's most pressing problems, a lack of healthy affordable housing. Dade Heritage Trust deeply appreciates the support of the County Commission and the Mayor that began in 2020 with District 5 Commissioner Eileen Higgins's backing of this proposed initiative. ■

Images by Steven Brooke and courtesy of Dade Heritage Trust



Art Deco building at 1401 SW 5th Street, left page shows pre-restoration



Mediterranean Revival 8-unit property at 1269 NW 5th Street



The Keyhole Building at 523 SW 7th Avenue

What's Up in Downtown Miami



New Businesses Activating Historic Buildings in the Flagler District

By Terrell Fritz

After significant disruption since 2020, first by the COVID-19 pandemic and then the ongoing Flagler Beautification streetscape project, there is good news in Downtown Miami's historic Flagler District. Exciting new restaurants and bars are opening in two of the district's most important historic buildings.

Photo above: Interior of Julia & Henry's

WALGREEN DRUG STORE, 1936

200 E. Flagler Street • Architects: Zimmerman, Saxe, & McBride with E. A. Ehmann

Julia & Henry's (yes, that's Tuttle & Flagler) is a unique, trendy entertainment eatery. It offers 26 different culinary choices including menus crafted by James Beard award-winning chefs and talented creators. Miami culinary scene's most lauded chefs are part of the action, including Michelle Berstein and José Mendín, as are internationally recognized names like French pastry chef Yann Couvreur, Latin American restaurateur Tomas Kalika, and top Peruvian chef and butcher Renzo Garibaldi.

Soon the building's fourth and fifth floors will open as music recording and rehearsal studios, podcast studios, and support services for the music industry. Culminating the project, Torno Subito Miami by world-renowned chef Massimo Bottura will open on Julia & Henry's rooftop.



OLD US POST OFFICE/ COURTHOUSE, 1914

100 NE 1st Avenue • Architect: Oscar Wenderoth; (1937/1948 addition: Kiehnel and Elliott)

Just a couple of blocks away, exciting new businesses are opening in the Old Post Office on NE 1st Avenue. **Biscayne Bay Brewing Company**, Downtown Miami's first Tap Room, has opened on the building's third floor offering a wide selection of craft beers brewed on-site. It provides a welcoming atmosphere where beer enthusiasts can enjoy favorite brews while relishing in the historic surroundings. The food menu includes elevated bar bites, Mediterranean dips, flatbreads, sandwiches, bao buns, and a Colorado wagyu burger.

On the fourth floor of the Old Post Office, **The Roystone** has opened as a "discreetly sinful" cocktail bar. Enveloped in an ambiance that transcends time, The Roystone offers a carefully crafted menu of imaginative signature cocktails, thoughtfully curated bites, and cherished classics. In addition, The Roystone will host an array of activations including HiFi vinyl DJs, jazz band performances, and disco-house nights.



A New Buzz in the Flagler District

Preserving our local treasures builds community.

RESTORATION OF THE Historic Lula Hattersley House

By Hugh A. Ryan

I first came across the sad old wooden house at 401 NW 3rd Street more than 13 years ago.

The building was long-neglected and its owner, Miami-Dade County, was looking for someone to take control of the property. As a historical restoration contractor and real estate investor, I met with the district commissioner at the time, but nothing came of those meetings.

Fast forward to almost five years ago, and Dade Heritage Trust showed interest in ownership and restoration of this historically-designated but decrepit structure. It was good timing with an enthusiastic district commissioner, Eileen Higgins, on board with the idea. DHT called me about the job and I brought in an architect, Gerald F. DeMarco, to tour the property along with DHT Executive Director Christine Rupp. Gerry and Christine shared my vision from 13 years ago – this 1,200-square-foot dwelling, located in the Lummus Park Historic District, needed an extreme make-over! Where most people could see a vacant lot under the rotted, termite-eaten wood, we envisioned a restored historic gem within Miami's downtown area.

Sadly, Mr. DeMarco passed away during the COVID pandemic. But his design firm, GFD Group Miami, continued and drew up plans

that would be approved by the City of Miami. They have been a wonderful team to work with throughout this project.

I've been saving Miami's dilapidated buildings for more than 25 years, and this was the worst one I've encountered. The roof had gaping holes, the front porch was gone, and it had been used as a squatter's refuge for decades. However, I was up to the challenge because the foundation and "bones" of the structure seemed solid. I approached this house as a step-by-step process. First step was to structurally keep it standing (I don't think it could have handled another tropical storm). Once we re-enforced and strapped everything, the second step was to dry it in, with a new roof, windows, and siding. Now, we are in the process of an interior restoration.

I am so proud of the crew and the work that has been done at the site. As has been the case in my 25 years in business (and typical of the Magic City), it is an international team. All of us are American but are of Irish, Italian, African, Haitian, Cuban, Syrian, Mexican, Dominican, Romanian, and Jamaican descent, among others. Some have been in Miami for a few years, while others for four



Where most people could see a vacant lot under the rotted, termite-eaten wood, we envisioned a restored historic gem within Miami's downtown area.

generations. We’ve come together to save a piece of Miami history. It’s nice to be on the job and have neighborhood residents walk by and stop to tell you how good it looks. I also love the local historians sharing that the house was originally around the block on NW 4th Street and was called the Hattersley House. It was moved to its current location more than 25 years ago.

One of the greatest satisfactions I have in my career is to see long-neglected structures coming back to life. I save all the possible historic items, either incorporating them into the project or designating them for the archives. The wrap-around front porch has all its original post and spindles. I’ve also kept the original address numbers, a few original windows, and plenty of old sash window weights. The original porcelain knob and tube pieces have been left untouched in the overhead beams to serve as a reminder of the 1925 electrical system. We salvaged Dade County pine lumber from the floor and wall structures that we plan to use in the kitchen cabinet doors.

I thank Dade Heritage Trust for allowing me to restore this “Little Georgia Farmhouse” that somehow survived in the ever-growing core of the Magic City. This is a one-of-a-kind project within sight of two of Miami’s oldest structures, Fort Dallas barracks and the Wagner Homestead in Lummus Park, and down the block from the Scottish Rite Temple and the Miami River. I hope that bringing this little house back to life inspires more restoration and interest in Miami’s wonderful history. ■



Photo above: Historic photo of Lula Hattersley House.

Photo below: Lula Hattersley House after restoration work.

Hugh A. Ryan is a building contractor who specializes in historic restoration of old Miami structures. A native Miamian, he lives in the Shenandoah neighborhood in a 1914 house with his wife, Erin, and two children. He served on DHT’s Board of Directors several years ago and is currently a member of the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board.

Miami

Two Historic Venues, One Needs a Champion



Miami Beach Bandshell

Designed in 1961 by prominent Miami architect Norman Giller, the Bandshell is an open-air venue that received historic designation by the City of Miami Beach in 2021. In 2022, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Subsequently, The City of Miami Beach has made a number of improvements to the building including a canopy spearheaded by architect Ira Giller, Norman’s son.

In 2015, a management contract was awarded to the not-for-profit Rhythm Foundation. Since then, the Bandshell has thrived. It now hosts over 100 events per year featuring an internationally diverse group of groundbreaking artists and was awarded “Best Live Music Venue in Miami” by Miami New Times in 2023.

For more information:

Miami Beach Bandshell • www.miamibeachbandshell.com • www.facebook.com/miamibeachbandshell
Miami Marine Stadium • www.restoremarinestadium.org • www.facebook.com/restoremarinestadium

Photo credits: Miami Beach Bandshell rendering: Giller and Giller Archives. Miami Beach Bandshell photo: Mark Diamond. Marine Stadium Photo: Ken Hayden

Courtesy of Don and Nina Worth



Miami Marine Stadium

Designed in 1962 by renowned Miami architect Hilario Candela, the iconic Miami Marine Stadium is an open-air venue that received historic designation by the City of Miami in 2008. In 2018, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Marine Stadium, beloved by Miamians, has remained shuttered since 1992. In 2008, Dade Heritage Trust began an advocacy campaign for its restoration that has continued for almost 16 years. The Marine Stadium attracts more international press than any other building in Miami and a recently completed feasibility study concludes it would be highly successful as a unique destination venue.

As we write this, the future of the Marine Stadium remains uncertain. The reason this project has moved so slowly is that it does not currently have a political champion or a strong civic leader behind it. It’s not too late...but it’s getting late.

Will anyone step up?

Preserving Miami's Ethnic Neighborhoods



By Christine Rupp,
Executive Director

Miami's urban ethnic neighborhoods are rapidly changing. The places that define the uniqueness of the neighborhoods of Little Haiti and Little Santo Domingo in Allapattah are disappearing. The working-class residents of these neighborhoods and the local shopkeepers have had minimal tools at their disposal to be able to integrate a sense of cultural and architectural preservation into the redevelopment of these prime urban areas.

What's at stake—and precisely what's worth preserving—goes far beyond buildings, beams and concrete.

On the line are vibrant communities filled with industrious immigrants whose entrepreneurial spirit built commercial corridors that today help fuel our region's economy.

The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) features Little Haiti, Little Havana, Allapattah and the newly crowned Little Bahamas in Coconut Grove on their website, acknowledging the tourism interest in Miami's diverse neighborhoods. Little Havana's success as a tourism destination – it is the second most visited area in Greater Miami after South Beach – has mainly been due to the property owners and operators of its local establishments who have

seen the economic successes that have come from promoting the Latin culture and heritage ubiquitous in the neighborhood. In 2016, the National Trust for Historic Preservation deemed Little Havana a National Treasure.

In 2023, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Allapattah's Little Santo Domingo one of America's Most Endangered Historic Places. A bright, bustling neighborhood, it's where generations of Dominicans have laid down roots and launched American dreams.

The Allapattah Collaborative Community Development Corporation (CDC) has taken a

decidedly pro-active approach to work to protect the people and places that make the community special, worth celebrating and saving.

The Allapattah CDC is a designated Florida Main Street and a member of Main Street America, a proven preservation-based economic development model. Main Street America, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a network of 1,600 neighborhoods and communities. The Allapattah Collaborative CDC is also a part of the Small Business Anti-Displacement Network, a national network of local and national organizations in a learning collaborative that share best practices.

Like all the neighborhoods mentioned in this article, Allapattah is in the cross-hairs of real estate developers and speculative investors, arguably at the epicenter of the nation's housing affordability crisis. Two-story commercial structures are routinely torn down to make way for high-rise apartment buildings that boast rents way out of reach for most who currently call Allapattah home.

Meanwhile, the price of a single-family home has skyrocketed. This has already resulted in the displacement of countless families — a dynamic not unique to Allapattah.



While these issues are complex and sometimes politicized, there are examples of solutions across the country when activists and governments work together to ensure a better community for all. Dade Heritage Trust believes that the City of Miami's key departments (Planning, Zoning, Resiliency, Housing & Economic Development) could and should play a crucial role in ensuring an equitable, thoughtful future for these neighborhoods.

The art, culture, cuisine, and the pedestrian-scale architecture of these areas must not only be preserved but also promoted and highlighted as economic drivers.

The Allapattah Collaborative CDC's continued efforts are to be applauded. With dedicated leadership, meaningful partnerships, and the support of the City of Miami, the successes in Allapattah could be duplicated throughout Miami's diverse ethnic communities. ■

Mileyka Burgos-Flores, Executive Director of the Allapattah Collaborative CDC contributed to this article. Allapattah photography by Clara Toro. Little Havana and Little Haiti images courtesy of Dade Heritage Trust.



Join Dade Heritage Trust in Honoring Arva Parks McCabe, Miami's Own Storyteller



By teaching generations of Miamians to understand and honor our community's past, historian, author, educator and activist, Arva Parks McCabe created a legacy that continues to influence the evolution of Miami.

Over the course of her illustrious life, Arva gave voice and power to honor Miami's remarkable history, the foundation upon which, together, we continue to define Miami's future.

Born in what is now Little Havana, Arva grew up in Miami Shores and attended Miami Edison High School. After graduating from the University of Florida, she returned to Miami to pursue her passion for the city's rich heritage. The resulting series of books detailing Miami's birth and growth included her best-selling book *Miami: The Magic City*, inspiration for a film of the same name.

Arva's advocacy helped preserve landmarks including the Freedom Tower, the Biltmore Hotel, and The Barnacle, among many others. Arva leveraged her knowledge and passion in ways that ensure Miami's history is embraced as part of its future.

The bronze sculpture, to be created by Freda Tschumy, depicts Arva standing with an open book. Miami-Dade County Public Library System and Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava have formally approved placement of the sculpture inside the Main Library and its acceptance into the library system's permanent art collection.

Please join Dade Heritage Trust and Chairperson Arva Suzanne Graham Gibson in supporting the creation of a life-size permanent public art sculptural installation honoring the life and on-going legacy of Arva Parks McCabe. The installation will be in the entrance hall of the Main Miami-Dade County Public Library adjacent to the Arva Parks McCabe Auditorium.

About Freda Tschumy

Miami-based artist Freda Tschumy's foundational studies covered painting, drawing, stone carving, and bronze casting. With a strong teaching career in addition to her studio practice, in 1991 she became director of the University of Miami Foundry and co-founded the Art After Dark program, helped create the foundry at ArtSouth in Homestead, and later joined the Foundry at Miami Dade College/Kendall as adjunct professor.

Tschumy has exhibited internationally and her sculptures are currently on view at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and the University of Miami Metrorail station. Her 2023 exhibition at the Coral Gables Museum, "Painting With Bronze: The Work of Freda Coffing Tschumy," featured abstract experimental pieces in bronze and other materials from the 1960s to today. Her work is in private collections and in those of the Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami-Dade Art in Public Places, Vassar College, and the Canadian Postal Museum. ■



The sculpture, created by renowned Miami-based artist, Freda Tschumy, depicts Arva standing and reading a book. Miami-Dade County Public Library System and Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava have formally approved the placement of the sculpture and the donation of the piece to the Library.

To support Dade Heritage Trust's initiative to honor Arva Parks McCabe, and for information on donor levels and associated benefits, **contact DHT Executive Director Christine Rupp at chris@dadeheritagetrust.org**

Torre Companies:

The Artistic Side of Preserving Historical Architecture

By Isabella Loret de Mola

As you walk into the downtown Coral Gables office of Torre Companies, you notice large photographs of historic buildings such as the Miami Marine Stadium, the Biltmore Hotel, and other historic landmarks. Undeniably, the firm has a deep appreciation for South Florida's history. The area's picturesque enclaves contain a rich cultural heritage carefully maintained through historic preservation efforts, including its treasure troves of historic landmarks and homes.

To express the importance of historic preservation, the Torre Companies team came to an interesting conclusion:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IS AN ART

Just as artists start with a blank canvas to create works of brilliance, historic preservation is the effort to restore an artwork to its original glory, to delve into history, understand and respect what a structure means for our society, and bring that meaning back to life. For the Torre Companies team, South Florida and its historic projects are the canvas, and the portfolio of historic preservation reflects the company's values for maintaining the community's rich cultural legacy.

A RICH LEGACY: THE INSPIRATION

Led by developer and preservationist Venny Torre, the Torre Companies team values and commits to the importance of preservation and re-discovering South Florida's architectural history. As a board member of Dade Heritage Trust and of the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board for many years, Torre takes pride in preserving South Florida's architectural, environmental, and cultural heritage through preservation, education, and advocacy. With the honor of having preserved multiple historically significant properties in the area, he has demonstrated the value of recognizing the architectural legacy of South Florida, the artistic elements of historic structures, and the skillset required to restore this culturally rich legacy.

PRESERVING THE PAST: THE CANVAS

Preservation efforts reflect a commitment to the community's pride in its heritage. Guided by historic preservation programs and departments, the Torre team has carefully restored a series of landmarks to their original beauty. Here are four projects that set a benchmark for the art of preservation.



*Trapp Homestead,
Miami, FL – Built in
1887; Preserved in 2013*

Inducted into the US National Register of Historic Places in 1994, the Trapp Homestead, also known as the Caleb Trapp House, is believed to be the oldest standing masonry home in Miami-Dade County. Located in the historic Miami neighborhood of Coconut Grove, the Trapp Homestead was constructed in 1887 out of locally quarried oolite limestone. Upon new ownership in 2006, a plan was made to restore the home to its original historic significance and build an appropriate addition for the current family's private use. With meticulous attention, Torre Companies undertook the preservation efforts of this magnificent Masonry Vernacular Style 10,000-square-foot two story residence. Preserving the character and detail of the original structure, the addition was designed in the same architectural style and was positioned 25 feet back from the front entrance in order to maintain the property's original prominence and view of Biscayne Bay. Setting the standard for historic styles and respect for their architectural elements, the Trapp Homestead is an example of the art preservation and the capacity to bring a historic property into compliance with modern day building codes without losing its architectural and historical features.



La Palma Hotel, Coral Gables, FL – Built in 1924; Preserved in 2023

Perhaps the most extensive historic preservation project undertaken by the Torre Companies team, the historic La Palma Hotel is the epitome of the art of preservation and restoration. Built in 1924 and originally known as the Cla-Reina hotel, this structure sets the architectural foundation for Mediterranean Revival style in Coral Gables and reflects the firm's passion for preservation. Known as one of the city's earliest hotels, this historic property underwent extensive preservation efforts to meet modern requirements while preserving its architectural integrity and history. Now home to two Michelin Guide-recognized restaurateurs, La Palma exemplifies a modern life for a historic structure and the importance of conserving historic architecture through the canvas of construction.



Chinese Village Addition, Coral Gables, FL – Built in 1926; Preserved in 2011

Also part of one of Coral Gables' historic Villages, the Chinese Village is a compound of carefully curated homes designed in the Chinese architectural style. This village created a diversity of style for the Gables, thus intensifying the importance of preserving its intrinsic characteristics as part of our community's history. The team carefully replicated the details of the existing structures in an exterior addition to one of the homes. This included the glazed roof-tiles and Chinese details that ornament the facades of the homes. All notable features appear in the addition and all details are perfectly preserved in the original home, an artistic celebration of this prominent 1920s Coral Gables Village.



Santa Maria Street Residence, Coral Gables, FL – Built in 1926; Preserved in 2010

Preserved in 2010, the residence at 4320 Santa Maria Street is paradigm of historic Coral Gables and representative of the City Beautiful's passion for themed villages. Built in 1926, the Santa Maria Residence is part of the greater Florida Pioneer Village, one of George Merrick's seven themed villages. Knowing this, the team paid meticulous attention to every detail, ensuring that its historical elements were carefully restored.



The Torre Companies proudly calls Coral Gables home with the headquarters building in the center of the city's business district at 208 Andalusia Avenue. For more information about the company and current projects, please see torrecompanies.com.

Isabella Loret de Mola is Chief Marketing Officer at the Torre Companies and serves on an advisory mentorship program at the University of Miami School of Architecture.

A&R's Coaches celebrate DHT's leadership.

Judith Anderson, Founder, Miami

Amy Wilczynski, NJ

George Fleming, NC


Susan Steiner, Zurich

Annabelle Harling, London

Cristine Chu, Hong Kong

Michael Naylor, ME

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The Historic Lyric Theater was acquired by the Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida, Inc. in 1988 and by 1989, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Black Archives celebrates the 110th Anniversary of the Lyric Theater as the Crown of Overtown!

Now more than ever, historically Black spaces and our vital history are in need of stewardship. We hope you will join us in the epic celebration by supporting our upcoming events, continued renovation efforts, and financial goals.

To learn more, visit www.BAHLT.org






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A NEW PODCAST



BY LUCIA MENESES

In today's digital landscape, podcasts have become incredibly popular, and it seems like everyone's got one! A podcast, essentially, is an audio program, reminiscent of a talk radio show, but with the added benefit of subscribing to and listening to it at your convenience. Occasionally, video elements are also incorporated. Although it may sound like a hipster trend, it actually predates the internet. People have been recording and sharing audio files since the 1980s. Today, creating and sharing your podcast is more accessible than ever, as it doesn't require expensive equipment or fancy editing software. Podcasts cover an extensive range of topics including, but not limited to, history, politics, true crime, entertainment, mental health, and society.

Dade Heritage Trust's education team is thrilled to announce the launch of our own podcast, "Miami Preserves," an exploration of Miami's historic places and the significance of preserving our cultural heritage. In this podcast series, you can expect engaging conversations with local historians, educators, and students.

The first season of "Miami Preserves" will delve into the history of three significant African American landmarks in Miami: the Black Police Precinct and Courthouse Museum, Hampton House, and Historic Virginia Key Beach. These landmarks are integral to DHT's African American Heritage education program, a program that offers free field experiences to students in grades 4-12 throughout the school year, enabling them to learn about Miami's rich Black history. What distinguishes our podcast is the conversations we will feature with teachers and students who have actively participated in our education program. For most of them, this is the first time they will visit these historic landmarks.



Given recent developments in Florida's political landscape, discussions surrounding book banning and censorship in schools have become unavoidable. Florida has taken steps to expand parental rights in education, prohibit the teaching of Critical Race Theory, modify educational standards to address the possible benefits of slavery to enslaved individuals, and restrict discussions on gender identity. Earlier this year, Florida implemented a ban on the pilot course for AP African American Studies, citing violations of state laws and a perceived lack of educational value.

Our upcoming podcast will engage in conversations with educators, including the one teacher in Miami-Dade County who was selected to pilot the AP course that was canceled mid-year. In light of these developments, the importance of sharing stories related to Miami's Black history has never been more pronounced.

Lucia Meneses with Terrance Cribbs-Larrant, DHT Board member and Executive Director of the Black Police Precinct and Courthouse Museum, courtesy of Dade Heritage Trust.



"MIAMI PRESERVES" WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 2024

The goal is to have multiple seasons that delve into a variety of preservation initiatives in Miami. We would like to thank the Wolfson Family Foundation for generously sponsoring this project.

Lucia Meneses is Dade Heritage Trust's School Programs Manager. With DHT since 2017, she has developed the education program's entire curriculum, which includes Historic Places, Green Spaces; Miami Urban Tree Trekkers, and the African American Heritage program tracks. Under her leadership, DHT has been deemed an official STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) partner of Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

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STORY AND HOME IMAGES BY IRIS KOLAYA



Annie, Bella and Bammy
Photo courtesy of Kathy Marlin.

Every year, Dade Heritage Trust honors a homeowner who lovingly and proudly cares for their historic residence. This year, Kathy and Chris Marlin are recipients of DHT's Key Keeper Award.

A distinctive light fixture and a touch of fate led Kathy Marlin to 717 North Greenway Drive, Coral Gables. On neighborhood walks, Kathy often wandered past the stately residence—one of many facing Granada

Golf Course—and noticed a large lantern hanging from an arch at the foot of the driveway. Enchanted, she purchased a similar fixture to adorn her house a few blocks away. Beyond the light, Kathy continued to admire this elegant 1925 property that would someday be ready for a historically sensitive update.

Fast-forward to September 2018, when a friend called Kathy about an interesting advertisement in the Miami Herald. The half-page ad was formulated by the six adult children of Dr. Arthur and Ruth Sokoloff, who had purchased the Italian Renaissance-style home in 1957. The siblings treasured this special place where they had grown up and cared for their aging parents. They maintained it after their folks' passing—Ruth in 2010, Arthur in 2017—and were searching for the right buyer—



ideally someone who would love and cherish it as they had. Kathy knew the house was meant for her family. She, her husband, and their two daughters met with the Sokoloff siblings and, a few months later, the home was theirs.

In retrospect, Kathy admits that she had not envisioned the arduous restoration process that lay ahead. Yet she enthusiastically embarked on the journey and is thrilled with the outcome. The Marlin's, their architect Luis Jauregui, and contractor FXD Construction, were determined to preserve the home's original details while removing some additions from the 1960s and 1970s. Finalizing architectural plans took nearly a year, including several appearances before the Coral Gables Board of Architects and Historic Preservation Board. Final permitting and construction took another three years, delayed by detailed restoration work and labor issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All work was done following best practices of the Secretary of the Interior's standard for the treatment of historic properties, with spectacular results. The original marble floors and Spanish clay roof tiles were repaired and restored. Windows were carefully removed and sent to a workshop in Orlando, where they were restored to their former glory. Light filters through original casement windows on the first and second floors, topped by stained glass arches in shades of green. Artists from International Fine Arts Conservation Studios (IFACS) are analyzing paint samples from the coffered ceiling, to faithfully restore the work of Italian artisans brought to Coral Gables in the 1920s by the home's original owners. Unique features preserved throughout the property include a gargoyle perched on the roof, a weathervane with a fisherman (fish on the line), and a pig-shaped gutter. The Marlin's moved into 717 North Greenway in December 2022.



Photos courtesy of © Steven Brooke

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👉 MEET AND GREET



Combs Funeral Home on the corner of NE First Avenue and NE Second Street in 1912. Courtesy of HistoryMiami Museum.

BY CASEY PIKET

As a fourth generation Miamian, I am naturally drawn to the people and places that help tell the story of our community. Dade Heritage Trust's offices in Brickell, the neighborhood I call home, is one of those places. I have worked with DHT to present walking tours, lectures, and exhibits about the history of Brickell. Through these activities and more, I hope to bring an understanding to Miami's new residents about the evolution of Miami and the importance of preserving our historic fabric.

My great uncle, Walter Combs, arrived in Miami in 1899 and founded the first residential-style funeral home in 1906 at the corner of NE Second Street and NE First Avenue in downtown Miami. He was also involved with the founding of the first fire department in Miami providing the first hearse service in Miami. Walter's brother, Jay Combs, who was my paternal great grandfather, arrived in Miami in 1906. My paternal grandmother, Hattie Faye Combs, was born in Miami and was part of the Miami High School graduating class of 1932 along with George Smathers, Gardner Mulloy, and Bebe Rebozo. My paternal grandfather was a bellhop at the Everglades Hotel before joining his brother, my Uncle Pete, to work for Pan American Airlines.

My dad graduated from Miami High School in 1958, and my mom from Coral Gables High School, also in 1958. I was born in Coral Gables, but raised in the north after my family began a slow migration that took us up to Minneapolis during my high school years. I have six siblings, four of whom were born in Miami before we migrated north.

I returned to my roots in 2001 when I moved back to South Florida. In 2012, I founded the Miami-History Blog, and then co-founded, along with Dr. Paul George, the Miami History Channel in 2016. I have published a couple hundred articles on the blog website, and produced a number of mini-documentaries, or videos, as part of the Miami History Channel.



Portrait of the Combs brothers. My great grandfather is second from the left. Courtesy of Combs Family.

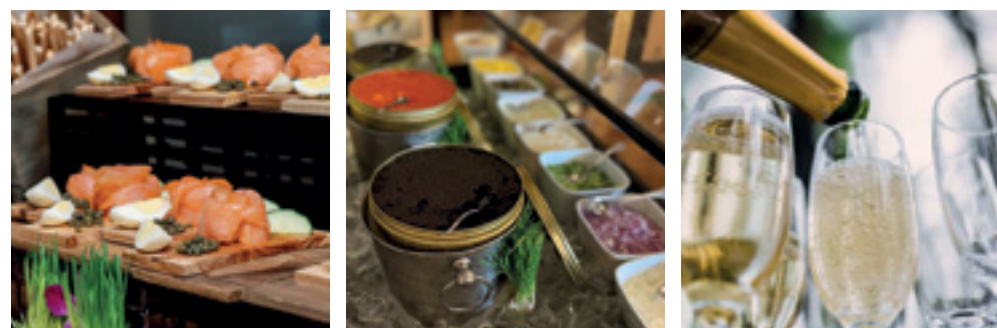


Photograph of a tour group this past April (2023), on the steps of the Dade County Courthouse. Courtesy of Casey M. Piket.

In 2018, I co-founded the Miami History Podcast, along with Dr. Paul George, where we have published more than 50 episodes onto a variety of platforms including iTunes, Stitcher, Spotify, and Soundcloud. I also collect and restore historic photos and video footage of South Florida, and have been leveraging this collection to produce compilation content of all of the changes that have taken place in South Florida through the years. It is my intention to create video montages of South Florida's changing skyline, particularly in downtown Miami and Brickell, that have been taking place since the turn of the century.

While Miami history is my passion, I pay the bills by working full-time in the software industry as a solution engineer. So, please visit the blog website at miami-history.com, or any of the platforms where the podcast and videos are published, which are free resources to any interested parties. If you join the Miami History Newsletter, which is free to anyone who is interested, you will be notified of any future tours or events that I host around the South Florida community. **To register for the newsletter, go to the Miami History website and click on the 'Subscribe' button.**

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MUNICIPAL MOMENTUM

RESTORING OPA-LOCKA'S MOORISH MASTERPIECE

BY DARVIN WILLIAMS, JD, MBA, MPH
INTERIM CITY MANAGER, CITY OF OPA-LOCKA

For almost 100 years, some of the most iconic and beloved cities in Miami-Dade have been building a rich heritage of the communities they represent. In the City of Opa-locka, a 1920s icon has stood the test of time, showcasing the area's ambitious past while serving as a symbol of the city's shining future.

Completed in late summer of 1926, the Opa-locka Company Administration Building – also known as Historic Opa-locka City Hall – is a Moorish Revival jewel replete with picturesque minarets and domes found throughout Arab architecture. A landmark attraction that drew buyers to Opa-locka during Florida's land boom of the 1920s, the architectural style is a composite of Persian, Arabic, and Orientalist elements.



The front gatehouse looking into the first of two courtyards in the front of the structure, with the top of the main tower waiting to be installed.



A spacious forum that once served as the Commission Chamber, the room, featuring box decorative beams and rounded windows, will be an ideal event space.



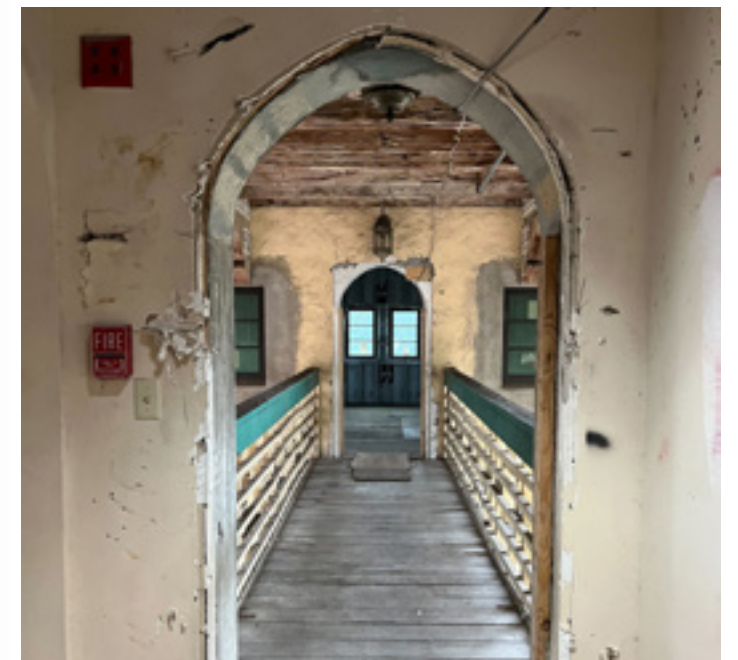
Over the decades, it has served as a leasing office, mayor's residence, a film studio, a chamber of commerce, an archeological museum, and, prior to becoming vacant, as a city hall.

After a makeover in the late 1980s, Opa-locka's historic city hall served as the community's administrative center until 2013, when city operations were relocated elsewhere. The building went into decline, but a restoration effort in 2015 included the removal of debris, replacement of windows, and resurfacing of roofs. However, due to budget constraints, the project was halted prior to completion.

A new effort is now underway to restore Opa-locka's historic city hall, a lasting symbol that stirs the imagination. In April 2023, the City of Opa-locka's mayor and commissioners unanimously approved a bid from general contractor Diamanti Construction and Development to complete the restoration of the nearly 100-year-old structure, with architecture firm MCHarry and Associates overseeing the project along with city officials. Included in the restoration are new electrical, plumbing, roofing, interior finishing, and exterior facade repair, as well as ADA-accessible improvements. Funding is coming largely from grants, with a portion from the city's general fund.

"Opa-locka has always been known for history and architecture that sets it apart from other communities nationwide," says Mayor John H. Taylor, Jr. "Having one of the largest collections of Moorish Revival buildings in America, Opa-locka is a historical yet forward-thinking city. That's why it was so important to continue this important project and provide residents with an exceptional place to learn about their history and simultaneously create their future."

Above: The third level of the building originally was a 2/1 apartment, with a rounded window opening that's since been restored.



Looking from the West at the connecting bridge, the Old World style awaits restoration.

Once restored, Opa-locka's historic city hall will be repurposed as a community center and venue for cultural events. It will endure as a cornerstone for the city's continued revitalization and a symbol of great things to come.

Darvin Williams, as chief administrative officer for the City of Opa-locka, oversees all departments and ensures the municipality's fiscal and operational success. An expert in public management, he brings a passion for service and professionalism in government.

Images Courtesy of Alex Van Meel

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES



Matheson Hammock Park

Honoring Our Heritage Parks

Matheson Hammock Park

Donated in 1930, Matheson Hammock was our first county park! This lovely scenic park offers a man-made atoll pool. It's also a perfect spot for experiencing the great outdoors. And it is home to one of Miami's most popular marinas and bayfront restaurants!

Greynolds Park

This 249-acre urban oasis, once the site of a rock quarry, turned 90 years old this year! Amenities include a golf course, picnic areas, playgrounds, walking paths/trails, and bird-watching opportunities. The park is also home to the annual Love-In Music Festival.

Haulover Beach Park

The 246-acre park offers 1.4 miles of beach front, and it is one of two public beach parks operated by Miami-Dade County. Its charter fishing piers serve as a home for deep sea fishing excursions. The marina provides a launch point for thousands of recreational boaters. The park also provides Dog-friendly areas, and has served as a staple for kite-flying fun for over 20 years!

Deering Estate

Miami's premier landmark that showcases the best of South Florida's historic and natural environment. With over 450 acres of land, it includes eight native ecosystems. As a great historic land and destination for tourists and residents, a variety of signature events, programs, tours and classes take place throughout the year.

Fruit and Spice Park

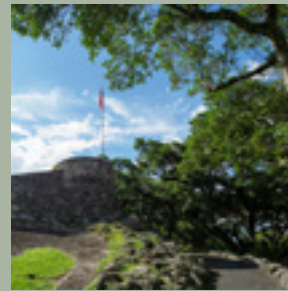
This is the only tropical botanical garden of its kind in the United States. It hosts over 500 varieties of fruits, vegetables, spices, herbs, nuts and other commercially important plant specimens from around the world. The park offers private group tastings and daily tours for guests as well.

Homestead Bayfront Park

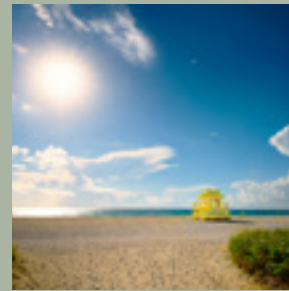
This park houses the second atoll pool created within the Miami-Dade parks system! It offers a beautiful tropical setting that includes a delicious restaurant called La Playa Grill Seafood Bar, as well as a beach.

Crandon Park

With amenities and nature preserves such as Crandon Gardens, a marina, a golf course and a tennis center, Crandon is visited by locals and tourists who enjoy the many recreational opportunities afforded. This park is home to the only fossilized mangrove reef in the world. It offers many amenities, sites, and features, including a beach, the Bear Cut Preserve, cabana rentals, and a marina.



Greynolds Park



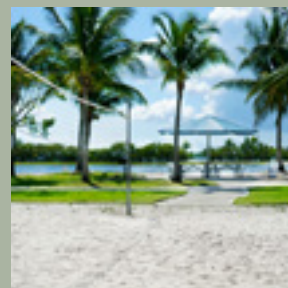
Haulover Beach Park



Deering Estate



Fruit & Spice Park



Homestead Bayfront Park



Crandon Park

To request materials in accessible format, sign language interpreters, CART and/or any accommodation to participate in any Miami-Dade County, Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces sponsored program or meeting, please contact Gisel Prado, 305-755-7848 or Gisel.Prado@miamidade.gov at least 7 days in advance to initiate your request. TTY users may also call 711 (Florida Relay Service).



ADVOCACY UPDATES

LITTLE HAVANA'S WESTMORELAND DISTRICT

Dade Heritage Trust's interest in Little Havana and recommended preservation efforts in the vibrant, urban neighborhood stretch back to the 1990's. It was DHT that turned to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2015 to have the neighborhood placed on the organization's Most Endangered Historic Places list. The attention from the National Trust led to a visioning effort and a report titled *Little Havana, Mi Importa*, that, if implemented, would promote preservation while promoting sensitive redevelopment to ensure a safe, healthy and walkable neighborhood chock full of incredible historic building inventory. To enhance this effort and document the area's cultural, architectural and environmental heritage, DHT has commissioned neighborhood surveys that provide an in-depth analysis of building types, significant residents and changes through time.



Page from the Westmoreland Preliminary Designation Report evidencing the loss of an historic residence.

In 2019, DHT worked with the planning firm Plusurbia to document the Westmoreland District in Little Havana, which is SW 13 Avenue (also known as Cuban Memorial Boulevard) from SW 8 Street to SW 14 Street. **Over 75% of the residences in that span were found to be historically significant and contributing structures to the proposed historic district.** Architectural styles represented are bungalows, mission, Mediterranean Revival, Streamline Moderne, Masonry Vernacular and Frame Vernacular, Colonial Revival and Ranch.



Residence at 1147 SW 13 Avenue that was given an unsafe structure violation and demolition order by the City of Miami. DHT is working with the owner to try to preserve this wonderful multi-family residence.



2023 image of a demolished bungalow on SW 13 Avenue.

Unfortunately, however, historic designation of this area has not been pursued and the lovely historic homes along the Avenue are disappearing. Dade Heritage Trust believes the City of Miami must take a new approach for the Westmoreland District and its potential designation to ensure the area's architectural fabric is preserved. While a traditional single-family and multi-family residential neighborhood, sympathetic uses for these properties, if allowed – such as Bed and Breakfasts, can help ensure their preservation by enabling the owners to gain additional income to continue to maintain these lovely historic structures. DHT intends to continue to work with consultants to document Little Havana and push for progressive historic preservation efforts to protect this National Treasure, as designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2019.

To view the Westmoreland District Preliminary Report, visit: dadeheritagetrust.org/advocacy-projects



OUR BRICKELL NEIGHBORHOOD

GROWING, TOGETHER: CONNECTING MIAMI'S CULTURAL LEGACY ON THE UNDERLINE

BY JAMAL WILSON

The beginning of The Underline tells the story of our past and the roadmap of our future. Central to the historical narrative of Miami is the story of Mary Brickell and her family, whose outpost marked the inception of the city. Before the Brickell era, this land was inhabited by the indigenous Tequesta. Phase 1, a half-mile segment running from Miami River to Coral Way, The Underline embarks on its transformative 10-mile journey south, intertwining Miami's history with the multi-modal urban trail, knitting together neighborhoods, stories, and legacies.

However, Miami's story isn't solely about the people who once lived here, but also the native flora and fauna that flourished across the landscape. In The Underline's Brickell Backyard, the addition of 30,000 native South Florida plants has increased populations of endangered pollinators. The symbiotic relationship between plants like coontie with its pollinator, the native atala butterfly, helps preserve this delicate ecosystem.

Deeper layers of history unfold within The Underline's Oolite Room. A porous rock that has endured across centuries, oolite is an integral part of Florida's geography and chronicles its evolution. From this bedrock emerged the site of Henry Flagler's railroad, a transformative juncture that signifies Miami's development. Adorned with a mural by local artist Edny Jean-Joseph, the Oolite Room stands as a tribute to Flagler's railroad and the Bahamian immigrants who played a pivotal role in its construction.



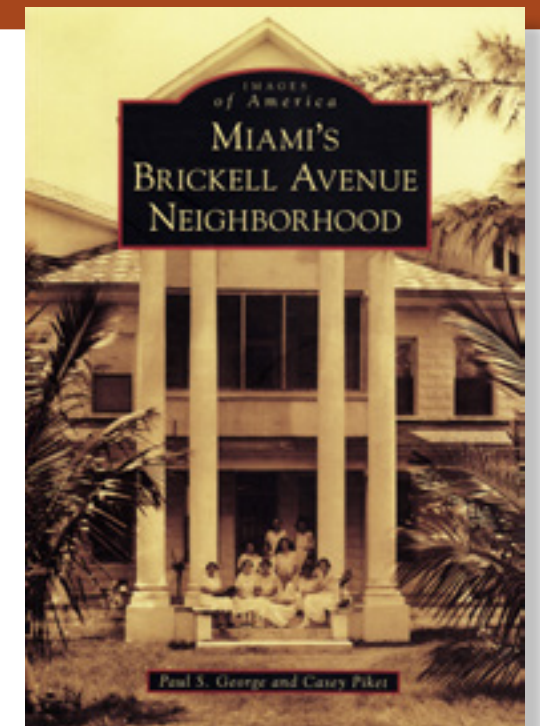
In Phase 2, a two-and-a-quarter-mile segment expected to open in winter 2024, Simpson Park emerges in the heart of Brickell, housing at least 96 native tree species. The park represents a precious remnant of the Brickell Hammock. Adjacent to Simpson Park, visitors will enjoy the Hammock Children's Playground.

Further south, the iconic Vizcaya Museum & Gardens is just a short walk from The Underline's Vizcaya Station Plaza, which will feature a meditative labyrinth and places to feature small businesses.

Phase 3, which begins construction late this year, will feature seven miles of inviting gardens including more than 1,800 trees and 350,000 native plants. Along with The Underline's microforests, it will have 12 amenity areas for the entire community to enjoy. Whether it's pickleball, soccer, skateboarding, an outdoor food court, a play forest where children can immerse themselves in nature, or a dog park, there is something for everyone.

To explore Phase 1 with a tour or learn more about The Underline's future phases, please visit our website and follow us on social media.

Jamal Wilson is the Marketing Manager for The Friends of The Underline.



For information and to purchase, please visit:
miami-history.com/brickell-avenue-neighborhood

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Special Thanks to Larry Gautier, Board of Trustees member at Dade Heritage Trust and Senior Vice President at NAI Miami / Fort Lauderdale



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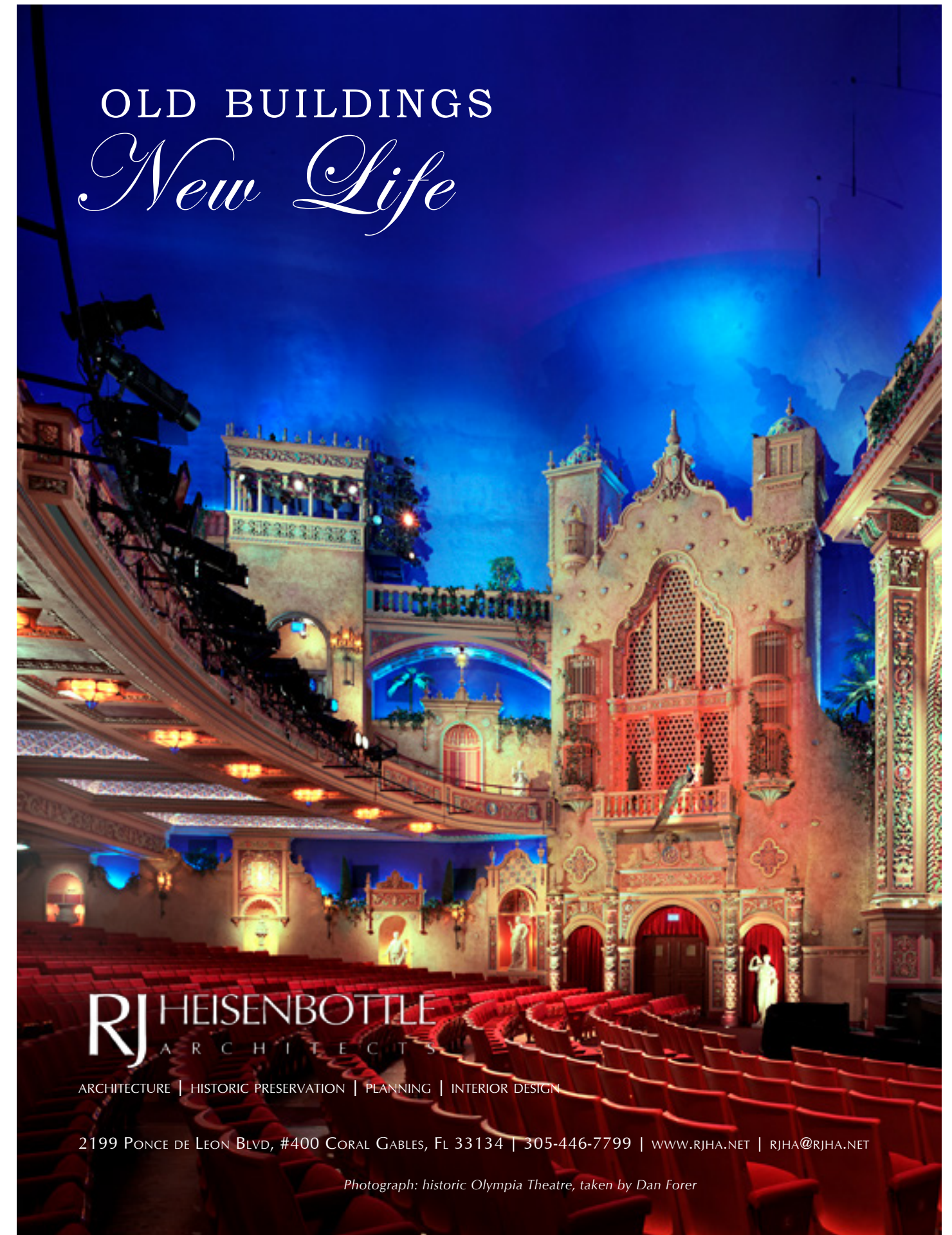


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Photograph: historic Olympia Theatre, taken by Dan Forer

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