



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

AUGUST 2013

DIANE RENOLLET CLINE

A REMEMBRANCE

by Mary Ulm and Benjamin B. Little

Wilton Manors Historical Society

Wilton Manors lost Diane Renollet Cline on August 28, 2013. She died after a short illness, at home, four months after her 80th birthday. The loss is substantial. Diane had been a moving force in the cultural, civic, and political life of Wilton Manors since the early 1980's. A newspaper article in 2007 referred to her as "Mrs. Wilton Manors." This distinction was well earned.

As an elected official in Wilton Manors during the 1980s, she waged a lot of battles. Many she won. In later years, as a "private citizen," her energy and persuasiveness moved any number of worthwhile projects forward. She knew everyone. Everyone knew her.

Diane, her husband Earle, and their five children moved to Wilton Manors in 1977 from Ohio. Her family was hardly settled in their new home before she jumped into the fray of Wilton Manors politics. She became the first Vice-President of the Civic Association; the major opposition to the "status quo."

Battle lines were drawn between the "Old Guard" and the "New Guard." when she and Bill Turner, son of Wilton Manors' first Mayor, ran for City Council in 1982 as "a ticket." Much to the surprise of many residents, they won.

At their first Council meeting, Turner and Cline were joined by Councilman Jack Zeman. The three led a faction that forced a heightened level of "professionalism" into City government and a change to the City Charter which has given Wilton Manors a strong City Manager and coherent City Council/Commission structure.

Diane was elected Council President by her peers in August 1982, and again in March 1984. When the new city charter abolished this office in November 1984 she became the City's first Vice Mayor. In a bizarre turn, Cline was briefly Acting Mayor. In late June 1983, the Mayor went missing and Diane stepped in.

In March 1986, Diane lost in a run for Mayor, but she was not finished contributing to Wilton Manors. She chaired the Community Affairs Advisory Board from 1994 to 2000 and restarted the Historical Society in 2002. Both endeavors served as a platform to "boost" Wilton Manors and look to the future as well as to preserve the past. She was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Commission in 2008.

Diane loved the opportunity to sell things at City events. Not only did it give her the opportunity to

raise money for worthy causes, it allowed her to "hold court" and share the latest "goings on." Diane organized a sale of the "left behind" contents of the old City Hall. She sold the "still attached" double doors to the Commission Chambers. She sold file cabinets and dilapidated office chairs. Representing the Historical Society, she raised nearly \$10,000 for the Island City Foundation. In the process, she "rescued" a jail door and the commode from one of the jail cells.

She was a founding member of the Board of Directors of Wilton Manors Main Street which became the Wilton Manors Development Alliance. The position of Chairwoman was created for her. After Richardson Historic Park, the initiative closest to her heart was the Children's Art Project at Jaycee Park. Open to change, she was a big supporter of narrowing Wilton Drive, having been influential in getting it widened in the 1980's.

She always had a joke to tell. She was worshiped by any number of local merchants, who could not say "No" to her requests for support or assistance in any number of projects.

Wilton Manors is a better place for her 40 year commitment.

Diane Renollet Cline

Civic Dates

Elected as Vice President of the Wilton Manors Civic Association in 1981, and later serving as its President for some fifteen years until it was disbanded in 2006.

Elected to a four-year term on the City Council in March 1982, elected by her colleagues as Council President in August 1982, and reelected as such in March 1984.

November 1984, the City's first Vice Mayor following a City Charter change.

Appointed by the City Council as the first Chairperson of the newly created Community Affairs Advisory Board in August 1994 and served until September 2000.

Founding member in 2002 of Wilton Manors Main Street, a private, non-profit which evolved into the Wilton Manors Development Alliance, and served as Vice President, President, and Chairwoman.

Founding President in 2002 of the reconstituted Wilton Manors Historical Society and served its President since that time; focusing on Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve.

Active contributor since 2006 and member of the Taste of the Island Committee.

Appointed to the City Commission in 2008.

Led or participated in countless official and unofficial volunteer efforts, including liquidating the contents of the old City Hall, promoting the Children's Art Project, serving as Acting Mayor, and selling "I Love Wilton Manors" tee shirts.

Friday, April 12, 2013 was declared by a Proclamation of the City Commission as Diane Cline Day in the City of Wilton Manors.