



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

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GINNY PEARCE

FIRST WILTON MANORS WOMEN BANKER 2012 PIONEER

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Virginia "Ginny" Pearce, the first female to be made an officer of the first bank opened in Wilton Manors, has been selected by the Historical Society as Wilton Manors Pioneer for 2012. As such, she will receive special recognition by the Broward County Historical Society and the Wilton Manors City Commission. Her story provides a unique perspective on the formative years of Wilton Manors.

Virginia "Ginny" Pearce, a native of Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, arrived in Fort Lauderdale from Maryland in 1950 with her young daughter and husband, an employee of Southern Bell Telephone, who was assigned to assist with hurricane cleanup. The family liked the area so well, they stayed Ginny later moved to Wilton Manors in 1970.

As a young wife and mother, Ginny frequented the popular Manor Market on Wilton Drive for its excellent selection of local produce, poultry, and beef. Manor Market owner, Lamar Braddy, needed someone to help in the store's office and convinced Ginny to come to work for him part-time in 1953, in an administrative and customer service position.

Ginny worked for Manor Market until 1956. When taking the market's deposits to the newly built Wilton Manors National Bank, she often ran into the bank's President, Clay D. Dyal, Jr., who came to offer Ginny a position with the bank. When Ginny approached Braddy about the job offer, he indicated that he knew that his close friend Dyal had been trying for some time to steal her away. The warm-hearted Braddy encouraged her to accept this opportunity to realize her potential. Thus, in 1956 Ginny began a long and successful career with another institution that formed the backbone of the Wilton Manors community. The bank's Charter Directors were among some of the most influential businessmen within the community and deposits by the end of 1955 totaled \$3.16 million. In ten years the deposits had more than tripled, and by the end of 1975 they had reached \$47.15 million.

Ginny began as a teller and held progressively responsible positions, accepting assignments in every department. In 1974, she became the first female officer of the

bank. That same year the community was saddened to learn of the death of Clay Dyal, Jr. "All the early businesses in Wilton Manors can attribute their success to Mr. Dyal, because he loaned money to all of them. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, insurance agents, you name it, got their start from his loans. And, everyone loved Mr. Dyal; he was brilliant and caring and wanted to help others become successful. He lost few loans through default because everyone wanted to live up to his trust," recalls Ginny.

On May 1, 1974 the bank was purchased and renamed to Sun Bank of Wilton Manors. To better serve the needs of its ever-increasing customer base, the bank's first branch was opened in 1977, across from Coral Ridge Shopping Center. Ginny was tapped to serve as Branch Manager and promoted to Vice-President. For that time, this was considered a remarkable accomplishment for a woman in banking. Ginny enjoyed over a decade as Manager of the Oakland Ridge Branch Bank. Later she moved into private banking and retired after 33 successful years in the banking profession. Sun Bank became today's SunTrust Bank in 1995.

In addition to her active work schedule, she held officer positions with the North Broward Chapter of the National Association of Bank Women and served as Secretary of the Wilton Manors Police Civil Service Board. She also served as a Junior Achievement Advisor and Bank representative to the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce.

Ginny had remarried in 1968 to Richard "Pat" Pearce, a native Floridian. They purchased a home in Wilton Manors in 1970 and established a swimming pool service and repair company that remained in operation until Pat's passing in 2006. Ginny still resides in her Wilton Manors home.

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