



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

JANUARY 2014

MARCIA STAFFORD TREE DEDICATION ISLAND CITY PARK PRESERVE JANUARY 11, 2014

By Benjamin B. Little
Wilton Manors Historical Society

On January 11, 2014, the City of Wilton Manors held a ceremony to dedicate a tree to Marcia Stafford, the longest serving civil servant in the history of Wilton Manors. In attendance were her son, Tracy Stafford, her daughter Nancy Stafford, the current Mayor, numerous former Mayors, City Commissioners, current and past, former co-workers, friends, and residents who remembered her.

On behalf of the Historical Society, Benjamin Little delivered the following remarks in her honor.

For "Founding Fathers," we have Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and others. Here in Wilton Manors, our "Founding Fathers" were Dave Turner, Perry Mickel, Al Hagen, James Dean, and Marcia Stafford.

These were the folks who got Wilton Manors from a bump in the road to a city. In the 1950's, '60's and '70's, politics and governance was a man's game, but Mrs. Stafford was clearly the extremely effective exception.

Between 1953 and 1976 there were all sorts of controversies. From what I have been able to determine from the public record, she remained above the fray and seemed to have provided a steadying influence which got us through it all.

Mrs. Stafford was elected to the post of City Clerk in 1952. When the position of Clerk became appointive, she ran for City Council in 1961, a seat she held for nearly 15 years. This would be a total of 23 years of elective service to the City. A record which stands today.

Today, we have a nice City Hall on Wilton Drive, with a nice foyer, and helpful public servants behind glass to help residents attend to business. From 1952 to July 1957 all this



was handled from Mrs. Stafford's kitchen in the Stafford's home on NE 25th Street. By my count, we now have seven full time employees doing her job. Yes, the City is larger and more complex, but now we have computers.

The Historical Society has a fair number of pictures of Mrs. Stafford, many generously provide by her children Nancy and Tracy. As a collection, these pictures are very interesting. Various City Councils are clearly "the men's club." And there she sits, very much a force which could not be ignored. She is renowned for her work with children in Wilton Manors. Perhaps her time spent reading to children inoculated her from the political games occupying peoples' attention. Her skills at keeping children under control at the library had to have been useful with the City Council.

Other pictures depict a lady you really wished was YOUR mother. Kind, intelligent, devoted. I was not fortunate enough to have met her, but she was much loved by many.

Turner, Hagen, Mickel, and Dean were important to the development of Wilton Manors because they were businessmen/developers. Mrs. Stafford was a wife, mother, and an example of someone who was selflessly devoted to the community. Arguably, she is the first and best example of a long line, continuing today, of residents who make Wilton Manors work.

Mrs. Stafford's legacy lives on here in Wilton Manors, but one must not overlook that her devotion to "service" has been continued with her children, Tracy and Nancy. We, and this tree, will continue to thrive under Mrs. Stafford's watchful eye.



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