



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

DECEMBER 2017

THE WRITE-IN CANDIDATE – 1984

By Benjamin Little
Wilton Manors Historical Society

It is an understatement to say that the March 1984 election for Mayor and Council was “exciting.” H. J. (Skip) Howells decided to run for Council after the filing deadline had passed. He was a supporter of Loren “Duke” Maltby. When Maltby dropped out of the race, Howells qualified as a “write-in” candidate. He worked as a cable splicer for FPL and was a high school graduate. He was the President of the Wilton Manors Jaycees and a member of the Recreation Board. He had coached the City softball league for 12 years.

He ran an active campaign. He was a big proponent of maintaining good city services, including the fine Leisure Services programs. He supported changing the City Charter to make the Mayor a member of the City Council. While he was not specifically aligned with “The New Guard,” he shared their views. He insisted his was his “own man.” He even gave pencils to his supporters.

Howells was endorsed by both the *Sun-Sentinel* and the *Miami Herald*. But, come election day, there were no pencils in the voting booths. He came in fifth in a field of five.

The headline in the *Miami Herald* on March 18, 1984 was “Lack of Lead Led to Loss, Candidate Says.”

He sued Supervisor of Elections, Jane Carroll, charging the election officials had promised to put a pencil in each voting booth. He said he was subsequently informed that putting pencils in the voting booths would encourage voters to vote for a write-in candidate. He maintained that making voters ask for a pencil would violate the privacy of their vote. On top of all that, even with a pencil, the process of casting a write-in vote was complicated. There were charges of “irregularities” with the ballots.

Judge Miette Burnstein of the Broward Circuit Court ruled that there was no hanky-panky. And even if his allegations of hanky-panky were true, he still would have come in last.

He decided that this was his last venture into politics. It was an environment which did not fit with his values.

The material on this site is made available solely for research, teaching, and private study. All images and written content should be considered © **Wilton Manors Historical Society** or another entity. **Any duplication, publication, or other re-use requires permission and appropriate attribution.** Please click on "CONTACT US" on the menu bar for further information. – Write In Candidate.docx