



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

JUNE 2018

PAT BRESLIN MILLER – INTERVIEW

By Mary G. Ulm with Sandra Steen
March 23, 2009
Wilton Manors Historical Society

Pat Breslin Miller was born in June 1929.

She had always dreamed of being a wife and mother. She married William G. Miller in January 1947 at the age of 18 and had four children before the age of 25.

Pat describes Bill as the "brightest person she ever met--he knew something about almost any subject". He attended law school at the University of Florida and became a member of the Florida Bar Association in 1950.

Bill had early ties to the area that became Wilton Manors. His best friend as a child was Odell Hiassen, the son of Carl Hiassen, a prominent attorney who practiced in Ft. Lauderdale. Hiassen built the first house in Wilton Manors. The house stands today at 601 NE 21st Court. Bill spent a lot of time with Odell and the boys enjoyed fishing at the rock pit that became Lazy Lake.

Perhaps it was Bill's fond boyhood memories that drew him to Wilton Manors as a place to raise his family. Bill and Pat moved to Wilton Manors in 1951. Their first house was at 57 NE 24th Street, next door to Robert and Grace Newton and not far from Bill's old fishing hole.

Grace Newton was founder of the first Girl Scout Troup in Wilton Manors and Pat often helped with the meetings. It was on a picnic outing with the Girl Scouts along the South Fork of the Middle River, in Perry Mickle's cow pasture, that Pat spotted the perfect location for a new home for her family. The Miller's home at 732 NW 22nd Street, in the Curva del Rio sub-division, was designed by Pat's uncle to fit on a pie-shaped lot. The home was built by Perry Mickel and his son Bob in 1956.

J. Marvin Brown, who served on the Village Council from 1947 - 1952, came over to the Miller's house regularly to talk to Bill about taking over City Attorney from Colonel Robinson, who was serving double duty as a member on the Village Council. In March 1952, Bill Miller was appointed as City Attorney and continued in that capacity for 30 years.

Bill came from a family that loved the law. His father served as the City Attorney for the City of Hallendale. His daughter Sharon has followed the family tradition by serving as Assistant City Attorney for the City of Fort Lauderdale for more than 20 years.

"Our children grew up in a household where Wilton Manors and how to improve its quality of life was a primary topic of conversation", remembers Pat. One of Bill's first duties was drafting the Charter to make Wilton Manors a city. Pat remembers going to Tallahassee to lobby the legislators

and dining at the Silver Slipper, a steakhouse popular with state law makers since 1938.

As City Attorney, Bill Miller also played a vital role in securing the City's first Bond Issue for sewers and later when levying taxes became necessary, in determining the millage rate.

Bill Miller worked tirelessly for the City—it was his obsession. It was part of his nature to make his work as an attorney a top priority. He spent countless hours in his den at home absorbed in City matters or reviewing items coming before the City Council at the kitchen table of Marcia Stafford, who served as City Clerk from 1952 -1960.

Bill Miller was awarded lifetime membership in the Wilton Manors Historical Society in 1975 for his work in drafting and obtaining the City charter. He continued as City Attorney through 1982, having served for 30 years in that role. His career with the City ended as part of a mass shake-up of City government led by newly elected Council members Bill Turner and Diane Cline. Bill Miller continued to practice law as a private attorney at the firm of Miller, Zachman, & Miller in Fort Lauderdale.

After twenty years of marriage and raising four children, Pat and Bill Miller grew apart, separated in 1971 and divorced in 1973. Pat Miller went back to school and eventually earned a Masters Degree in Social Work. While attending school she began a 12 ½ year career working for Catholic Charities Services, eventually serving as its Director. When her aunt moved to Wilton Manors, Pat left Catholic Charities: Services to devote her time to the care of her aunt.

Today, Pat Miller continues to apply her expertise in social work by leading a Parkinson's support group at John Knox village. She is learning to speak Spanish and serves as a Eucharistic Minister at Henry's Hideaway at St. Henry Catholic Church in Pompano Beach.

Please see the People Section for more information on Pat's husband, William Miller.

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