



2020 Walk of Fame

AGENDA
2020 WALK OF FAME COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2020 – 9:00 a.m.
City Hall, 8th Floor Conference Room
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Welcome and Introductions

Call Meeting to Order

Approval of Minutes

Selection of Chair for 2020

Discussion of 2020 Walk of Fame Nominations

2020 Walk of Fame Selections

Other Matters of Interest or Concern

Adjourn

Tim McGovern, Staff Liaison
(954) 828-4340

Note: Two or more City Commissioners and/or Advisory Board members may be present at this meeting. If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this public meeting or hearing, he/she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. If you desire auxiliary services to assist in viewing or hearing the meetings, or reading meeting agendas and minutes, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 954-828-5002 and arrangements will be made to provide these services for you.

**City of Fort Lauderdale
WALK OF FAME COMMITTEE
City Hall, 8th Conference Room
Thursday, September 26, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.
DRAFT MINUTES**

Committee Members Present

Sonya Burrows, Chair
Denyse Cunningham
George Hanbury II
Robert Lochrie, III
Patrick Shavloske
Lillian Small

Staff Present

Chaz Adams, Strategic Communications Manager
Angela Sabina, Public Information Specialist
Karen Newhart, Parks and Recreation
Tim McGovern, Staff Liaison

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Shavloske/Lochrie. A motion was made to amend the May 24, 2019 Walk of Fame Committee minutes to the first version that was circulated minutes. Passed unanimously.

Discussion of Award Criteria

The Committee discussed the current award criteria. Chair Sonya Burrows emphasized the importance of people making an impact outside of their “respective fields.” Lillian Small questioned the “lifelong” component of the criteria. Patrick Shavloske spoke about how people can make a tremendous impact living in the community even if they only live here for a brief period of time. Denise Cunningham suggested removing “lifelong” from the award criteria. Robert Lochrie, III suggested that the criteria should be a sustained contribution and impact on the City of Fort Lauderdale. Shavloske mentioned adding criteria about bringing notoriety or fame to Fort Lauderdale due to the award’s Walk of Fame title. Lochrie suggested changing “lifelong” on the award application to “sustained impact.” The Committee agreed.

Chaz Adams gave the committee an overview about the Citizen Recognition Awards and spoke about the history of the Walk of Fame and the committee.

Chair Burrows suggested having the homeowner and civic associations submit Walk of Fame nominations since it would generate exposure for the award program. Lochrie supported the idea. Small discussed a vetting process for the nominees. Lochrie suggested that Borrows reach out to the homeowner and civic associations via email to

get nominations. Adams suggested that an announcement could be made at the next Council of Civic Associations meeting.

The Committee discussed how they do not want to accept incomplete applications or ones submitted with only attachments. Shavloske suggested that nominations should be resubmitted each year. The Committee agreed that nominations should be resubmitted and to not have any carryovers to subsequent years.

The Committee also discussed moving the award application deadline to January, meeting to discuss applications in February, and having subsequent meetings if further discussion is needed.

George Hanbury II asked if the committee members could nominate someone but abstain from voting. The Committee agreed.

Lochrie questioned how many awards the committee should give out annually. Hanbury suggested setting a maximum number so as not to diminish the award's significance. The Committee agreed to a maximum of four honorees per year with families being treated as one honoree.

A discussion was held regarding the 2019 Walk of Fame nominees the committee had previously sent forward to the City Commission. Adams explained that the agenda item got pulled and was placed on hold. Adams also explained how the City Commission directed the Committee of Citizens' Recognition to narrow down their nominations for one category since two people were nominated. The Committee agreed that they would like the City Commission to approve the 2019 Walk of Fame nominations or provide feedback. Adams discussed the importance of the Committee Chair and/or other members attending the City Commission meeting when the item is scheduled.

MOTION: Shavloske/Small. A motion was made to change the award criteria to read: Walk of Fame Honorees are recognized by making sustained, positive impacts in one or more of the areas listed below but not limited to:

- Providing a positive outlook for the future of our youth,
- Contributing to the quality of life for our citizens,
- Fostering the spirit of our community,
- Bringing positive recognition to the City, locally or nationally,
- Making the City of Fort Lauderdale a place to live, work, or play,
- Encouraging people to visit the City of Fort Lauderdale as a destination of choice.

Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Shavloske/Hanbury. A motion was made to ratify the 2019 Walk of Fame selections previously made and recommend the City Commission recognize them as 2019 Walk of Fame honorees. Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Shavloske/Small. A motion was made to limit the nominees to a maximum of four per year. Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Shavloske/Cunningham. A motion was made to not accept incomplete Walk of Fame applications and to not allow carryovers of any applications to future years. Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Hanbury/Cunningham. A motion was made to set all the motions from the May 24, 2019 Walk of Fame Committee meeting as the bylaws for future committees. Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Shavloske/Small. A motion was made to set the 2020 Walk of Fame application deadline to Monday, January 13. The Committee will meet in February to discuss nominations and have subsequent meetings if needed. Nominees will be selected by April 1, 2020. Passed 5-1-0 (Lochrie absent.)

MOTION: Small/Shavloske. A motion was made to adjourn at 10:14 a.m. Passed unanimously.



**City of Fort Lauderdale
Walk of Fame Honorees (2010 – 2019*)**

2010

Connie Francis

Singer, Actress, Entertainer

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of “Where the Boys Are”

2011

City of Fort Lauderdale

Commemorating the City’s Centennial (1911 – 2011)

Louise Crocco

Legendary Cardinal Gibbons High School Girls’ Volleyball Coach

Brent Jett

Astronaut and Space Shuttle Commander

Marcia Pinder

Award-winning Dillard High School Girls’ Basketball Coach

Rick Shaw

Radio Broadcasting Legend

George Smith

Legendary St. Thomas Aquinas High School Football Coach

2012

H. Wayne Huizenga
Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

Jimmy Evert
The Patriarch of Tennis in Fort Lauderdale

Chris Evert
Hall of Fame Tennis Professional

Woody Woodbury
Comedian, Actor and Television Personality

2013

W. George Allen
Attorney and Civil Rights Advocate

The Gill Family
Fort Lauderdale's First Family of Tourism

Jack Drury
Public Relations Executive and Goodwill Ambassador

2014

"Crazy" Gregg Newell
Father of Spring Break

Jerome "Jerry" Faber
Tourism Pioneer

John Amodeo
Legendary Restaurateur

2015

Hugh Taylor Birch
Father of Fort Lauderdale Beach

Ina Lee
Tourism Icon

Dr. Ron O'Brien
8-Time U.S.A. Olympic Diving Coach

Tim Schiavone
Owner, World Famous Parrot Lounge

2016

George L. Burrows, Sr.
Founder of Burrows Electric Company

Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue
A Tradition of Excellence for 90 Years, 1926-2016

Nicki Englander Grossman
Tourism Czar

Rev. Monsignor Vincent T. Kelly
Pastor, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
Supervising Principal, St. Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Gibbons High Schools

2017

Dr. George L. Hanbury, II
Fort Lauderdale City Manager
President Nova Southeastern University

Kaye Pearson
Marine Industry Icon and Founder of Show Management

The Motwani Family
Ramesh "Bob," Ramola, Dev and Nitin
Fort Lauderdale Beach Visionaries

The Zloch Brothers
Bill, Chuck, and Jim
Brothers Dedicated to the City through Sports, Law, Finance, and Community Service

2018

Evelyn Fortune Bartlett
Artist and Patron of Art and Ornament

Beauregard Cummings
Civic Leader, Mentor and Community Organizer

Elliott Miley Hendricks, M.D.
Pioneer, Physician, and Humanitarian

Robert B. "Buddy" Lochrie Jr.
Fort Lauderdale Native, Banker and Civic Leader

2019*

Walter Banks
Levi Henry
The Perry Family
Stan Smoker

*2019 nominations still need to be adopted by City Commission.



2020 Walk of Fame Nominations

Sylvia Aldridge

John MacDonald

Barbara Markley

JoAnn Medalie

Kelvin Watson

Irma Wesley



2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form

The City established the Walk of Fame in 2010 at the inaugural Great American Beach Party to pay tribute to the legendary Connie Francis on the 50th Anniversary of "Where the Boys Are," the 1960 film which made Fort Lauderdale an overnight sensation and a "must see" destination for visitors.

Walk of Fame Honorees are recognized by making sustained, positive impacts in one or more of the areas listed below but not limited to:

- Providing a positive outlook for the future of our youth,
- Contributing to the quality of life for our citizens,
- Fostering the spirit of our community,
- Bringing positive recognition to the City, locally or nationally,
- Making the City of Fort Lauderdale a place to live, work, or play,
- Encouraging people to visit the City of Fort Lauderdale as a destination of choice.

As part of the awards program, each honoree receives a commemorative marble paver that is placed in the Walk of Fame to memorialize their outstanding accomplishments. The Fort Lauderdale Walk of Fame is located on the beach along the east side of A1A at Las Olas Boulevard. Walk of Fame Honorees are announced at the Great American Beach Party, which annually takes place on the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend.

If you would like to submit a nomination for the 2020 Great American Beach Party Walk of Fame, please complete the information below. Please feel free to attach additional sheets or submit your responses via email to tmcgovern@fortlauderdale.gov. The deadline for the 2020 Great American Beach Party Walk of Fame nomination is **Friday, February 28**.

Name: Dennis Ulmer

Address: 1007 NW 11 Place

City, State, Zip Code: Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

Home Phone: N/A Office: N/A Cell: 954-763-1913

Email: dennisu512@aol.com

2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form – Page 2/2

Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community, paying particular note to the Walk of Fame selection criteria. Provide any examples of civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other achievements.

Please see attached.

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

Please see attached.

3. Please provide a brief biography, resume or any other background information about the nominee including contact information.

Please see attached.

Submitted by: _____

Dennis Ulmer

Dennis Ulmer

Background material such as nominee biography, resume, media copy, etc. is highly recommended.

All nominations must be received by **Friday, February 28, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.** Submissions may be mailed to: Tim McGovern, City of Fort Lauderdale, Parks and Recreation Department, 1150 G. Harold Martin Drive, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304. Forms may also be emailed to tmcgovern@fortlauderdale.gov. Nominations and background materials submitted after **Friday, February 28, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. will not be accepted.** If you have any questions, please call 954-828-4340 or email tmcgovern@fortlauderdale.gov.

Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

PRINT

SUBMIT

2020 Walk of Fame Nominations Form Sylvia Aldridge

Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community, paying particular note to the Walk of Fame criteria. Provide any examples of civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other achievements.

I am nominating Fort Lauderdale Pioneer Sylvia Aldridge for the 2020 Walk of Fame Honoree

Sylvia Aldridge was one of the first black settlers in Fort Lauderdale arriving here in 1904. She and her husband, Anderson, in 1908, were the parents of the first black baby, named George, born in the city.

Sylvia Aldridge had the first employment agency in the city. Founded to provide jobs for blacks cleaning the homes of affluent white residents. She then founded Sylvia's Victory Cabs to see that the workers could get to work on time.

During the Depression, Sylvia would not be concerned about the rent being paid on property that she owned. She also always had soup on her stove to feed those in need.

In 1936, when a farm labor truck overturned in north Broward. Several workers were killed, many others were injured. The wounded were laid out on the grass in front of Memorial Hospital, on East Broward Boulevard. They could not be taken inside because they were black. There, moving among them on the lawn, washing and tending to them as best she could, was Sylvia Aldridge. The incident convinced her and others that a black hospital was needed. Until that time, surgery was performed by Dr. James Sistrunk in his office. The hospital rooms were just plain rooms in the back of the building. Aldridge became a leader in the fundraising drive that two years later led to the building of Provident Hospital. Provident served the black community until public hospitals were desegregated in the 1960's.

Sylvia Aldridge was founding president of the Dillard High School PTA and remained active for 25 years. In 1947, she helped underwrite the school's first band. In March, 1958, Sylvia Aldridge was named, "Woman of the Year" by Zeta Phi Beta. Sylvia was presented the award for, "Her outstanding services in religions and civic work and exemplary qualities of finer womanhood".

Her activities in the community were matched by those in her church. A devout member of St. John's United Methodist Church, Sylvia Aldridge donated land for a sanctuary. As well, she was a trustee and benefactor for Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, and active in local community activities, such as the Northwest Federated Women's Club, the American Woodsman, the Eastern Star, Heroines of Jericho, and the Grand United Order of Pallbearers. She also was an active worker for both Community Chest and the March of Dimes.

The United States Post Office Branch at 400 Northwest 7th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, is named in Sylvia Aldridge's honor.

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

I believe Sylvia Aldridge is deserving of this award for her outstanding community service. Imagine a woman in the early 1900's accomplishing so much in the way of being a business entrepreneur, then add that Sylvia was a black woman! It just speaks to me to contemplate it! I decided to nominate Sylvia Aldridge when I learned of her accomplishments. A woman who did so much for the black community, who strived to find blacks jobs, provided transportation, all of this in the segregated south. The Aldridge's son, George, was found shot and killed and the murder was never solved. Again, it boggles my mind to think of her. She was a strong woman! Then you add to the list, all the community things that she did, helping to secure the Provident Hospital, founding the PTA at Dillard High School, all the great things that she did for the community. Sylvia Aldridge would not have been allowed to swim at Fort Lauderdale Beach. I think it's fitting for such a fine person as she was, in this time and place, that we FOREVER give her a spot at our beach to honor her memory and all that she had accomplished. I am honored to nominate Sylvia Aldridge for the Walk of Fame marker and award. May the marker inspire us all to learn about and honor another of our great pioneers while also inspiring us to serve the community as they all did!

3. 2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form

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Biography of Sylvia (Hill) Aldridge

Born: November 18, 1884 Died: November 12, 1962

Sylvia Hill Aldridge was born November 18, 1884, just North of Gainesville. Sylvia Hill was the 6th of eleven children to a family that was unusually affluent for that time and place. Her parents owned eighteen hundred acres that had been given to Hill forebears by their former slave owners once they were freed after the Civil War. In 1904 she married Anderson Aldridge. Shortly afterwards they moved to the new settlement of Fort Lauderdale. At that time, the black community consisted of seven homes and two stores.

Sylvia Aldridge began work cleaning the homes of affluent white residents. She saw there were plenty of such jobs to be had. She also saw a lot of black folks either didn't know how to go about getting these jobs, or they were intimidated, afraid of dealing directly with white people. This gave her the idea for her first business Sylvia's Employment Agency.

She quit her own job as a maid and began finding work for her neighbors, right out of her home, at 301 Northwest Second Street. It was the city's first such business and for many years it was the only agency for domestic help.

Aldridge was a born entrepreneur. When she realized her employees needed a way to get to work, she started Sylvia's Victory Cabs making certain everyone arrived at their jobs on time.

A niece, Ollie Irving, recalled the day her aunt came home with twenty sparkling white uniforms. She put them in the bathroom, then, one by one, as women came to ask about work, she'd send the prospective workers into the bathroom to find a uniform that fit and get ready to work.

She had rules, too, and was very strict about them. Clients were told that if one of her housekeepers did not meet their approval, they were to immediately call Mrs. Aldridge. "She trained the women, you see. She taught them how to keep a family house properly. How to polish mirrors, how to properly make the beds, aunt Sylvia taught them everything they needed to know in order to keep the client happy and keep the job."

Irving says her aunt and uncle also ran a small restaurant from the side of their house. They also owned property that they rented out. All of this created a good living for Aldridge and her family, and she was a generous woman. During the Depression she was known for ignoring rent deadlines and for feeding anyone who needed a meal from a huge soup kettle on her kitchen stove.

Edna Way, another early settler, recalled coming to town and being impressed by the lady Aldridge. "I first came here to teach one year. When I stayed to teach summer school, they had cut it down to one teacher and I didn't have a job. I found Mrs. Sylvia Aldridge. She was active in the Methodist Church, and she was concerned about everyone's welfare. She would just put a finger on a person, no matter who came. She knew people so well in that she always sent the right person to the job. I thought that was so remarkable. And so generous! You never knew of her charging someone for getting them a job." Another Aldridge distinction. The couple's son George, born in 1908, was the first black baby born in Fort Lauderdale, according to records filed with the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and the Black Historical Society. Tragically, later in life, George Aldridge was found shot and killed, the murder was never solved.

One pivotal day in Aldridge's life came in 1936, when a farm labor truck overturned in north Broward. Several workers were killed, many others were injured. The wounded were laid out on the grass in front of Memorial Hospital, on East Broward Boulevard. They could not be taken inside and treated because they were black.

There, moving among them on the lawn, washing and tending to them as best she could, was Sylvia Aldridge. The incident convinced her and others that a black hospital was needed. Until that time, surgery was performed by Dr. James Sistrunk in his office. The hospital rooms were just plain rooms in the back of the building. Aldridge became a leader in the fundraising drive that two years later led to the building of Provident Hospital. Provident served the black community until public hospitals were desegregated in the 1960's.

Aldridge's generosity knew no bounds. In 1939 she took in an orphaned thirteen-month old baby boy named Reuben. Much beloved by the Aldridge's, Reuben was a good student at Dillard High School and went on to graduate from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Anderson Aldridge died in November 1953, Sylvia Aldridge carried on in the businesses without him until she fell in her backyard in 1961 and fractured her hip. At seventy-seven, she never regained her health. She was in and out of the hospital until she died of a heart attack in 1962. According to her doctor, Von D. Mizell, she died with her son Reuben on her mind. "The day she died all she could do was talk about him." The physician recalled.

Her activities in the community were matched by those in her church. A devout member of St. John's United Methodist Church, Sylvia Aldridge donated land for a sanctuary. As well, she was a trustee and benefactor for Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, and active in local community activities, such as the Northwest Federated Women's Club, the American Woodsman, the Eastern Star, Heroines of Jericho, and the Grand United Order of Pallbearers. She also was an active worker for both Community Chest and the March of Dimes. She was founding president of the Dillard High School PTA and remained active for 25 years. In 1947, she helped underwrite the school's first band.

In March, 1958, Sylvia Aldridge was named, "Woman of the Year" by Zeta Phi Beta. Sylvia was presented the award for, "Her outstanding services in religious and civic work and exemplary qualities of finer womanhood."

Her funeral drew residents from both black and white communities, with all remembering Aldridge as a good Samaritan. Two ministers spoke and the Dillard choral ensemble sang. The four-page program with a large picture of her on the cover, eulogized her as, “pleasant toward everyone, a loveable character, a humanitarian in stature.” She was eulogized with the words, “There was not a worthwhile project or civic organization in the community that she was not identified with in one way or another”, More than a few smiled when recalling her trademark response when asked to take on some task. “Baby I’ll get right on it.”

Sylvia Aldridge was laid to rest in Historic Woodlawn Cemetery.

After her death, niece Ollie Irving who cared for Aldridge during her illness, inherited her aunt’s northwest Fort Lauderdale home. She lived there and made her living by selling fruit from the back of her station wagon until a fire destroyed the house in 1979.

She recalls how the city stopped her from repairing the house, since it stood in a targeted redevelopment zone. The city was clearing out old structures to make way for new homes and apartments.

Irving stood in the way of the demolition, refusing the city’s purchase price of \$13,570. She wanted the fire-gutted, crumbling house—part of which was said to be at least seventy-three years old—to be preserved as a historic landmark, to memorialize the contributions made to the community. After all, Irving said, Anderson and Sylvia Aldridge were among the first black families to settle in Fort Lauderdale, their son the first black child to be born in the city. “I wanted something to stand, to represent Sylvia Aldridge down through the years.” Unfortunately, vagrants began hiding in what remained of the structure. Garbage was dumped in the backyard near the mango trees. The city began condemnation proceedings and the structure was demolished.

Members of the Black Historical Society of Broward County agreed that the house had historical meaning and wished the house could have been preserved. “Sylvia Aldridge was an angel who was always handing out something to someone”, said Elizabeth Williams, who was a member of the Historical Society, “We wanted to do something about the house, but then it burned down beyond repair.”

Indeed, said Mary Smith, who founded the Historical Society, “We don’t have landmarks in the northwest section that we can say remind us of our past.”

While the Aldridge home no longer exists. A United States Post Office Branch at 400 Northwest 7th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, serves not only the African-American community, but the entire city. The branch is located not far from Sylvia’s home, and is named in her honor. The post office was opened in 1998.

An observation of my own doing this biography, all of the early news stories about Sylvia Aldridge had her name spelled incorrectly. Notice in the clippings I have attached to this 2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form. Her name is misspelled. It is “Sylvia Alrdige” or “Silvia Alrige”. I doubt if the newspaper in that day and time, would have been so careless writing about a white citizen.

Sources of materials used in my research:

I wish to thank History Fort Lauderdale for providing me access to their archives in researching Sylvia Aldridge.

My Soul is a Witness: A history of Black Fort Lauderdale by Deborah Work

Fort Lauderdale Daily News, Monday, March 10, 1958

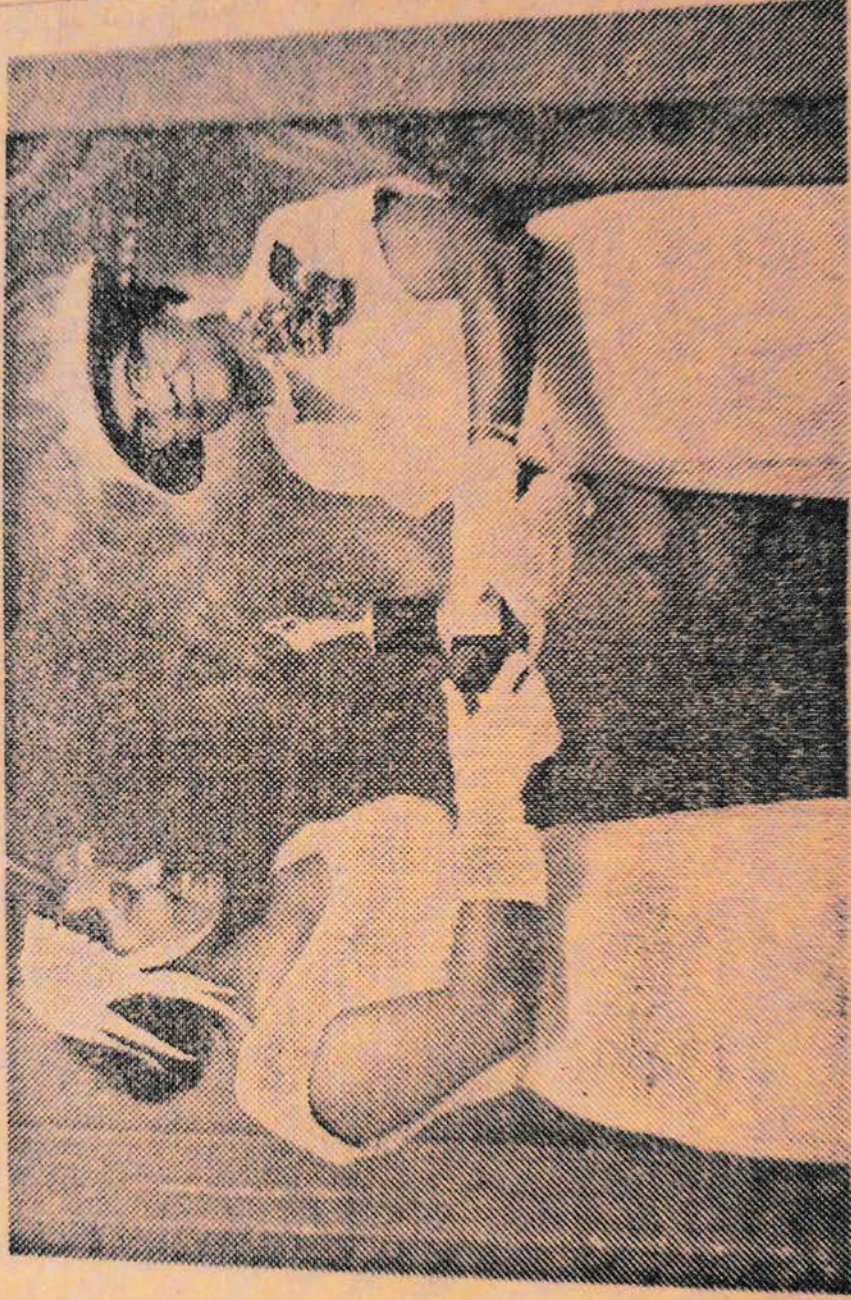
Fort Lauderdale Downtown, February 1992

Photograph of Sylvia Aldridge’s house after the fire with niece, Ollie Irving, Fort Lauderdale News, April 23, 1980.

Sylvia Aldridge



History Fort Lauderdale
March 1



WOMAN OF THE YEAR — Mrs. Sylvia Alridge, right, recently received the Zeta Phi Beta "Woman of the Year" Plaque for her outstanding services in religious and civic work and exemplary qualities of finer womanhood. Shown presenting the award is Mrs. Bernice Allen, anti-basileus of the chapter. The presentation was made during Zeta's annual "Finer Womanhood Week" program which was held at New Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

SYLVIA ALDRIDGE, A FORT LAUDERDALE VISIONARY

Sylvia Alridge arrived in Fort Lauderdale before it had been incorporated as a city. The year was 1904. She was young, newly married and optimistic.

Sylvia found work right away. In her first job, she worked a domestic. However, as she observed events in this rapidly developing community, she also saw opportunity. Sylvia recognized the need to match people who needed help with people who needed jobs. She therefore founded Sylvia's Employment Service, the first employment agency in town. Once Sylvia matched people to positions, she also saw the need to provide safe, dependable transportation for her clients. So Sylvia founded the Victory Cab Service.

Besides her visionary business sense, Sylvia Alridge also attacked the social problems around her. In 1936, a tragic farm accident left many injured farm workers lying outside the only hospital in town, denied health care because of their race. Sylvia joined forces with Dr. Sistrunk and led the fund raising efforts that resulted in the opening of Provident Hospital, the first such local institution to serve the African America community.

Sylvia is remembered for her practical approach to life and her humanitarian concern for her neighbors. She saw many ways to make a difference in her world and acted upon them. She founded the first employment service, a pioneering taxi service and helped to found a hospital. Not bad for the daughter of a slave.



Black History Celebrates . . . Black History

by Kevin Lane

"I knew a man, Bojangles
and he danced for you
In worn out shoes.
With silver hair, a ragged shirt,
and baggy pants
The old soft shoe.
He jumped so high,
he jumped so high
Then he'd lightly touch down
Mr. Bojangles, Mr. Bojangles,
Mr. Bojangles . . . Dance."

When we hear that hauntingly beautiful, sprightly song, "Mr. Bojangles," it usually brings to mind a kindly Black man that was usually drunk, danced for those at county fairs throughout the South and spent a lot of time — behind these country bars, "Cause I drinks a bit."

That 'Mr. Bojangles' is a fictitious person — the fact of the matter is that the 'real' Bojangles was a self-made multi-millionaire that was known as the worlds greatest tap dancer. In a 1934 profile of Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson in the New Yorker Magazine, he was described as " . . . a philanthropist of note . . . No charity movement is attempted today without Robinson's support. A beautiful performance without him would be like a Milk Fund affair without Mrs. Randolph Hearst," the article noted.

February is Black History Month and it's a time when contributions of Afro-Americans are recounted and festivals such as our own 12th Annual Sistrunk Historical Festival helps recognize people and events. Actually, the Sistrunk Historical Festival is a celebration of African, African-America and Caribbean Cultures. February 1st starts the month of activities with a parade and everyone loves a parade. The route will go from 441 and Sunrise Blvd. down to NW 27th Avenue and North onto Sistrunk Blvd. to NW 15th Avenue.

This year's festival theme is "They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in the Americas." More than thirty events including exhibits, demonstrations, and the First Annual Black Theater Festival of South Florida will be offered to the public. Most events are free. For further information call 765-4663. □

Sylvia Aldridge . . . A Great Humanitarian

Sylvia Hill was born on November 18, 1884, near Brookier, Florida, just north of Gainesville. She was the sixth of 11 children for Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Hill. Her family was rather affluent, owning 1,800 acres of land that had been given to Hill's forebears when they were freed after the Civil War.

She married Anderson Aldridge in 1904 and moved to Fort Lauderdale where the Black community had a total of 7 homes and two stores. At first, she worked as a domestic. Recognizing there was a growing need for such work and also realizing that many Blacks did not know how to go about getting work, she started Sylvia's Employment Agency. For those readers who remember the 'old days,' Sylvia was quite famous and almost anyone that was seeking domestic help called Sylvia. Her business prospered and later she started Sylvia's Victory Cabs to drive many of her clients to work. She owned several rental buildings.

Although she made a good living, it was a well known fact that she could have been much wealthier, but she was generous to a point of being "a soft touch". She would not press for employment fees or rent, if she felt that the debtor was in a bind. During the Depression, she ignored rent deadlines and fed anyone who needed a meal from a giant soup kettle on her kitchen stove.

A remarkable event happened in 1936 when a farm-labor truck overturned in North Broward. Three or four of the workmen were killed and many others were injured. The injured were laid out on the lawn in front of what was then Memorial Hospital on E. Broward Blvd. Since they were Black, they couldn't be treated at the hospital. So, there was Sylvia, moving among them, washing them and tending them as best she could.

The incident helped convince her and many others that a Black hospital was needed. At that time, surgery on Blacks was performed in Dr. James Sistrunk's office and the "hospital rooms" were just plain rooms in the back of the building. At the leader in a fund raising effort, Mrs. Aldridge helped make Providence Hospital a reality which served the Black community until public hospitals were desegregated in the 1960's.

After a life of good works, she died of a heart attack on November 12, 1961. At her funeral a four-page program, with a large picture of her on the cover, eulogized her as "pleasant toward everyone, a lovable character, a humanitarian in stature." When Mrs. Aldridge is remembered, in the White community as well as the Black, it is with warmth. Phrases such as "Good Samaritan", "good Christian person", "always wanted to help" and "very dedicated" occur. One of her greatest contributions was that she probably provided more people with jobs than any other individual. □

Much of this information was taken from "A Biographic History of Broward County" by Bill McCovey.

Some of the events planned this month include:

- ✓ The First Annual Black Theater Festival of South Florida - various locations throughout South Florida.
- ✓ The Mixed Media of Deborah Trotter - A one woman show featuring the art and sculpture of Ms. Trotter at the Main Library throughout the month.
- ✓ African Dance in the Diaspora Workshop - Conducted by Anita MacBeth.
- ✓ Artist in Residence Program - Featuring the Master Works of Charles Mills including the Sistrunk Entry Way Project.
- ✓ Writings '92 - Young Playwright Competition.
- ✓ Cultural Literary Events.
- ✓ Video Fair.
- ✓ Call of Africa Gallery on Las Olas - Reception.
- ✓ Jazz Branch on Riverwalk.
- ✓ Morehouse College Coo Club.
- ✓ Much . . . much more.

Call 765-4663 for full
calendar of events.

**MODEL HOME IN
NEGRO DISTRICT
VISITED SUNDAY**

The reception committee stated the better home in the negro section, that of Mamie Jackson on Catalachan avenue. The committee was more than pleased to have this particular home for one of its demonstration homes, for it was planned and built as a result of Peter Handy's demonstration in Fort Lauderdale last year, and is without doubt, a credit to the committee who had charge of the 1925 campaign. It is cozy, comfortable, convenient, and immaculate in the last degree. The home has a long porch on the east and an entrance on the west in a neat and well-carpeted hall or reception room, on each side of which is a well-appointed bedroom. West of the hall is the dining room furnished with a little painted breakfast set. The kitchen might well put to shame many of the housekeeper's white employees' kitchens. Everything was perfect.

At this house the following in the program arranged and presented by Ada Williams and Sylvia Aldrich.

Song, "America" by all present; invocation, Rev. J. A. Cameron, pastor of the Methodist Church; paper, "Better Homes" by Sylvia Aldrich; talk by Mrs. M. Lewis Hall, chairman Better Homes committee; resolution by Johnnie Hawkins; talk by

This Fort Lauderdale Daily News article of April 26, 1926, tells of a tour to a model home in the "negro section." Black resident Sylvia "Aldrich" urges her neighbors to improve conditions in their community, to "use more paint . . . secure sewage, city water, electric lights, sidewalks . . . so that when visitors are riding through our city, they will not . . . tell where the negro section begins and the white section leaves off."

**COMMISSIONERS THANK
COLORED CITIZENS**

The county commissioners of Broward county desire to thank the colored citizens of this county who assisted in preparing and preparing the barbecue given in honor of the return of returned soldiers and held at the North Park Hotel August 27, 1919.

To T. C. Williams, general manager; to Frank H. M. Moore, mayor; to J. J. Green, W. M. Tinsdale, commissioners; and to the following who so kindly assisted in making the barbecue a grand success: L. J. Williams, D. W. McFadden, Joe Murray, T. B. Reed, Walter Anderson, A. W. Williams, Herbert L. Shelton, Mrs. Dixie Alrige, Mrs. Annie Reed, Mrs. Rev. L. A. Frazier, Mrs. J. Lee Matthews, Mrs. Lillian Jones, Mrs. Clara Hinton, Mrs. Ellen Robinson and others.

We desire to thank the Red Cross committee of Fort Lauderdale and individuals for their generous contributions, also Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Goode of Hollywood for the beautiful and carefully prepared basket of good things. This basket received the compliments of all present. After the barbecue a carefully prepared entertainment was given at the hotel in colored town and an excellent program rendered. Refreshments were served to all present. To all who assisted in making the affair a success we extend our appreciation and thanks.

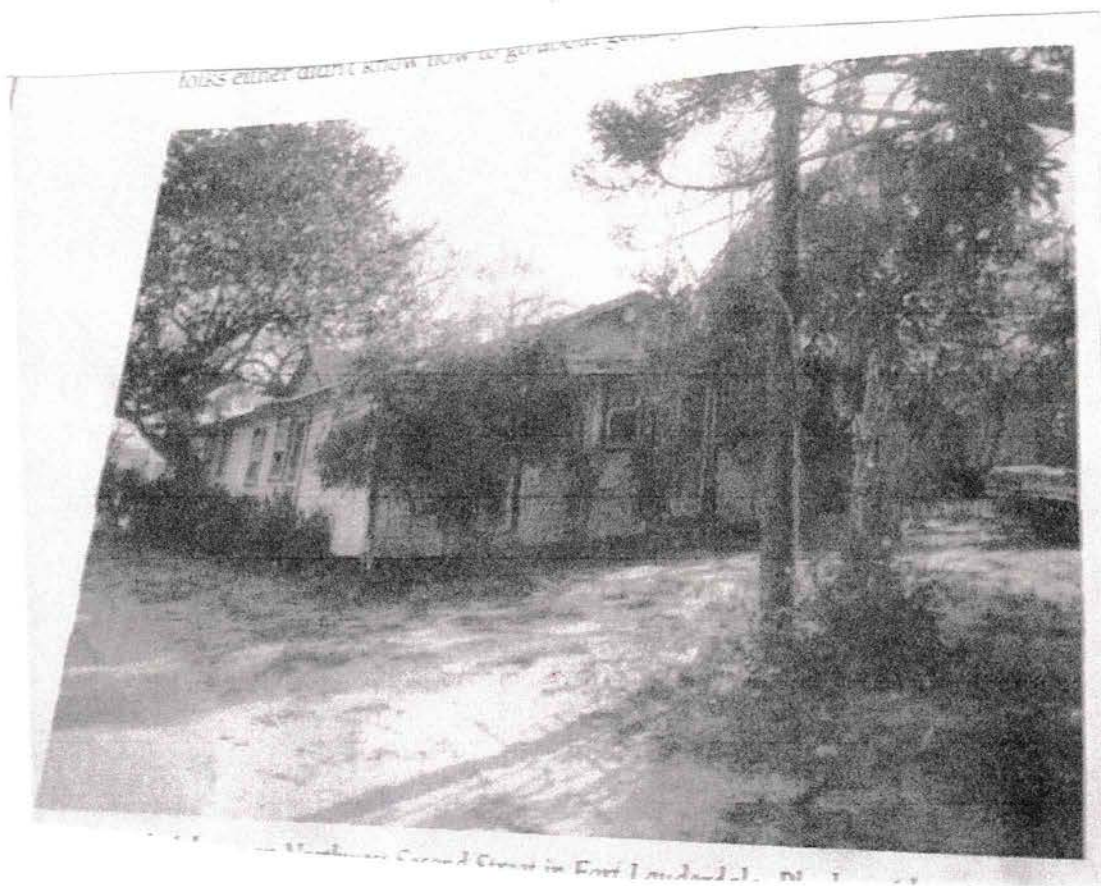
Gloriously yours,
A. B. LEWIS, Chairman.

In this August 29, 1919 Fort Lauderdale Herald article, the Broward County Commission thanks the "colored citizens," including "Silvia Alrige" for hosting a barbecue to welcome home returning black World War I veterans.

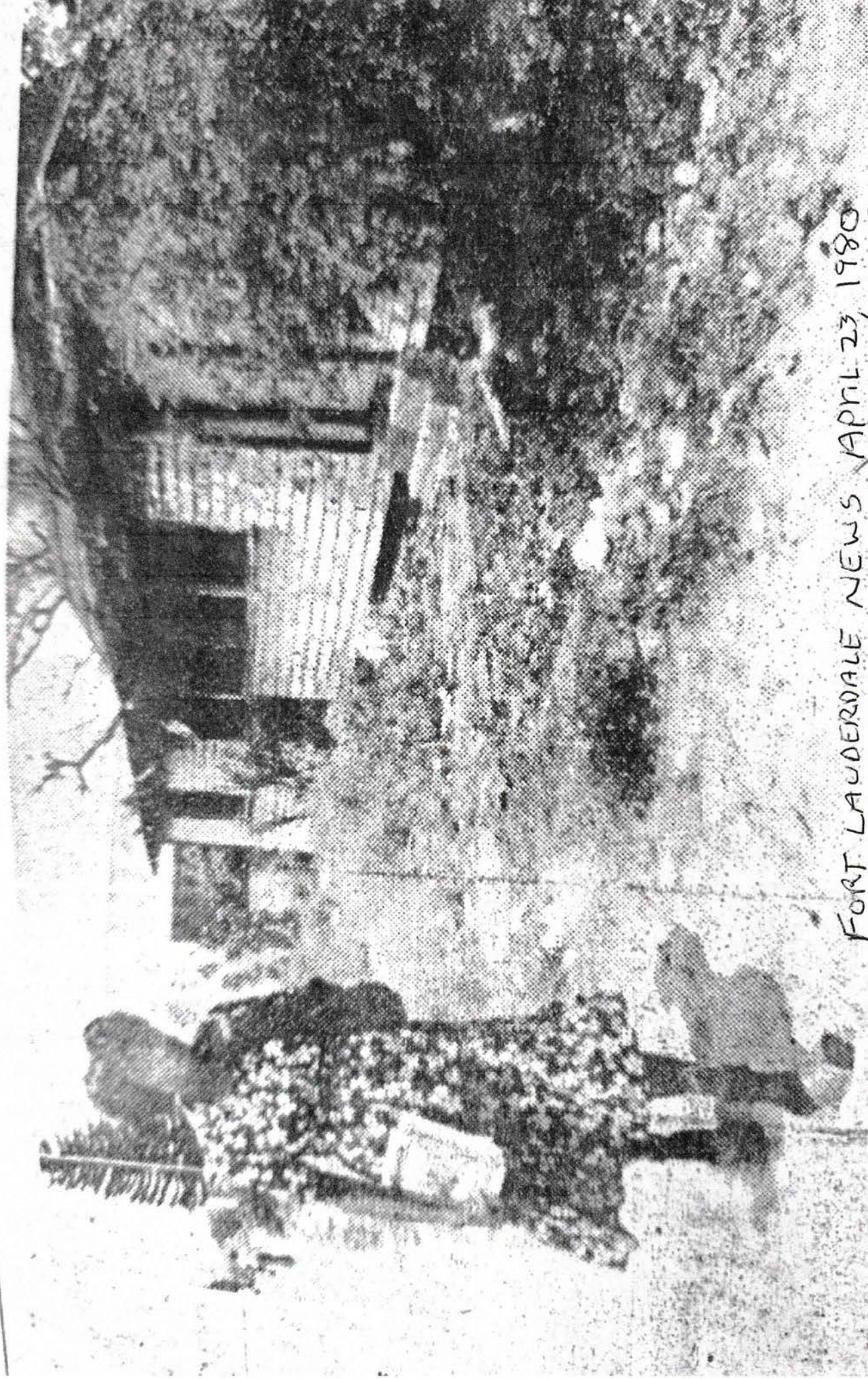


A holiday gathering of the Northwest Federated Woman's Club, organized in 1938 after hearing Dillard School Principal Clarence C. Walker speak of the school's needs—chairs, stools, sewing machines, stoves, and furnishings for a Home Economics room. Pioneer Sylvia Alridge suggested the club be named the Negro Woman's Club of Fort Lauderdale. Dues would be 10 cents each meeting. To kick off fundraising the ladies raffled a black doll and raised \$62.83. Original members included Jasie Davis, Eliza Robinson, Viola Davenport, Furalie King, Annie T. Reed, Lula Bryant, and Sylvia Alridge. Photo courtesy of the Old Dillard Museum.

Sylvia Aldridge's home on Northwest Second Street in Fort Lauderdale. Black residents wanted it preserved as a historic landmark, but a fire destroyed the home in 1979. Photo courtesy of the Broward County Historical Commission.



FORT LAUDERDALE NEWS



FORT LAUDERDALE NEWS APRIL 23, 1980

Ollie Irving walks in front of the house she inherited from her aunt, pioneer Sylvia Aldr

Staff photo by NICK VON

air union L



Sylvia Aldridge

BIRTH unknown
DEATH Nov 1962
Broward County, Florida, USA
BURIAL Woodlawn Cemetery
Fort Lauderdale, Broward County,
Florida, USA
MEMORIAL ID 18071292

Sylvia Aldridge is listed by name only on the marker at Woodlawn Cemetery. The Florida Death Index lists only one person by a similar name who died in Broward County, and the name is slightly different.

Sylvia Alridge
Death Date: Nov 1962
County of Death: Broward
State of Death: Florida
Race: Black
Gender: Female

Maintained by: T Jason Brown
Originally Created by: Mary Harrell-Sesniak
Added: 25 Feb 2007
Find A Grave Memorial **18071292**

Find A Grave, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 18 February 2020), memorial page for Sylvia Aldridge (unknown–Nov 1962), Find A Grave Memorial no. 18071292, citing Woodlawn Cemetery, Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida, USA ; Maintained by T Jason Brown (contributor 48172037) .

Copyright © 2020 Find A Grave



2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form

The City established the Walk of Fame in 2010 at the inaugural Great American Beach Party to pay tribute to the legendary Connie Francis on the 50th Anniversary of "Where the Boys Are," the 1960 film which made Fort Lauderdale an overnight sensation and a "must see" destination for visitors.

Walk of Fame Honorees are recognized by making sustained, positive impacts in one or more of the areas listed below but not limited to:

- Providing a positive outlook for the future of our youth,
- Contributing to the quality of life for our citizens,
- Fostering the spirit of our community,
- Bringing positive recognition to the City, locally or nationally,
- Making the City of Fort Lauderdale a place to live, work, or play,
- Encouraging people to visit the City of Fort Lauderdale as a destination of choice.

As part of the awards program, each honoree receives a commemorative marble paver that is placed in the Walk of Fame to memorialize their outstanding accomplishments. The Fort Lauderdale Walk of Fame is located on the beach along the east side of A1A at Las Olas Boulevard. Walk of Fame Honorees are announced at the Great American Beach Party, which annually takes place on the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend.

If you would like to submit a nomination for the 2020 Great American Beach Party Walk of Fame, please complete the information below. Please feel free to attach additional sheets or submit your responses via email to tmcgovern@fortlauderdale.gov. The deadline for the 2020 Great American Beach Party Walk of Fame nomination is **Friday, February 28**.

Name: DEBORAH GREENBAUM NOMINATING JOHN D. MACDONALD

Address: 424 NE 12th AVE

City, State, Zip Code: FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33301

Home Phone: 954-728-8757 Office: _____ Cell: _____

Email: DZUBEG@AOL.COM

2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form – Page 2/2

Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community, paying particular note to the Walk of Fame selection criteria. Provide any examples of civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other achievements.

JOHN D. MACDONALD - AUTHOR

A PROLIFIC WRITER, WHO SOLD 70 MILLION BOOKS IN HIS CAREER. HE WROTE 21 NOVELS ABOUT TRAVIS MCGEE, SET IN FT. LAUDERDALE AND SURROUNDING AREAS. MACDONALD WAS AN ENVIRONMENTALIST WHO TRULY LOVED FLORIDA. HIS BOOKS BRING POSITIVE RECOGNITION TO FT. LAUDERDALE AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO VISIT, CERTAINLY AS MUCH, OR GREATER, THAN "WHERE THE BOYS ARE." HE DESERVES RECOGNITION.

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

JOHN D. MACDONALD CREATED AN ICONIC FICTIONAL CHARACTER, TRAVIS MCGEE, WHO LIVED ON A HOUSEBOAT CALLED "THE BUSTED FLUSH," DOCKED AT THE BAHIA MAR MARINA, SLIP 18. FT. LAUDERDALE FEATURES PREMINANTLY IN HIS BOOKS, AS DOES HIS LOVE FOR FLORIDA'S ECOLOGY AND DEEP CONCERN FOR ITS ENVIRONMENT.

3. Please provide a brief biography, resume or any other background information about the nominee including contact information.

THIS WOULD BE A POST-HUMOUS RECOGNITION, AS MACDONALD DIED IN 1986.

BORN IN PENNSYLVANIA, MBA FROM HARVARD, SERVED IN WWII, MOVED TO FLORIDA IN 1949. HIS WRITINGS ARE STEEPED IN A LOVE OF FLORIDA. CARL HIAASEN WROTE "MOST READERS LOVED MACDONALD'S WORK BECAUSE HE TOLD A RIP-ROARING YARN. I LOVED IT BECAUSE HE WAS THE FIRST MODERN WRITER TO HAIL FLORIDA DEAD-CENTER..."

Submitted by: DEBORAH GREENBAUM

Background material such as nominee biography, resume, media copy, etc. is highly recommended.

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Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

PRINT

SUBMIT

From: [Tim McGovern](#)
To: [Angela Sabina](#); [Karen Newhart](#)
Cc: [Chaz Adams](#); [Tim McGovern](#)
Subject: FW: [-EXTERNAL-] Walk of Fame 2020
Date: Monday, March 09, 2020 11:37:31 AM

From: Tom Rumore <rumore@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2020 11:23 PM
To: Tim McGovern <TMcGovern@fortlauderdale.gov>
Subject: [-EXTERNAL-] Walk of Fame 2020

I was just told that John D. MacDonald has been nominated for a place on the Walk of Fame. As an avid fan of his, dating back to the 1960's, I would urge you to support his election to that great honor.

Many contemporary writers have credited much of their success to what they learned either directly from him, or from his many, many novels and non-fiction books.

I believe this son of Fort Lauderdale truly deserves to be recognized for his long and storied career.

Thank you for your consideration.



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Name: Barbara Markley

Address: 2416 Middle River Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305

Home Phone: (954)609-7928 Office: _____ Cell: _____

Email: barbaramarkley@bellsouth.net

2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form – Page 2/2

1. Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community. Examples include civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other categories.

Accomplishments: 33 years as a Family Law attorney and Mediator; Mother of two accomplished adults; 13 years on the Board of Trustees for the Florida Children's Theatre. Barbara is one of Fort Lauderdale/Broward County's most accomplished citizen activists fighting gun violence through work with Moms Demand Action and as Co-Chair for the Gun Safety Committee of the League of Women Voters of Broward County. Barbara's numerous protests of the gun shows at the War Memorial undoubtedly helped bring attention and change - convincing the City Commission to bring more family friendly activities to Holiday Park.

The League of Women Voters Lock it Up! program, created by Barbara, is an effort to encourage safe storage of firearms by gun owners, thus hopefully decreasing the number of gun deaths and injuries. Lock it Up! has been adopted by 190 partners around Broward County, who have either agreed to distribute free gun locks, educational brochures, or both - including Fort Lauderdale City Commissioners, who have allowed Barbara to speak at their district meetings and have distributed the brochure through newsletters. To date, approximately 26,000 brochures and 11,000 gun locks have been given away.

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

Extraordinary courage, perseverance and true grit are the reasons why Barbara Markley (lawyer/mom/wife/author/patron of the arts) transformed from a South Floridian we might not know or hear about to one who certainly deserves to be honored on the Walk of Fame. Fort Lauderdale has been her town for 32 years. Her push to make Fort Lauderdale a safer place to live, work, and play for everyone has led her to create some out of the box solutions which have translated from pipe dreams and possibilities to realities, in just a few years' time. Fort Lauderdale is on the map as a city which took the bold step to say no to gun shows and yes to family-friendly sports activities. It is on the map for saying yes to helping spread the word about keeping firearms locked and away from small children. And it's on the map for being a city that would listen to its citizens - Barbara and those she organized - when it was clear that creating family-friendly spaces in city parks made more sense than selling guns in those same parks. Through her commitment to civic responsibility and love for the city, Barbara has made her mark. She has helped to make Fort Lauderdale better, safer, and more attractive for generations to come.

3. Please provide a brief biography, resume or any other background information about the nominee including contact information.

Please see the attached resume for Barbara Markley.

Submitted by: Katy Syed (954)918-9944

Background material such as nominee biography, resume, media copy, etc. is highly recommended.

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PRINT

SUBMIT

Barbara Markley

954-609-7928 | barbaramarkley@bellsouth.net

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305

Family Law Attorney/Certified Mediator/Award-winning Author with thirty-three years' experience. Excellent organizational, communication, administrative, writing, negotiating, and interpersonal skills.

Dynamic Community Organizer and Public Speaker with experience in organizing events/ outreach programs, writing program materials, networking, maximizing resources, grant-writing, developing partnerships, coordinating grassroots support, training staff, and presenting educational seminars to the public.

EXPERIENCE

Barbara Markley, P.A. | Fort Lauderdale, FL **2003 – Present**
Self-Employed Attorney/Mediator

Broward County Support Enforcement Division | Fort Lauderdale, FL
1996-2002
Attorney III
1990-1994

Law Office of Robert J. Moraitis, P.A. | Fort Lauderdale, FL
1994-1996
Associate Attorney

EDUCATION

Juris Doctor (JD)
Tulane School of Law | New Orleans, LA

Bachelor of Arts with Honors (BA) English
Tulane University | New Orleans, LA

COMMUNITY

Co-Chair, League of Women Voters of Broward County, Gun Safety Committee **2017-present**
Designed *Lock it Up!* program, a comprehensive, non-partisan gun safety campaign to encourage Broward County residents to lock up their guns to protect

children through distribution of free gun locks and educational brochures. In one year, acquired over 200 community partners, educated 6,000 people about gun safety, and distributed 26,000 brochures and 13,000 gun locks.

Board of Directors, Ex Officio Parent Member, FCAAP

July 2019-present

Board of Trustees, Florida Children's Theatre

2006-present

AWARDS/HONORS

2019 Florida Civic Advance, Honorable Mention for *Lock it Up!* Program

2019 LWV Florida Power of Women Award

2019 LWV Broward Excellence in Leadership Award

2019 Recognized in Congressional Record by Congressman Ted Deutch for *Lock it Up!* Program

2019 Recipient of Florida American Legion Grant for *Lock it Up!* Program (\$5,000.00)

PUBLISHED BOOKS

Accidental Activist: Justice for the Groveland Four, Co-Author

Jamie Quinn Mystery Series (Books 1-6)

Quirky Essays for Quirky People (Volumes 1-3)

THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE PRESENTS THE



2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form

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Name: Ang Medaki

Address: 5100 N. Ocean Blvd #402

City, State, Zip Code: Lauderdale Sea FL 33308

Home Phone: _____ Office: _____ Cell: 678-294-1473

Email: amedaki@aol.com

2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form – Page 2/2

Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community, paying particular note to the Walk of Fame selection criteria. Provide any examples of civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other achievements.

JoAnn Medale has been the eyes of the beach for the past 40 years. She resided on NE 17 St, on the finger streets for 20 years before moving to the Harborage Condominium in 2000. During all that time she has constantly been attempting to improve the beach area. She instituted the first sea oats planting on Ft. Lauderdale beach arranging for the Ft. Lauderdale High School Ecology Club to plant the first sea oats at NE 19th Street. JoAnn has constantly been in contact with the City Manager & Commissioners regarding improvements to the beach area. JoAnn served as an assistant to the city manager under Connie Hoffman. She has served on →

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

JoAnn has worked for the past 40 plus years to improve Ft. Lauderdale Beach.

3. Please provide a brief biography, resume or any other background information about the nominee including contact information.

JoAnn has resided in Ft. Lauderdale since 1960 & has constantly been a civic activist attempting to improve the city. She was one of the leaders in the project to make the City of Ft. Lauderdale the best city in the nation.
Contact info: 3055 Harbor Dr #801
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314
cell: 954-651-4627
email: beachmedal@aol.com

Submitted by: JoAnn Medale

Background material such as nominee biography, resume, media copy, etc. is highly recommended.

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Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

PRINT

SUBMIT

1. cont

the Parks & Recreation Committee of the City for many terms. She was instrumental in removing motorized scooters from the beach area. JoAnn has attempted for many years to have the pedestrian bridge at Bahia Mar restored & improved.

City of Fort Lauderdale 2020 Walk of Fame Honoree Nomination Form

Nominee Information

Name: Kelvin Watson

Address: 100 S Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale FL 33301

Home Phone: NA

Office Phone: 954-357-7377

Cel Phone: 954-336-6749

Email: kelvinwatson@broward.org

Please describe the nominee's accomplishments or contributions to the community. Examples include civic responsibility, financial contributions, volunteer service, projects accomplished, or other categories.

Dynamic, focused and visionary, Broward County Library Director Kelvin Watson is a leader whose accomplishments positively impact the quality of life in Fort Lauderdale and help make it an amazing place to work, play, live and visit. Whether expanding library services to air, land and sea or spearheading exciting technological, educational and recreational opportunities for local youth, Kelvin's contributions to Fort Lauderdale help open doors to success, change lives and prove that libraries have a crucial role in the today's 21st-century city.

Under Kelvin's leadership, Broward County Library (BCL) is going places it has never been before! BCL is now offering library services by air, land and sea to people who live, work, study or play in Fort Lauderdale. This includes the new FLLibrary, a one-of-a-kind library "lounge" in the Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport that lets travelers access and stream free movies, music and TV. Opened in 2019, it provides a welcoming respite for travelers, offering visitors to our airport and city a taste of the tech-savvy, forward-focused services we enjoy in Fort Lauderdale. On land, anyone riding a local transit bus or visiting select parks can now access free music they can download and keep, while guests at select local businesses, health-care facilities and government offices can use "Pop-Up" libraries to download free eBooks – no library card needed. Free library services at sea will soon be available to cruise ship employees through a pilot program launching this year at Port Everglades.

Kelvin has also enhanced library services that enhance the city's quality of life by encouraging and catering to entrepreneurs and small businesses. At Main Library in downtown Fort Lauderdale, Creation Station Lab offers a free community center equipped with tools such as state-of-the-art computers and robotics as well as public access to the latest virtual reality equipment, while the Creation Station Business Coworking Hub provides free work and meeting spaces and expert assistance, and resources for creating and growing businesses.

Other notable accomplishments include expanding BCL's role as a community hub and meeting place by launching exciting new festivals, programs series and events that position BCL and Fort Lauderdale as dynamic, culturally inclusive and diverse. BCL's first live art/literary festival, ChalkLit/ArtLit, held in 2018 at the Main Library in downtown Fort Lauderdale, attracted over 5,000 guests, leading to the event's expansion in 2019. Other large-scale community events include Vet Fest, a free expo held annually in Fort Lauderdale; Moonlight Tales, an adult song-and-story cabaret held outdoors in the center of downtown; and Cultural Conversations at the Center, a program series at the African American Research Library and Cultural Center that discusses important issues of the day in open community forums. Additionally, under Kelvin's leadership, BCL has launched inclusive initiatives that assist those in our community who need it most. These include the award-winning Coffee and Conversation with a Librarian program, a public discussion series for people experiencing homelessness, Reach Out Reach Up, a partnership with Broward County Sheriff's Office that provides career assistance to people re-entering the community after incarceration and the nationally recognized Veterans Connect Program, which uses library resources to assist veterans' transition to civilian life.

Kelvin Watson has also focused on creating and providing services, resources and programs to inspire, educate and enrich the lives of our community's children and teens and help prepare them for the workforce of the future. At the Main Library, small children can visit the nationally recognized Active Learning Center, a free educational play space that promotes school readiness. The Studio, a creative safe space for anyone ages 13 to 19, is also located at Main Library and provides teens with access to video production gear, musical instruments, state-of-the-art computers and video games as well as workshops on social media, performance art and more, giving them the valuable hands-on tech experience needed in the

21st century workforce. Youth of all ages can check out the Creation Station Lab workspace to use advanced design software, virtual reality equipment and more. Initiatives such as Ready for College offer teens free SAT/ACT test prep and workshops on applying for and affording college while programs such as the annual Teen Empowerment Summit provides central Broward and Fort Lauderdale teens with a full day of inspiring speakers – including an address by Kelvin – and activities.

Additionally, initiatives such as “Your ID is Your Key” give all Broward County Public School students a free digital library card that uses their student ID number to give them access to all of BCL’s digital resources. A partnership with the Broward Municipal Services District provided free tablets and technology training for individuals living in underserved areas of Fort Lauderdale. Other lending programs provide take-home access to virtual reality headsets and gear, children’s Playaway tablets, read-along embedded audiobooks and portable Internet hotspots.

2. Why is the nominee deserving of this award?

Kelvin Watson is deserving of a place on the City of Fort Lauderdale’s 2020 Walk of Fame because, while he may be a relative newcomer to Fort Lauderdale, Kelvin has made outstanding contributions to Fort Lauderdale in the form of library services and programs that inspire and enrich. Under his leadership, Broward County Library has launched award-winning initiatives that bring music to the streets and parks of the city, free books to readers of Fort Lauderdale and programs that motivate and educate our community’s youth.

As a visionary community leader, dedicated library professional, Kelvin is an exemplary candidate for the City of Fort Lauderdale’s 2020 Walk of Fame. His accomplishments have been recognized locally, statewide and nationally. He has received the Friends of African American Research Library and Cultural Center’s 2019 Community Service & Distinguished Achievement Award, the Friends of the Stirling Road Library’s 2019 “Favorite Friend” Award, the Florida Library Association’s 2019 Librarian of the Year and the American Libraries Association’s 2017 Black Caucus Award for Excellence in Librarianship. He was also a Top

Finalist for a 2018 Route Fifty Navigator Award, which celebrates excellence in public sector services. Additionally, under his leadership, Broward County Library has received numerous awards and recognitions including:

- Three 2018 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards for Veterans Connect Program; The Active Learning Center at Main Library; and “Free Music – Right Here, Right Now” Partnership with Broward County Transit and Parks
- 2018 NACIO (National Association of County Information Officers) Awards of Excellence for the Veterans Connect Program and the Your ID is Your Key Digital Library Card Campaign
- 2018 Florida Library Association Awards’ Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award for Outstanding Programs of Direct Service to Youth - The Active Learning Center at Main Library.

3. Please provide a brief biography, resume or any other background information about the nominee including contact information.

Kelvin Watson started his career as an officer in the United States Army then transitioned into the private sector as an executive with Ingram Library Services, Borders Group and The Library Corporation (TLC). These positions fueled his passion for the field of library science and he joined the USDA National Agricultural Library and then the Queens Borough Public Library in Queens, New York. In Queens, he was instrumental in the creation of QL Virtual Library, the Flexible Standard for E-content NISO (FASTEN) pilot project and a groundbreaking community mobile tablet lending program post-Hurricane Sandy. Throughout his career, Mr. Watson has remained active and involved in professional associations, has been a frequent speaker and panelist at conferences, has been published in national library literature, and has been recognized numerous times for his work. Mr. Watson is a Past President of Black Caucus of American Library Association and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Book Industry Study Group, a member of the Public Library Association Board of Directors, and Board of Directors for the Southeast Florida Library Information Network. Mr. Watson was the 2016 inaugural winner of the American Library Association’s Ernest A. DiMattia Award for Innovation and Service to Community and Profession, and recipient of the 2017 DEMCO/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence in

Librarianship and was named 2019 Librarian of the Year by the Florida Library Association. Mr. Watson is a member of the Ft. Lauderdale Alumni and Southaven Mississippi Alumni Chapters of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.

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Broward County Library Director Kelvin Watson seeks to expand access

Posted by: [Carma Henry](#) Posted date: **June 08, 2017** In: [Local News](#) | comment : **0**



Broward County Library Director Kelvin Watson seeks to expand access

By Nichole Richards

Broward County's new Libraries Director, Kelvin Watson, brings to South Florida a valuable skillset acquired over a lengthy career centered on books. A native of Saint Louis, MO, Watson has developed an interesting reimagining of libraries that shatters the rigid concept of "library as a place" and replaces it with library holding digital space.

"I am not only interested in bringing people in the library," Watson told me, "But I want to bring the library out to people."

This is his vision for Broward County. As the former Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President for Queens Library in New York City, a library system that serves millions, Watson is passionate about the idea of easy access digital libraries. Through the incorporation of innovation and new technologies, "the library" has the opportunity to reestablish itself as a much needed community pillar.

Under his leadership, the Broward County libraries system has already begun the transformation. Online digital library card applications are quickly replacing the antiquated paper application. Tablets are being distributed to local libraries in preparation for a tablet loaning initiative. Digital content is expanding rapidly. As a personal nod to his years of service in the Army, Watson has also led the creation of the Veterans Connect Hotspot program, a free mobile internet service for Veterans and Active Military. Already within his first three months, Watson has set the trajectory for a revolutionized library experience in Broward County.

In addition to modernization, Watson also aims to expand Broward's libraries reach through the establishment of strategic partnerships with the county's important institutions, particularly Broward County Public Schools.

"We want to support our schools and build stronger relationships," Watson explained, "We would like to be a trusted resource for students, teachers, and administrators."

As one of very few African Americans in the profession, Watson feels honored to follow in the footsteps of his mentor Samuel Morrison, former Director of the Broward County Library System. With a passion for teaching and educating, Watson considers his new position as a mixture of personal passions and servant leadership within the Black community.

"There are not many African American men embarking upon this career path," Watson said, "But I see it as an opportunity to be a role model."

Watson admits he has not established special projects directed towards Broward's Black community, but emphasized the new partnerships and initiatives will have a direct impact on the county's most marginalized communities.

"My job is to serve everybody," Watson said, "I will leave special initiatives in those communities to the branch managers who are doing a great job and have a more intimate knowledge of community needs. But I am going to these places and I am meeting with the community and asking them what they want from Broward's libraries."



Broward County Library Pilot Tackles Digital Divide

by [Matt Enis](#)

May 04, 2017 | Filed in [Technology](#)

As part of an effort to bridge the digital divide, [Broward County Library](#) (BCL), FL, in partnership with T-Mobile, the county's [Enterprise Technology Services](#) division, [CareerSource Broward](#), and the School Board of Broward County, has launched a two-year pilot program that will provide 300 tablet computers and data access plans to eligible residents of the [Broward Municipal Services District](#) (BMSD). Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief requested the development of the pilot, noting that many families do not have sufficient income to afford computer equipment or Internet access, and that this poses barriers to education and, ultimately, income growth. "For some families in our community, it is more important to put dinner on the table than to have Internet access," she said. "But studies show conclusively that a lack of access to the digital world can adversely affect income and level of education achieved. It's important for every family to be able to connect to the same information

resources that many of us take for granted." Targeting households with incomes less than \$36,273 that include K–12 students, the program aims to connect BMSD residents with online resources available through BCL, CareerSource Broward, and other local institutions. T-Mobile will donate the tablets, valued at \$115,000, and the county will invest \$93,600 to fund the data access plans for the duration of the program. At the conclusion of the two-year pilot, the program's success will be evaluated in hopes of continuing it, according to a press announcement. The timing is opportune. Kelvin Watson, former COO and senior VP of Queens Library, NY (QL), just took the reins as BCL's new director on February 26. Although the pilot began taking shape prior to his appointment, the project's contours are similar to a [successful tablet lending program](#) that Watson launched in Queens, beginning with a [pilot test in 2013](#). "We're going to follow a similar model," at BCL, Watson told *LJ*. Unlike QL, Broward does not currently have plans to design a custom interface for the tablets, and many of the details are still being finalized. But, similar to the program in Queens, BCL will preload the tablets with a curated selection of apps and other content. In addition, "we plan on tying the tablets to library programming," encouraging program participants to make regular visits to their local branch, Watson said. Mobile device management (MDM) software will be used to configure and maintain the devices, and possibly to restrict what types of additional apps and content can be downloaded onto them. MDM can also remotely lock tablets that are not returned on time or are reported lost. Rather than publicizing the program to patrons, BCL will work with the schools to identify students and families that meet the program's eligibility requirements, Watson said. BMSD "is a low-income area. We only have 300 [tablets] but there are going to be a lot of people who fit the criteria—the audience that we are trying to reach," he explained. Participants will be required to attend an orientation to learn the basics of using the tablets. Although the checkout period has not yet been finalized, Watson said that terms ranging from six months to an entire school year were under consideration. These relatively lengthy checkout terms are expected to help families and students to become more familiar with the tablets and online resources over time. "The goal is to provide continued access to these resources to help improve digital literacy," Watson said. "Our motto in the BMSD is 'Investing in our future, improving our community,' and that is exactly what the Digital Divide program helps us do," Sharief said in an announcement.



Photo by Ari Rothenberg

Kirkus Reviews: Digital Edition/KirkusReviews.Com:
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/features/kelvin-watson/>

Kelvin Watson

In this sponsored interview, we talk to a librarian intent on "inviting the uninvited"
Interviewed by Megan Labrise on October 15, 2018

After Kelvin Watson’s family finished watching the 1984 miniseries *Master of the Game*, the St. Louis, Missouri, native marched right to the nearest library, checked out the Sydney Sheldon novel it was based on, and read that 400-page book cover to cover. He was 8 years old.

“I felt very accomplished. That thing was bigger than me!” says Watson, who vividly remembers the experience 42 years later. “Reading that book made me recognize that what you check out from the library can transport you to the places you read about—I was *transported* to the diamond mines of Africa—and it didn’t deter me from checking out other books after that.”

Watson remained a voracious reader through middle school, college, and officer training. He served as a commissioned officer in the Army and worked in leadership roles in sales and marketing, for Ingram Book Group and Borders Group, Inc., before pivoting to a decorated career in public library service. Eighteen months ago, he transitioned from director of e-content services and strategy at Queens Library in New York City to the highest administrative position

at the 11th-largest public library in the nation: director of Broward County Libraries in southern Florida.

“The theme we’ve embraced over the past year and a half is ‘inviting the uninvited,’ ” says Watson, who is one of two recently named directors at large of the Public Library Association. “The greatest value we can give the community is continuing to launch initiatives for everybody, even those who can’t, for whatever reason, make it to our physical locations.

[Continue reading >](#)

“What that has meant to Broward County is turning the library into a place that is both physical and digital,” he says of the 36-branch system, which serves approximately 1.9 million Floridians. “Most people are now equipped with a cellphone, so, essentially, the library is wherever you want the library to be.”

This fall the library can be found at 10 new Broward County locations—including a coffee shop, a health care center, and the Pompano Beach City Hall—courtesy of Pop Up Library, a pilot program forged in partnership with Baker & Taylor, a Charlotte-based distributor of books and entertainment. The system is one of the first in the nation to offer full access to its e-book collection, via Baker & Taylor’s Axis 360 platform, through a device that functions like a hotspot and doesn’t require additional staff to run.

Just plug in Pop Up Library and “you immediately are able to gain access to our Axis 360 database of e-books, and you can start getting access to those library materials without the need for a library card,” Watson says. “It’s mobile, so we can choose and move the locations. The way I envision it, we now have 10 new [digital] locations to add to the number of [brick-and-mortar] locations we have. We’re bringing more awareness of the library and extending our reach in the community.”

Broward County is already experiencing great success with a similar program launched last year: Community Share provides e-collection access to students in Broward County Public Schools, allowing them to view library resources during the school day, right at their desks, with digital library cards the key to a kingdom of knowledge. 30,000 students are registered, and they’re already looking to expand the program, which has the added benefit of strengthening the relationship between the library and school district, Watson says.

“Baker & Taylor are excellent partners for us because they continue to innovate,” he says. “It’s good to have partners that are adapting to our changing needs and the needs of the communities

we serve. They're always responsive, willing to hear from the customers, willing to listen to their



customers, and I appreciate that.”

Always striving with an eye toward the next accomplishment, Watson and his team have big plans to bring Broward County customers the maximum value a modern library can provide, no matter who—or where—they are.

“As a library system, we’re constantly evolving, we’re adapting,” Watson says. “That’s what the library has to do, just like any other organization or company that serves the public.

“We’ve done projects like working with our buses,” he says, “advertising the library and also connecting people to our electronic resources on the bus, because the buses are equipped with Wi-Fi. We did a similar thing with our parks. It’s always warm here in South Florida, so we have a lot of those outside gyms. We launched a pilot last fall for people to connect to music while they walk the trails or exercise.

“You have to stay relevant,” he says. “There are so many other things that people could be doing versus going to the library. I’m trying to make sure they’re always coming back.”

Megan Labrise is a staff writer and co-host of the Fully Booked podcast.



Libraries Director Kelvin Watson elected as a PLA Director-at-Large

Posted by: [Carma Henry](#) Posted date: April 19, 2018 In: [Feature](#), [Local News](#) | comment : [0](#)



Libraries Director Kelvin Watson elected as a PLA Director-at-Large

Will begin serving three-year term in late June 2018

BROWARD COUNTY, FL – Broward County Libraries Division Director Kelvin Watson has been elected as one of two new directors-at-large of the Public Libraries Association (PLA). His three-year term will begin immediately after the American Library Association's 2018 Annual Conference, which takes place in New Orleans from June 21-26, 2018.

"It is an honor to have been selected by my peers to serve as one of the PLA's directors-at-large," says Watson. "I'm looking forward to working within the PLA to further explore ways to expand the reach of libraries in the communities they serve and to broaden access to the vast educational, technological, and recreational resources and services public libraries provide."

Watson was named Director of Broward County Libraries Division in February 2017. Since then he has led ambitious and innovative initiatives that have made the Library a force in bridging the community's digital divide and strengthened the Library's connection to the communities it serves.

His initiatives include the Veterans Connect Program, which provides free portable Internet service to veterans, active-duty military, and their dependents as well as events and outreach targeted specifically to veterans; the "Your ID Is Your Key" service that makes digital library cards available to all Broward County public school students; and the launch of the GoChip, a device preloaded with a season of a premiere TV show that customers can check out. He's also overseen the launch of the Library's new "Reach Out, Reach Up!" program to assist formerly incarcerated

individuals in reintegrating into society by offering participants services that provide job readiness training, technology skills, literacy, and educational programs.

Additionally, Watson spearheaded partnerships that offer access to Broward County Library's collection of free downloadable and streaming music to Broward County Transit bus riders and visitors to Broward County parks and forged a collaborative partnership with T-Mobile that provides underserved members of the community with technological access and training that increase educational and vocational opportunities. Under his leadership, the library's collection management system has been decentralized and staff at all 38 locations are now empowered to select materials that best serve their communities.

Throughout his career he has remained active and involved in professional associations and, in addition to recent election to the PLA Board of Directors, is currently the immediate past President of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. Watson is a frequent speaker and panelist at conferences and the recipient of numerous awards; including the 2017 DEMCO/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence in Librarianship. He has worked tirelessly to evolve the library's role in the community as "the inviter of the uninvited."

Watson is one of six PLA directors-at-large serving on the PLA Board of Directors, and the first director-at-large from Broward County.

The PLA, which is headquartered in Chicago, is the largest association dedicated to supporting the unique and evolving needs of public library professionals. Founded in 1944, PLA serves nearly 9,000 members in public libraries large and small in communities across the United States and Canada, with a growing presence around the world. PLA strives to help its members shape the essential institution of public libraries by serving as an indispensable ally for public library leaders.

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-ne-broward-library-online-books-20190920-jfuetwhskngupbut2e5c7hprji-story.html>

This library offers online books, videos and music for free — no matter where you live



By **Larry Barszewski** South Florida Sun Sentinel | Sep 20, 2019 | 4:47 PM



Travelers pass the FLLibrary between Terminals 3 and 4 at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, where visitors can download free music, videos and books from the Broward County library system. (Amy Beth Bennett / South Florida Sun Sentinel)

You now can download a bestselling book, a hit song or a video at no charge. A **plan to make people feel welcome in Broward** has opened up the county's online library collections to the world.

The free access is available to anyone who logs onto the county's website at broward.org/Library and **applies for** an Instant eCard.

Access is also offered to airline passengers passing through Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and to people using county parks, who can scan a Quick Response (QR) code to apply for an online library access card and immediately begin making downloads.

The online cards are offered to anyone who lives, works or attends school in Broward County, or who is just visiting the county or who was born in the county. But they are set up so anyone can take advantage of them.

“I’d like to see as many people reading from anywhere in the world as possible. Anybody who’s reading, who’s coming through Broward, is a benefit to us,” Commissioner **Michael Udine** said. **“I have no problem if we’re subsidizing a small amount, somebody who’s reading a book who is not from Broward County.”**

Once an application is made, the library quickly sends an email with a library card number and pin, which allows users to connect to a variety of online services paid for by the county. Mobile users can also download free apps for the different services to make it easier to access those collections.

Some of the online resources are:

- OverDrive, which provides eBooks, eAudiobooks and videos, and includes New York Times best sellers.
- Freegal, a music service that allows cardholders to download up to six free songs a week — and keep them forever. Unlimited streaming of music also is possible.
- Hoopla, which has movies, music, eAudiobooks, eBooks, comics and TV shows that can be streamed or downloaded.
- Axix 360, which has eBooks for children and young adults.
- RBdigital Magazines, which includes hundreds of popular publications.
- Rosetta Stone, which can be used to learn foreign languages.

“Another reason we’re doing this is not just to provide a service to visitors, it also raises awareness of what libraries offer,” library spokesman **Stephen Grubb** said.

A cost to taxpayers

Rita Lipof, a library worker, said the open-access policy is not fair to county taxpayers, who are footing the bill for the nonresidents using the collections. It means longer wait lists for the most popular books, forcing the county to buy more copies to meet the demand, she said, and it gives nonresidents access to other music, books and videos that the county pays a fee per download.

“I do not think it is the goal of Broward County Library to provide online resources for non-Broward County residents,” Lipof told county commissioners. **“It’s great if you’re at the airport and you’re coming from another place and now you can get all these free eBooks, but it also would be great if we handed out \$20 bills. People would like that, too.”**

Some of the online services charge the county an annual fee, while others charge by the download. OverDrive costs the county \$1.2 million annually, Freegal \$170,000 and Hoopla \$230,000, officials said.

Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties don’t offer any similar nonresident access to their online collections, officials with those programs said. **Nonresidents can purchase regular library cards that are good at each county’s libraries and online. Palm Beach County’s cost \$95 for a year or \$55 for a half year, while Miami-Dade’s costs \$65 for a year.**

Leila Khalil, a Miami-Dade library spokeswoman, said most nonresidents can access free digital services through the library systems where they live.

Growing popular

There is a rising demand in Broward for the digital resources. The library **system’s total** digital circulation went from 1.75 million in the first 10 months

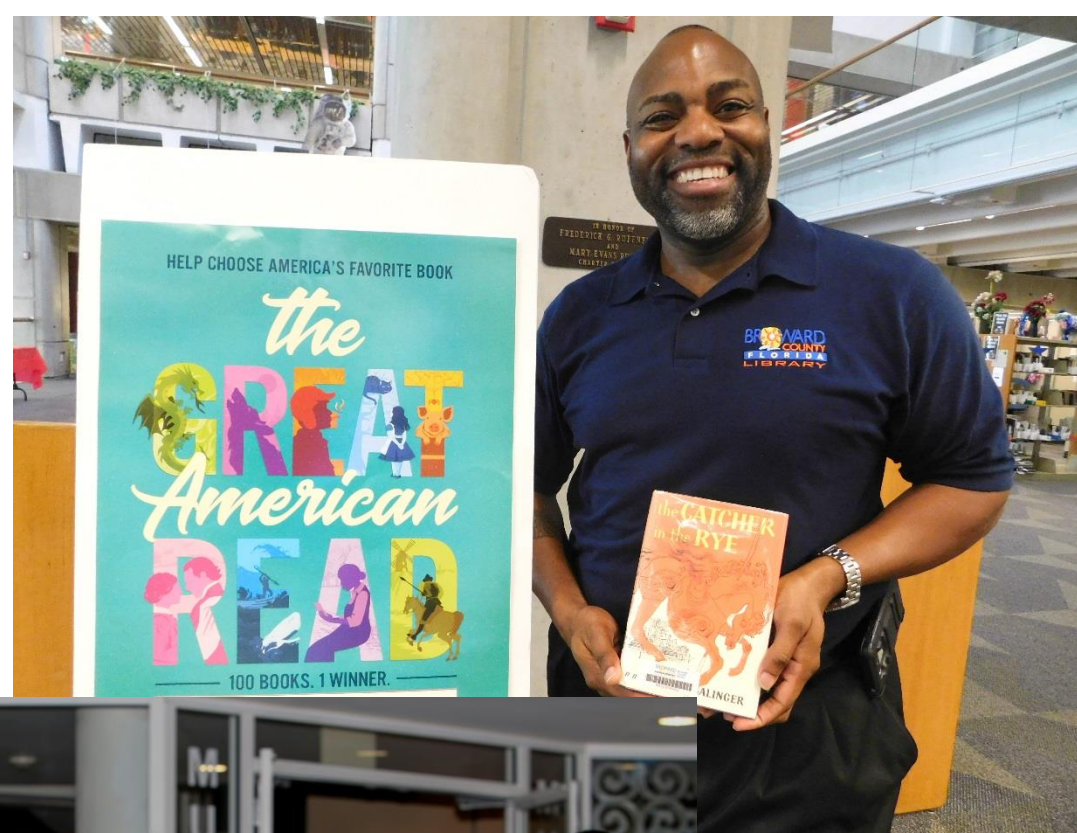
of Fiscal Year 2018 to 2.12 million for the first 10 months of Fiscal Year 2019, a 22 percent increase.

So far, Broward County officials aren't worried that nonresidents will bankrupt its online programs. Nonresidents make up only a small portion of all cardholders, said Broward Library Division Director Kelvin Watson. Any increase in wait lists for the most popular items is due more to the rising number of county residents having library cards than to outsiders, he said.

In the past three years, nonresidents made up only 10 percent of the eCards issued, or 5,796 of 56,978, officials said. The nonresident portion drops to 2 percent when you include the 205,974 Broward residents who have received regular library cards that can also be used to access the online services.

Advertisement

County Administrator Bertha Henry said the county will gather more statistics about the program so it can gauge the impact out-of-county residents are having on **the system. "It's expected that we're going to have people who do** not live here access those readers, but it was just one more addition to how do **we make our visitors feel welcome," Henry said.**



16TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING INSPIRATIONAL BREAKFAST



Irma Hunter Wesley of Fort Lauderdale is noted for her passion and dedication to early learning. In the Broward County early care and education community, Mrs. Irma, as she is affectionately called, is an engaging early learning professional with a heart focused on the futures of all children. She is the Executive Director of the Irma Hunter Wesley Fort Lauderdale Child Development Center located in the heart of the Sistrunk Community.

She received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Nova Southeastern University and a Certification in Early Childhood from Florida Atlantic University. She is the wife of the late Sylvester G. Wesley and has raised six children, who all have college degrees. She began working in the field of early learning in 1969, and has continued this focus of guiding children to be good citizens and lifetime learners. She has cared for thousands of children during her illustrious career.

As an early care and education provider, Mrs. Irma makes a daily impact on the educational futures of Broward County's children. Children attending Irma Hunter Wesley Fort Lauderdale Child Development Center experience her enthusiasm for learning every day.

Mrs. Irma believes that developing a child is different from just keeping or looking after a child. Mrs. Irma has stated many times: "I believe in tender loving care. Research has found that the first three years of a child's life are the most crucial and since I get them when they are six weeks old, I can work to build a good self-concept, to make them think they can do anything." Mrs. Irma has clearly made the distinction between a childcare facility and a babysitting facility. In fact, she is the only black woman to design a city building; namely the Ft. Lauderdale Child Development Center. She collaborated with the architects and had her office placed in the middle of all the classrooms so she could look into each one.

Breaking down the barriers to early education cannot be accomplished without a dedicated staff. Perhaps the most important aspect of Mrs. Irma's career is her ability to surround herself with loyal and dedicated people. Many of her staff have been with her for over 10, 15, 20, 35 and 42 years. The center has a special magic in the workplace that keeps her staff coming to work each day. There is a saying, "Do what you love, and love will be your reward."

Mrs. Irma has always been at the forefront of early learning in Broward County. She works with young parents and grandparents to create a community that celebrates learning. Her legacy in the early care community will continue, as she is highly respected by her colleagues and serve as a role model for others in early childhood education. Mrs. Irma has been recognized for her many contributions to Broward County. She has been honored by the 100 Black Men of Broward County and was selected for best exemplifying the principles of Kwanzaa, and Humanitarian Award from the Vanguard Chronicle for her outstanding work. In addition, she has served as Board Member for the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. She was a recipient of the Jim Moran Foundation Award for 2004 for Lifetime Achievement and Community Service as well as recipient in 2000 of the JM Family's American-American Achiever Award in the Health and Family Services category.

From: [Tim McGovern](#)
To: [Karen Newhart](#)
Cc: [Angela Sabina](#); [Chaz Adams](#); [Tim McGovern](#)
Subject: FW: Walk of Fame Honoree
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2020 10:51:49 AM
Attachments: [Irmalrma Hunter Wesley.pdf](#)

From: Tracy Roach <TRoach@fortlauderdale.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 1:48 PM
To: Tim McGovern <TMcGovern@fortlauderdale.gov>
Subject: RE: Walk of Fame Honoree

Resume attached for Irma Wesley. Sorry I said Westbrook.

Tracy Roach

*Assistant to Vice Mayor Robert L. McKinzie
City of Fort Lauderdale, District III
For event information, visit our [website](#)
954-828-5011 (o)
954-828-5667 (f)*

From: Tracy Roach
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2020 2:45 PM
To: Tim McGovern <TMcGovern@fortlauderdale.gov>
Subject: Walk of Fame Honoree

Please submit Irma Westbrook's name. I will email the resume next week.

Have a great weekend!

Tracy Roach

*Assistant to Vice Mayor Robert L. McKinzie
City of Fort Lauderdale, District III
For event information, visit our [website](#)
954-828-5011 (o)
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