

Prelude To Maturity

THE FIRST THIRTEEN YEARS
OF THE
WILTON MANORS WOMANS CLUB

IT BEGAN LIKE THIS -

WILMA WAS BORN IN A LITTLE VILLAGE IN SOUTH FLORIDA ON APRIL 5, 1949. THE NAME OF THE TOWN IS WILTON MANORS AND WILMA'S FULL NAME IS THE WILTON MANORS WOMANS CLUB, BUT THAT IS MUCH TOO BIG A MOUTHFUL FOR A LITTLE GIRL, SO FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS BRIEF BIOGRAPHY WE WILL CALL HER WILMA WOCL.

WHEN WILMA CAME INTO THE WORLD HER FAMILY WAS VERY SMALL AND LITTLE KNOWN, BUT BY THE TIME OF HER CHRISTENING (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS BEING CHARTERED) THE TOTAL NUMBER IN THE WOCL FAMILY WAS 32. IN THE BRIEF SPAN OF 13 YEARS, FOR WILMA HAS NOW REACHED THAT VERY INTERESTING AGE, HER FAMILY HAS GROWN TO 85 AND HAS BECOME A WELL RESPECTED, INTEGRAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY LIVE, HAVING GROWN IN WISDOM AND STATURE.

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THE WOCLS DID AFTER WILMA'S BIRTH WAS TO SELECT A FLOWER AND COLORS WHICH WERE TO BE FOR WILMA ALONE, TO CARRY WITH HER THROUGHOUT HER LIFE. AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION THE HIBISCUS WAS CHOSEN AS HER FLOWER AND DELPH BLUE AND YELLOW HER COLORS.

BEING GREAT ADMIRERS OF THE RULES OF MR. ROBERTS AND EMMA FOX, WILMA'S FAMILY CHANGED THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY ONCE A YEAR. THE NEW HEAD OF THE FAMILY, ALONG WITH OTHERS SELECTED, GUIDED THE FAMILY IN MAKING DECISIONS IN A DEMOCRATIC AND ORDERLY WAY. WITH THE SELECTION OF EACH NEW GROUP THERE WAS ALWAYS A BIG CELEBRATION (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN INSTALLATION) AND WILMA LOOKED FORWARD WITH DELIGHT TO THIS TIME, WHEN SHE WORE HER PRETTIEST DRESS AND HAD LUNCH IN A BEAUTIFUL HOTEL.

WILMA'S FAMILY LIVED IN A RATHER CRUDE STRUCTURE AT THIS TIME BUT IT WAS A WARM AND FRIENDLY PLACE. ACTUALLY, THE WOCLS WERE ONLY ONE OF THE FAMILIES SHARING THE BUILDING - IT WAS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND MANY GAY TIMES WERE HAD THERE. APPROPRIATELY, IT WAS CALLED THE VILLAGE HALL. SHORTLY AFTER WILMA'S BIRTH, HER FAMILY PURCHASED 36 CHAIRS AND A LARGE TABLE FOR THE BUILDING. THIS WAS A GREAT ADDITION TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE HALL, BUT VERY SOON THE WOCLS BEGAN PUTTING A LITTLE ASIDE EACH MONTH WITH THE DREAM OF HAVING THEIR OWN HOME SOMEDAY.

WILMA'S FIRST CHRISTMAS WAS AN EXCITING ONE. HER FAMILY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE A COMMUNITY SING AROUND A CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE PARK. THE CHILDREN OF WILTON MANORS WERE ROUNDED UP FOR THE "SING" AND THE WOCLS SERVED REFRESHMENTS TO THE HAPPY CHILDREN AFTERWARDS.

1950 WAS A VERY BUSY YEAR. THE VILLAGE HAD MANY NEEDS AND THE WOCLS PITCHED IN AND HELPED MEET THEM. THE FIRST CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE WAS STARTED THAT YEAR, KNOWN AS THE COMMUNITY CHURCH, AND THE FIRST SERVICES WERE HELD IN THE HIGHLAND ESTATES CIVIC CLUB BUILDING. THE WOCLS FURNISHED CAKES AND PIES AND AIDED IN SERVING A BARBECUE DINNER TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CHURCH. A CARNIVAL WAS HELD TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, AND AGAIN THEY ASSISTED.

IN FACT, THERE WERE MANY CARNIVALS, BARBECUES AND FIESTAS IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS, ALL FOR VERY WORTHWHILE CIVIC PROJECTS, AND THE WOCLS COULD USUALLY BE FOUND AT THE SAME OLD STAND - THE CAKE AND PIE DEPARTMENT.

ALSO IN 1950 IT WAS REALIZED BY THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE THAT A SCHOOL WAS BADLY NEEDED. MEMBERS OF WILMA'S FAMILY ACCOMPANIED OTHER CITIZENS TO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS, TO ACQUAINT THE BOARD WITH THE SITUATION. ONE SUCH TRIP WAS A VERY NOISY ONE - A MOTOR CAVALCADE, COMPLETE WITH POLICE ESCORT AND A STEADY HONKING OF HORNS, WHICH CERTAINLY LET THE SCHOOL BOARD KNOW THEY WERE THERE. IT COULDN'T BE SAID WITH CERTAINTY THAT THE MOTOR CAVALCADE WAS "THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK" BUT RESISTANCE TO A SCHOOL IN WILTON MANORS DID DIMINISH RATHER QUICKLY AND BEFORE LONG A BEAUTIFUL SCHOOL WAS ERECTED. TO SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION, THE WOCLS SERVED REFRESHMENTS AND SERVED AS HOSTESSES WHEN THE NEW SCHOOL HELD IT'S OPEN HOUSE. THEIR INTEREST IN THE SCHOOL DID NOT SUBSIDE. DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SCHOOL THEY HAD BOOTHS AT PTA CARNIVALS AND HELD SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PURCHASING BOOKS FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.

THE VILLAGE HALL WAS BEING USED MORE AND MORE AND NEEDED SOME FINISHING TOUCHES TO MAKE IT MORE PRACTICAL AND ATTRACTIVE. MANY MEN IN THE VILLAGE VOLUNTEERED THEIR SERVICES TO GET THIS WORK DONE AND THE WOCLS SERVED FOOD TO THE WORKERS DURING THEIR BRIEF RESPITES FROM LABOR.

A CHICKEN PILEAU SUPPER WAS SERVED BY THE WOCLS TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE ALTERATIONS. THE FAMILY HAD A LOT OF FUN ON THIS PROJECT. THE CHICKEN PILEAU (PRONOUNCED PER-LOO) WAS SUGGESTED BY A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY WHO HAD COME FROM NORTH FLORIDA. SHE HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE MANNER OF THE OLD SOUTH, COMPLETE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD SOUTHERN COOKING, BUT CHICKEN "PER-LOO" WAS A STRANGER TO THE REST OF THE FAMILY. THOUGH THEY COULD NEVER QUITE RECONCILE THE SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION OF THE DISH, THEY LEARNED HOW TO MAKE IT AND AGREED IT WAS DELICIOUS.

THE WOCLS WERE ALSO GIVING SOME THOUGHT TO THE FUTURE OF THEIR OWN FAMILY. BEING INTERESTED IN CULTURAL PURSUITS (WILMA MUST LEARN TO SING!) IT WAS DECIDED THAT A PIANO WAS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE. A FUND WAS STARTED TO PURCHASE A PIANO BUT IN A VERY SHORT TIME A GOOD USED ONE WAS AVAILABLE AND IT WAS DECIDED TO BUY IT WITH TIME PAYMENTS. WILMA AND ALL HER FRIENDS REALLY ENJOYED THAT FIRST PIANO AND IT WAS LATER TRADED IN FOR A BETTER ONE.

A CENSUS WAS TAKEN THE NEXT YEAR OF THE FAST-GROWING VILLAGE. OF COURSE WILMA KNEW JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN TOWN SO SHE TOOK THE CENSUS, AND MANY GROUPS USED IT.

WILMA'S FAMILY IS A CARD-LOVING BUNCH. ABOUT THIS TIME THEY BEGAN GIVING CARD PARTIES, BOTH FOR PLEASURE AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF JUST ABOUT EVERY WORTHWHILE CAUSE THAT CAME ALONG. THE PARTIES BEGAN WITH BINGO (WHICH WAS LEGAL THEN WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF ASKING A WINNER WHO WAS BURIED IN GRANT'S TOMB), PROGRESSED THROUGH THE CANASTA-SAMBA RAGE, AND SETTLED DOWN

PRETTY MUCH TO BRIDGE PARTIES, WITH A FEW SIX-SOMES STILL PLAYING A VERY ADVANCED VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL CANASTA, AND AN OCCASIONAL TABLE OF PINOCHLE FOR VARIETY.

ONE OF THE FIRST BENEFIT CARD PARTIES WAS FOR HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL, THEN BEING ERECTED IN THE NORTH END OF THE COUNTY.

RUMMAGE SALES ALSO BEGAN AS A BIG SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR THE WOCLS. ONCE A YEAR THEY COULD BE SEEN, BEFORE DAWN, SILENTLY DRIVING TO COLORED TOWN, THEIR CARS LADEN WITH CAST-OFF CLOTHING AND ALL SORTS OF WHAT-CHA-MA-CALL-ITS IMAGINABLE. AND OH YES, THE VERY NECESSARY THERMOSES OF HOT COFFEE AND BAGS OF DOUGHNUTS TO KEEP THEM AWAKE!

ABOUT THIS TIME THE VILLAGE OF WILTON MANORS, BY AN ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE, BECAME THE CITY OF WILTON MANORS. WILMA'S FAMILY HAD GROWN, TOO, AND NOW NUMBERED ABOUT 50.

THE NEXT BIG PROJECT WILMA ATTEMPTED WAS THE PUBLISHING OF A COOK BOOK, WITH FAVORITE RECIPES OF MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY BEING USED. TWO OF THE WOMEN SUBMITTED A RECIPE FOR BARBECUED CHICKEN - EACH STATING THAT HER HUSBAND THOUGHT HER BARBECUED CHICKEN THE BEST EVER EATEN. BEING ON THE FRIENDLIEST OF TERMS, EACH WOMAN OFFERED TO WITHDRAW HER RECIPE. RESULT - NO RECIPE FOR BARBECUED CHICKEN IN THE COOK BOOK!

IN 1952 WILMA'S ATTENTION WAS BROUGHT TO THE NEED FOR GIRL SCOUTING IN WILTON MANORS. SHE ORGANIZED AND SPONSORED THE FIRST TWO TROOPS, INTERMEDIATE TROOP #43 AND BROWNIE TROOP #44, AND CONTINUED TO SPONSOR THESE TROOPS UNTIL THEY BECAME INACTIVE SEVERAL YEARS LATER. SHE SPONSORED OTHER TROOPS - SOMETIMES AS MANY AS FIVE IN ONE YEAR. WILMA'S FAMILY HELPED THE GIRL SCOUTS IN MANY WAYS. ONE YEAR MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY TAUGHT TROOP #44 TO DO TEXTILE PAINTING. WILMA CONTRIBUTED SILK SCRAPS AND THE GIRLS PAINTED LOVELY DESIGNS ON THEM, THEN MAKING THEM INTO SACHETS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR THEIR MOTHERS AND FOR PATIENTS OF A NURSING HOME. ANOTHER TIME SOME OF THE WOCLS PAINTED SCENERY FOR A PLAY GIVEN BY A SCOUT TROOP AND THE PLAY WAS GIVEN SEVERAL TIMES, INCLUDING A PERFORMANCE FOR WILMA'S FAMILY. THE GIRL SCOUT COOKIE SALES HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY SUPPORTED AND THEIR TROOP CEREMONIES ATTENDED. IN RETURN, THE GIRL SCOUTS HAVE PROVIDED MANY AN INTERESTING PROGRAM IN THE WOCL HOME.

THE SEMINOLE INDIANS HAVE ALWAYS HELD WILMA'S INTEREST AND SHE HAS CONSISTENTLY AIDED THEM WITH CLOTHING, FOOD AND EDUCATION. THROUGH WILMA'S INTEREST IN THE SEMINOLES, THE GIRL SCOUTS DEVELOPED A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THEM. ON ONE THANKSGIVING DAY TROOP #43 COOKED AND ATE THEIR DINNER ON THE RESERVATION WITH THE SEMINOLES. AT A PARTY GIVEN BY A SCOUT TROOP FOR SOME SEMINOLE FRIENDS ONE OF WILMA'S FAMILY FOUND HERSELF TIED, ANKLE TO ANKLE, TO A GROWN SEMINOLE MAN, WHILE HOPPING AROUND THE ROOM PARTICIPATING IN A GAME OF POPPING SUSPENDED BALLOONS. THERE WAS A BRIEF MOMENT WHEN SHE WONDERED IF THIS WASN'T A BIT TOO MUCH "TOGETHERNESS".

IN 1955 A BABY WAS BORN TO THE WOCLS AND A NEW BRANCH OF THE FAMILY BEGAN. THEY WERE CALLED THE JUNIOR WOCLS AND WILMA FELT A SURGE OF PRIDE IN HELPING THEM GET STARTED. SHE WAS A MOTHER, GRANDMOTHER, AUNT AND COUSIN ALL ROLLED INTO ONE. COINCIDENTAL WITH THE BIRTH OF THE NEW BABY, WILMA AND HER FAMILY SAW THE PROMISE OF THEIR DREAM COME TRUE; THEY FOUND FRIENDS TO HELP THEM SECURE A NEW HOME. TWO FRIENDS IN PARTICULAR OFFERED THEIR AID AND WORK BEGAN. THE GROUND-BREAKING FOR THE NEW HOME TOOK PLACE IN APRIL OF 1955. AMID THE GREAT JUBILATION THERE WERE STORM CLOUDS. SOME NEIGHBORS OF THE NEW HOME-SITE DIDN'T THINK THE WOCLS WOULD BE VERY DESIRABLE, BECAUSE OF THEIR VERY LARGE FAMILY. THEY THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE LOTS OF NOISE AND LINES OF GARBAGE CANS IN THE YARD. AGAIN WITH THE HELP OF A GOOD FRIEND, THIS OBSTACLE WAS SURMOUNTED AND IN TIME THE NEIGHBORS LEARNED TO APPRECIATE WHAT LOVELY PEOPLE THE WOCLS WERE. REALLY MUCH MORE DESIRABLE THAN THE TRUMPET-PLAYING AND PRACTICING BOY NEXT DOOR!

MANY THINGS WERE NEEDED FOR THE NEW HOME AND SO MANY GOOD FRIENDS CAME TO THE RESCUE. THE JUNIOR WOCLS GAVE THEM CHAIRS AND LATER GAVE THEM TWO BEAUTIFUL SILVER SERVICES FOR TEA AND COFFEE. BY SECURING ADS FOR THE TABLE TOPS IT WAS POSSIBLE TO ACQUIRE A LARGE NUMBER OF CARD TABLES, AND THEN THE CARD PARTIES INCREASED IN SIZE AND MOMENTUM. THE OLD PIANO HAD BEEN LEFT IN THEIR OLD HOME FOR THE USE OF OTHERS AND A NEW MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OFFERED HER BABY GRAND AT A BARGAIN PRICE. IT WAS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED. MORE THAN HALF OF THE COST OF THE CARPETING WAS DONATED.

THE FAMILY HAD IT'S FIRST PARTY IN THEIR NEW HOME DECEMBER 20, 1955. IT WAS A LOVELY CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR WILMA.

THE FIRST DINNERS SERVED IN THE NEW HOME WERE A LITTLE FRANTIC. THE KITCHEN EQUIPMENT WAS QUITE COMPLETE BUT DISHES AND SILVER WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY PURCHASED, SO WILMA'S AUNTS AND COUSINS ARRIVED FOR DINNERS WITH BASKETS FULL OF EVERYTHING BUT THE PROVERBIAL KITCHEN SINK.

A HOUSEWARMING PARTY WAS GIVEN FEBRUARY 25, 1956 AND ALL THE RELATIVES WERE INVITED. WHILE SHE WAS SOAKING UP WORDS OF ADMIRATION FOR THE NEW HOME, WILMA ALSO HEARD LOTS OF THE USUAL "KINFOLK" COMMENT, "MY HOW YOU'VE GROWN!"

LANDSCAPING WAS DONATED AND THE LAWN WAS SPRIGGED. THE BABY GRASS HAD TO HAVE TENDER, LOVING CARE TO GET A GOOD START, WHICH WAS NO SMALL JOB. HUSBANDS COULD BE HEARD GRUMBLING, AS THE WOMEN LUGGED HOSES INTO THEIR CARS, TOOK THEM TO THE WOCL HOME AND STOOD OUT IN THE VERY COLD WEATHER WATERING THE GRASS, "WELL, I'LL BE DARNED - SHE NEVER WORKED THAT HARD ON OUR LAWN!"

IN 1957 THE VILLAGE HALL CEASED TO EXIST AS SUCH AND WAS CONVERTED INTO A BEAUTIFUL NEW CITY LIBRARY. MEMBERS OF THE WOCL FAMILY CONTRIBUTED MATERIALS FOR PUNCH AND MADE COOKIES FOR THE OPEN HOUSE.

NOW THAT THE NEW HOME WAS WELL ON IT'S WAY TO BEING COMPLETE, MORE THOUGHT COULD BE GIVEN TO WILMA'S CULTURAL GROWTH. A PROSE AND POETRY WRITING CONTEST FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WILTON MANORS SCHOOL WAS INSTIGATED, TO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG IN THIS CREATIVE LINE. PRIZES WERE

AWARDED THE WINNERS AND THIS HAS CONTINUED TO BE A MOST GRATIFYING, ANNUAL PROJECT.

MANY KINDS OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT CLASSES WERE FORMED. THERE WERE SOME STUDYING CONVERSATIONAL SPANISH, OTHERS LEARNING THE ART OF TEXTILE PAINTING, STILL OTHERS IN STUDY GROUPS DELVING INTO SUCH SUBJECTS AS THE THREAT OF COMMUNISM.

NOW IN HER PRE-TEENS, WILMA BECAME VERY INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND HER. SHE HELD A BENEFIT CARD PARTY FOR THE CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY AND ENCOURAGED PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THIS ORGANIZATION. SHE SPENT A DAY OBSERVING THE PROCEDURE OF THE JUVENILE COURT; THIS HAS ALSO BECOME AN ANNUAL ACTIVITY.

SO WE FIND WILMA AT THE CLOSE OF CHILDHOOD AND READY FOR THE EXCITING TEENS. DURING HER TWELFTH YEAR SHE HAS HAD MANY NEW EXPERIENCES. HER FAMILY HAS GROWN TO 85 AND TOGETHER THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW IN KNOWLEDGE AND TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE SPACE AGE AHEAD. LATIN-AMERICA, OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE SOUTH, HAVE BEEN STUDIED FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PROBLEMS; THE SECRETS OF THE DEEP HAVE BEEN EXPLORED. WILMA HAS NOT BEEN DULLED BY WORK: THOUGH WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE DOES BRING IT'S OWN SATISFACTION, THERE MUST BE FUN AND PLAY FOR WELL-ROUNDED GROWTH. THERE HAVE BEEN PARTIES AND SUPPERS AND TALES FROM WORLD TRAVELERS - AND ALWAYS THE GROUP SINGING. AT THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY MEMBERS EXCHANGED GIFTS THAT WERE ESPECIALLY APPRECIATED SINCE THEY ALL WERE HOME-MADE. WILMA LOVED THE PARTY DECORATIONS, SET AROUND THE THEME OF A LITTLE GIRL'S CHRISTMAS DREAM. EXTENDING THE USUAL ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW TO INCLUDE HOBBIES, NEW DEPTHS OF PERSONALITY WERE DISCOVERED. A HAWAIIAN LUAU WAS GIVEN, COMPLETE WITH ISLAND FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT: A DELIGHTFUL EVENING FOR ALL WHO ATTENDED.

NOW IT IS TIME TO SAY "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TEEN-AGER" TO WILMA. SHE HAS GONE THROUGH THE CRAWLING AND TODDLING STAGES WITHOUT TOO MANY BUMPS AND BRUISES, TO STAND ON HER OWN TWO FEET. WE WHO HAVE WATCHED HER GROW TAKE PRIDE IN HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HER APPROACHING MATURITY. INTERESTING NEW FACETS OF HER POTENTIALITIES WILL BE SEEN TO DEVELOPE AS SHE CONTINUES TO GROW. THOSE WHO HAVE GUIDED HER SO WELL IN THE PAST WILL SURELY SEE THAT HER FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. IT IS NOT WITH REGRET THAT WE SEE WILMA PASSING FROM CHILDHOOD INTO YOUNG WOMANHOOD, BUT WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION TO SEE HER DESTINY FULFILLED.

MAY GOD GUIDE US ALL.

Presented by:

Virginia Hagen
April 3, 1962