

## *74+ Years of Kiwanis Service in Wilton Manors—preserving the legacy*

The evolution of the Wilton Manors Kiwanis Club began after WWII, when the population of Wilton Manors grew dramatically, with many young families moving into the Village. The gentlemen of the community decided it was time to form a Kiwanis club to serve the children of those families. The officers were elected and installed on September 19, 1950, and the Club's official charter was presented November 25, 1950.

In 1952, one of the Club's first projects was to raise funds and build a baseball diamond on a lot adjacent to the new elementary school on 26th Street.

James Dean, served as president in 1953. In 1958 he donated land for a Clubhouse. The Club borrowed money from the members to build the structure. It was completed at the end of 1958 and included a kitchen, auditorium meeting room, and two bathrooms. The Clubhouse provided the Kiwanians a venue for a variety of major fund-raising events during the year. You may remember the Pancake Festivals (which one year attracted over 1500 guests), Chili Cook Offs, Spaghetti Dinners, Steak and Fries, Fish Fries, Burgoo Kentucky BBQs, Pumpkin Patch and Christmas Tree lot.

Revenue from these events, as well a rental of the Clubhouse itself, was used to sponsor a variety of Youth Activities; including Kid's Day, Little League, Soap Box Derby, Boy Scout Troop 115, and in the mid 1990's, stewardship of Kiwanis Park (later expanded and renamed Island City Park Preserve). The proceeds were also used to fund numerous other programs for Wilton Manors children, seniors, police officers, and city employees.

Over decades, various Wilton Manors community service organizations were formed, flourished, then would struggle with recruiting new members and ultimately folded. The Wilton Manors Kiwanis Club lasted the longest, with over 74 years of service. But it too saw the end was approaching and made plans to liquidate and disband.

In 2021 the Kiwanis Club approached the City about purchasing the Clubhouse property. For a number of reasons, the City Commission was reluctant to add another property to the park system. So the Club voted to move forward with selling the waterfront property on the open-market. The property sold on June 9, 2022 for \$883,100.

To ensure a continuing legacy of supporting the community in the future, the remaining members voted to use most of the proceeds to establish a number of targeted endowed scholarships through the *Broward College Foundation*; and to fund certain program areas through the *Broward Education Foundation* and the *Florida Kiwanis Foundation*.

Learn more about the history and legacy of the ***Wilton Manors Kiwanis Club*** at <https://tinyurl.com/kiwanishistory>