

BROWARD COUNTY



49TH ANNUAL

PIONEER DAY

HONORING BROWARD'S PIONEER SPIRIT

2025



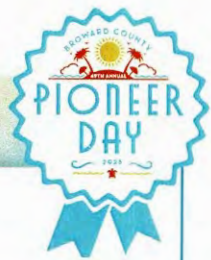
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025
Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center
1770 Monroe St, Hollywood, FL 33020



**Hollywood
Historical
Society**



BROWARD.ORG/HISTORY



JOSEPH L. GALLEGOS



JOSEPH GALLEGOS graduated from the University of Florida in 1972 with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Secondary Education, earning state certification. He later earned a Master of Public Administration from Florida International University in 1982.

In April 1999, he began what would become a 16-year tenure as City Manager of Wilton Manors. “I had the great fortune to work with elected officials and department directors who, despite differing views, always came together for the good of the city,” he reflects.



Under his leadership, Wilton Manors transformed from a quiet bedroom community into a vibrant Urban Village. The rise of Wilton Drive as an entertainment and economic hub marked a turning point in the city’s renaissance. One of his proudest achievements was securing community support for a new City Hall, Police Department, and Emergency Operations Center—replacing the outdated 1957 facility. “It took a lot of outreach, but over 60% of voters said yes.” He also oversaw the revitalization of the city’s six community parks, now central to Wilton Manors’ charm. In retirement, he and his wife Hope remain active through the Kiwanis Club, proudly affirming, “Life is just better here.”

Nominated by the City of Wilton Manors and Wilton Manors Historical Society

WILTON MANORS

Before it was named Wilton Manors, the area in which Wilton Manors is now located was known as Colohatchee. The name Wilton Manors was created by a land developer from Georgia in 1925. Ned Willingham led the early development of the town, and Wilton Manors was officially incorporated as a municipality in 1947.



WHEREAS, Joseph Gallegos served with distinction as the City Manager of Wilton Manors for sixteen years beginning in April 1999, guiding the city through a transformative era with vision, integrity, and unwavering dedication; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, Wilton Manors evolved from a quiet bedroom community into a vibrant Urban Village, embracing its growing LGBTQ+ population and becoming a model of inclusive redevelopment and cultural vitality; and

WHEREAS, his tireless efforts led to the revitalization of Wilton Drive as an economic and entertainment hub, catalyzing a renaissance that redefined the city’s identity and ensured its continued success; and

WHEREAS, one of his most significant achievements was securing community support for a bond issue that enabled the construction of a new City Hall, Police Department, and Emergency Operations Center—replacing the aging 1957 facility and providing modern infrastructure to serve future generations; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gallegos oversaw the renewal of the city’s entire Parks and Recreation system, including major renovations to six community parks, which now serve as vibrant gathering spaces that foster connection and civic pride; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gallegos has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to public service and professional excellence through his involvement in numerous organizations, such as International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA) Palm Beach County PBCCCMA, Broward County BCC/CMA, Wilton Manors Main- Street Organization, and the Wilton Manors Business Association; and

WHEREAS, in retirement, Joseph Gallegos has remained active in the Wilton Manors community, particularly through the Kiwanis Club and its scholarship programs, continuing their legacy of service and love for the “Island City”; and

WHEREAS, we recognize Joseph Gallegos as a **Broward County Pioneer for 2025** honoring his enduring contributions to the City of Wilton Manors and the broader Broward County community. His legacy of leadership, innovation, and civic engagement continues to inspire future generations.

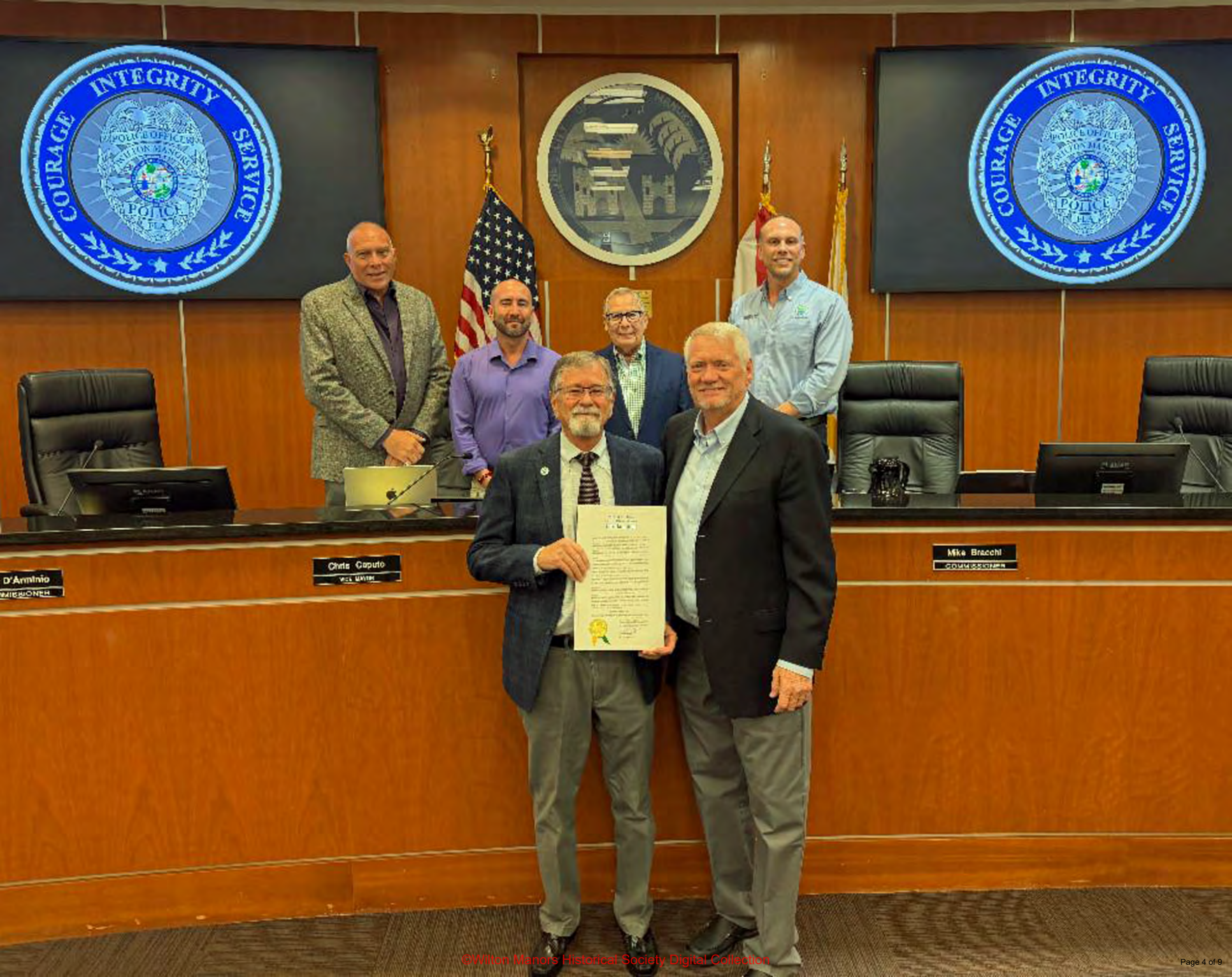
NOW, THEREFORE, BE PROCLAIMED BY THE CITY OF WILTON MANORS that Tuesday, October 14, 2025, be designated as:

JOSEPH GALLEGOS DAY

in the City of Wilton Manors and ask that everyone join me in congratulating him as the Wilton Manors 2025 Pioneer and wishing him the very best in his future endeavors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Wilton Manors to be affixed on this 14 day of October, 2025.

SCOTT NEWTON
MAYOR
The City of Wilton Manors



D'Armino
WILTON MANORS

Chris Caputo
WILTON MANORS

Mike Bracchi
WILTON MANORS

RETURN FORM BY EMAIL OR MAIL TO: Broward County Historic Preservation Board c/o Rick Ferrer

Email: hpb@broward.org or rferrer@broward.org

Mailing Address: Broward County, Urban Planning Division - Historic Preservation Program

1 N. University Drive, Box 102, Plantation, FL 33324

2025 PIONEER DAY NOMINATION AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM

In selecting a nominee for Broward County Pioneer, please include as a primary consideration the individual's contribution to his/her community. Length of residence in Broward County should not be the basis for selection. Please include sufficient biographical information and 2 photographs of the nominee (1 current; 1 'historical').

Nominating Entity (Including email, phone number):

Pioneer's Name:

Pioneer's Mailing Address (Including city, state, zip):

Pioneer's Telephone and Email:

Pioneer's Place and Date of Birth:

Date of arrival in Broward County; if born elsewhere:

Spouse/Domestic Partner Name (if applicable):

Child(rens) Name(s) (if applicable):

Mother's and Father's Names:

Education:

Memberships/Hobbies/Volunteerism:

Reminiscences of the Pioneer's Life in Broward County:

Joseph Gallegos - recollections of his time as Wilton Manors City Manager

Greatest challenges: I started with the City on April 1, 1999, I began in the Old City Hall/Police Station structure, fronting on NE 21st Court across from an huge overgrown lot (now the site of Gables Residential). The one-story structure was built, I recall in the late forties or early fifties, and was in terrible shape (leaks, vermin behind walls) In addition, a number of the City's records were then housed in an outdoor shed that had been flooded in hurricanes/storms destroying or damaging a good portion of those records. The Commission Chambers were located in a converted fire engine garage on the east side of the building.

We absolutely had to do something. The challenge in those days was to seek out individuals and groups in the community that would support the funding required for a new City Hall/Police Station through a Bond Issue and annual budgeting allocations. It was not easy, I recall a commissioner that led a group against any kind of increased taxes, improvements or any new development in the city. Ultimately, through a lot of personal outreaches with groups such as Main Street, the Wilton Manors Business Association, the Kiwanis Club, along with the then Police Chief and a couple nascent Neighborhood Associations were developed to be great supporters. The Bond Issue was approved by over 60% of the vote.

2. In terms of Most Memorable occasions, I was most happy at the ribbon cuttings of our renewal of our entire Parks and Recreation System (Now Leisure Services).

a) Hagen Park: was a tiny field shelter that had been closed in. The City's leadership team pursued a beautiful new building with a large community room, offices and a small community gym.

b) The Island City Park Preserve: consisted of a deteriorated one-bedroom house as the office, a severely broken sea wall along the North fork of the Middle River and one small playground that had been donated by the Kiwanis of WM . Now stands a new building with a Community meeting/rental space, with attached kitchen. A new capped sea-wall a boardwalk over-look and a verdant created Mangrove wild area.

c) Mickel Park: which was basically an unused property, with three little league ball fields (Little League had not played there in years). Subsequent to our design thoughts and construction it now has a beautiful performance shelter, walking paths, a kids splash pad, brand new playground, a small Police substation, a volleyball court and a neighborhood meeting room.

d) Don Eisele Park: was a small linear lot that went to the River on NW 29th Street just east of Power-line Road, After design and construction it has a floating dock, picnic structure, and sidewalks.

e) Snook Creek Park: was a small overgrown water access area; a new paved small boat ramp, parking lot for cars and small boat trailers along with a small shelter .

f) Richardson Park: Just a beautiful home; now a waterfront park along the South Fork, with wedding rentals and a community meeting space in the renovated home and grounds. Retired Broward County Judge George Richardson's desire to contribute his family estate to future generations of Wilton manors was truly magnificent (prior to being a Judge, he also served as the City Attorney for Wilton manors a few years). A great deal of appreciation goes to former WM and Fort Lauderdale Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler who partnered with staff to make the gift a reality

g) Colohatchee Park: Complete reconstruction of the Nature Boardwalk through the mangrove area with nature overlooks, new linear dock; concrete restrooms with repaved parking area.

h) New City Hall and Police Station: site of the old Piggly-Willy grocery store.

3. On the transition from the years of young families raising their kids, who subsequently moved for jobs, education, their own new families and so on, to a completely new Urban Village with an increasing gay population. This process was remarkable and ultimately essential to the success and growth of the City. So, I am sure this could be compared with "gentrification" that has occurred elsewhere. I think what is remarkable in the renaissance case of our City, was, in large part a result of the WM entertainment area pioneers that seized on the Wilton Drive opportunity. Foremost among them, George Kessinger, who opened Georgie's Alibi early on. Who's place still provides great food, a fun time and no negative going ons. Others are many including Nick Berry and his business partners are surely good ones. By way of history, the new residents purchased the older homes and performed magic in almost all cases renovating and beautifying the homes and properties; followed later of course, by multi-unit developments such as Wilton Station, Gables Residential, The Cosmopolitan, and others. ✓

Through conversation with many new LGBT residents, they related that they were looking for a quieter, accepting, safe, and organized community. Cities like Miami Beach, Boston, etc. where they first lived in predominately gay areas, became just too crazy..

I'll share that a career of 16 years in the City Manager position is unusual. I cannot say enough about the great team of Elected Officials and Department Directors I was lucky enough to have and to gather. These successes would also not have happened indeed without again, excellent elected Officials. Mayors and Commissioners over the years, who perhaps had different personal views, but always came through to support my teams vision because of a deep desire to do well for the City, its residents, visitors, and the City's employees.

4. Wilton Manors is essentially 'built out' with few remaining open, undeveloped residential or commercial parcels. However, for an attractive first-tier suburb like Wilton Manors, demolition and re-
construction is and will continue to be the rule (See today the new homes on NW 21 Court west of Andrews Ave and the West side of Andrews Avenue from around NW 29th Street to Oakland Park Boulevard, recently demolished awaiting new development). Our pluses are: the people that are already here!!; Location, location, etc. 5 mins from I-95; 8-10mins from the beach; 12-14mins from the Airport; 15 minutes to the second largest cruise port in the nation; 15 minutes from the FT. Lauderdale downtown; Las Olas Boulevard, Broward County's Main Library; the Federal Courthouse, etc.; 45-50 Minutes from the magic city (Miami). (Also, the City has a lot of waterfront property we are the Island City, surrounded by the North and South fork of the Middle River).

5. Things people would not know about Wilton Manors: Our City is only 2.3 Square Miles in total. We have our own Police Department; our population is about 12,000 people. We have 11 bridges to access our City. You have to cross one to get here!. While we do not treat drinking water, but our City owns and maintains all of the water mains, tributaries; water meters, Fire Hydrants etc. While we do not treat wastewater, but, we own and maintain all of the sewer mains, lines and lift stations. We also construct and maintain all of the underground storm drain systems in the entire City. We have our own Library. Our PD has a marine patrol boat that protects our waterfront properties.