



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

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RETIRED BASKETBALL COACH RECALLS EARLY FORT LAUDERDALE/ WILTON MANORS

by Mary Ulm
Wilton Manors Historical Society

Bill Huegele, one of Broward's most successful coaches, fondly remembers riding his bicycle at age 12 to play golf at Richardson Public Golf Course on Wilton Drive. "The course was mucky and I'd hit the ball and duck when the mosquitos got stirred up," laughs Huegele. The year was 1946. A year later the Village of Wilton Manors was formed.

"With a population of less than 30,000, Fort Lauderdale was one big community," says Huegele. "If my buddies and I decided to go horsing around downtown, my mother knew about it before I got home."

Bill explains that social activities revolved around the old Fort Lauderdale Central High School that spanned the area between NE 3rd and S. Federal Avenues and Broward and Las Olas Boulevards. The Friday night ritual was to go out to dinner and then the football game. Often a bonfire would be built at the High School and someone would start a "snake dance" that wound around for several blocks.

The school was built in 1915 in the Mediterranean Revival style by famous South Florida architect, August Geiger. Dances were often held outdoors in the elaborately arched courtyard.

Other memories include time spent at the popular Casino Pool, the first Olympic-sized pool in Florida. Bill says that in 1946 A1A ended at the pool site. Another memory is of the bunkers from World War II located where Harbor Beach is now. And, he tells of watching in fascination as the New River Tunnel was built in the late 1950s. "It is really not a tunnel, but a tube, because the engineers building it never found the river bottom and water flows under the structure." Some long-time residents continue the tradition that started in the 1960s of honking their car horns as they go through the tunnel.



**Coach Bill Huegele at Everglades
Junior High**

Attending movie theatres on Saturday mornings was a popular past-time. Bill recalls how the Duncan yo-yo company held contests at the Rialto theatre. Yo-yo salesmen dressed in colorful Hawaiian shirts would carve a beach scene on the freshly-sold yo-yos.

Bill grew up in the era before automated home washing machines and dryers were common. One of Bill's chores was doing the family's laundry at the "Helpy-Selfy" Laundromat on State Road 84. The women in the Laundromat were quick to offer him advice. A "Helpy-Selfy" Laundromat opened in Wilton Manors on Wilton Drive in 1949. A Laundromat remains in business on the site today as "Laundry Lounge".

Bill is a 1954 graduate of Fort Lauderdale High. He was a member of the "Flying L's" team that won the 1953 state basketball championship.

Upon graduation from High Point College in North Carolina, Bill returned to Fort Lauderdale as coach at the newly opened Everglades Junior High School (now W.C. Dandy Middle School). A year later he moved to Fort Lauderdale High where he served as Junior Varsity Basketball coach until he was named head basketball coach for the 1965/66 season, a post he held for 596 games. His teams won four district titles.

And what was his favorite pre-game meal? "A chili-dog and blizzard from the Dairy Queen on Wilton Drive, of course," he says with a chuckle.

Huegele retired from the Broward County School System in 1995. An avid tennis player, he continues to play to this day, and he taught tennis for almost two decades at Holiday Park with Jimmy Evert, father of Chris Evert.



**Highway A1A ended at the Casino Pool and Beachfront.
Photo is circa late 1930s.**

*One of a series of photos generously donated to
the WMHS by Mr. Huegele*

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