



# WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HISTORICAL NOTES

### MAYOR KING WILKINSON

#### WILTON MANORS 2014 PIONEER

By Paul A. Kuta  
Wilton Manors Historical Society

The Historical Society has selected King Wilkinson as the Wilton Manors Pioneer for 2014. The City honored him with an official Proclamation for his service and commitment to the Island City at the City Commission Meeting on September 23rd. He also will represent our city at the annual Broward County Pioneers Day celebration in Hallandale Beach on October 18, 2014. This ceremony will kick off year-long county activities to commemorate Broward's 100th anniversary in 2015.

Business entrepreneur and public servant, King Wilkinson has had an active life and multi-faceted career in Wilton Manors for more than 35 years and, at age 76, he is still going strong. Born in Bridgton, Maine in 1938, King grew up on a farm in Casco, Maine, attended local schools and the University of Maine. He moved to Cocoa Beach, Florida in 1962 and worked in the U.S. Space Program.



In 1967, King relocated to Fort Lauderdale and became a state-certified General Contractor. A few years later, King moved to Wilton Manors, became a licensed realtor in 1978 and a restaurant owner on Wilton Drive in 1984. He had a shaky start in the restaurant business because customer access was made difficult by the widening of Wilton Drive to four lanes in 1985.

From 1986 to 1994, King served on the Wilton Manors Board of Adjustment, becoming its Chairman. Mr. Wilkinson was elected as Mayor of Wilton Manors in 1994 and served two terms until 1998. It was a challenging period for our city because the national economy was in the doldrums and the city was trying to attract business investment.

On a brighter note, Mayor Wilkinson presided over the 50th anniversary of Wilton Manors, which included a parade down Wilton Drive in May 1997.

Aside from his business interests, King was active in the city's youth sports activities in the 1980's; the charitable endeavors of the Fort Lauderdale Optimist Club, serving twice as President; the Kiwanis Club of Wilton Manors; and the Wilton Manors Business Association, on whose Board he served for many years.



During the early 1990's, King was a member of the Broward County Motion Picture and Film Committee and the South Florida Film Industry Association. He helped to facilitate the making of many feature films and commercials in South Florida. This included the movie "Striptease" starring Burt Reynolds and Demi Moore, a portion of which was filmed in Wilton Manors. King had a part as an "extra" in that movie.

In his earlier years, King was involved in boxing as a pro, trainer and manager in association with the Rocky Marciano family. After Rocky Marciano was killed in a plane crash in 1969, his family moved to Wilton Manors, and King mentored Rocky's young son for several years.

A keen sports enthusiast, King Wilkinson currently owns and operates Red's Sports Bar in Wilton Manors at Five Points, and continues as an avid collector of sports memorabilia.

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