

Coral Gables news

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'Faces of History' fundraiser celebrates art in public places

BY ROBERT HAMILTON

Ninety years ago, Coral Gables' city planners and visionaries were influenced by the aesthetics of the City Beautiful Movement popular in the early 1900s which encouraged the use of wide tree-lined avenues, monumental buildings, winding roadways, green space, ornate plazas, and fountains.

The effect of the "White Way" lighting was for increased beauty as well as to illuminate the streets and sidewalks in the business and residential sections of Coral Gables. In 1926, 500 ornamental bases were designed for the "White Way" streetlights in Coral Gables. This project placed city founder George Merrick as an early advocate of "art in public places."

Recently, guests joined local artists and the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables (HPACG) in celebration of Merrick's vision of "art in public places" and the historically significant decorative White Way lights.

The fundraising event was hosted by HPACG member Mary Anne Danguillecourt at her elegant home and garden. The historic home, inspired by 18th Century rural French architecture, was designed by architect Edgar Albright as part of the Country French Village, one of George Merrick's seven themed villages.

Eight local artists contributed to the event by creating original images to commemorate the historically designated White Way Lights and to benefit HPACG. The artists' original artworks were offered at a silent auction and commissioned notecards were sold. Proceeds raised will help defray the cost of the "White Way" historic marker set to be dedicated in 2016 during the city's 90th anniversary.



Former Coral Gables Mayor Don Slesnick (left) and HPACG president Karelia Martinez Carbonell (second from right) are pictured with contributing artists Alice Goldhagen and Carlos Barbon at the "Faces of History" event.

VIP patrons were welcomed with a glass of Sophie Baron Grand Reserve Champagne and assorted "fruits and fromages" donated by Milam's Markets of Coral Gables. Guests had the opportunity to meet the contributing artists one on one and preview their original artworks. The ambiance was enhanced by the talented young pianist Samuel Zilberstein who played classic and modern tunes throughout the evening.

After the special VIP reception, all guests enjoyed savory, made-to-order crepes by CrepeMaker al fresco and a tasting of several varieties of sherry donated by Lustau — considered by many to be simply the best sherry winery in existence — since 1896. Live music and art auction contributed to the evening's lively entertainment. Guests explored and

wandered the garden grounds with its whimsy sculptures.

Among the guests were historian and author Arva Moore Parks, former dean of the University of Miami's School of Architecture Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk; former Gables Mayor Don Slesnick and Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick; founder of Dade Heritage Trust Dolly MacIntyre; Coral Gables Museum board member Ajit Asrani and wife, Maria Alicia; Joseph and Nora Portuondo; Leslie Rivera, and artists Carlos Barbon, Jorge Fornes, Jessica Fiallo, Alice Goldhagen, Don Queraltó, Diego Quiros and wife, Vivian.

The event committee included Karelia Martinez Carbonell, Ann Goodman, and Jane Maranos.

For additional information, visit www.historiccoralgables.org.