

Celebration of Life, large and small, at annual Memorial Park Association meeting

2015 a good year for park statue and its working model

By Kate A. Hallock
Resident Community News

Last January, local historian Wayne Wood thrilled those attending the Memorial Park Association annual meeting by sharing the discovery – thanks to the diligent efforts of Dr. Dianne Taylor – of a broken plaster model of the winged statue, Life.

After having been on display at the Jacksonville Art Museum in the late 1950s, the model was misplaced and eventually located by Taylor in a closet at Jacksonville University.

During the past year, Sally Corporation repaired the model with the intention of creating a new mold and, subsequently, reproductions to be sold to benefit preservation-minded organizations.

At the 2016 Memorial Park Association Annual Meeting on Jan. 6, Taylor and Wood unveiled the first reproduction to the delight of the audience. Art collectors and supporters of Memorial Park lined up after the meeting to place their orders for one of the 30 replicas of the iconic sculpture's working model. Wood donated 10 replicas each to Memorial Park Association, the Jacksonville Historical Society and Riverside Avondale Preservation to sell for \$2,500 apiece.

Prior to the unveiling at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, a four-part presentation was given by Agnes Danciger, president, Pattie



Dr. Dianne Taylor and Dr. Wayne Wood with the new Life statue model, unveiled at the Memorial Park Association annual meeting.

Houlihan and Jake Ingram, past presidents, and Wayne Wood on the history of the association's work to maintain and enhance the park, which led to the November-December 2015 restoration of Memorial Park's iconic sculpture, "Life" and the surrounding fountain.

Memorial Park Association celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2016. A review of the previous year highlighted a number of events, including the passing of founder Anne Wright Freeman in January 2015, the restoration of Life statue and fountain by McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, and the hiring of Susan Tandingan as a part-time administrative assistant/coordinator/database manager.

Also during 2015, the association completed the \$200,000 capital grant match as well as raised \$136,066 in gifts and pledges

through a variety of fundraising events and programs to be used for the park's Master Plan and MPA operating funds.

At the meeting, retiring board directors Joan Van Vleck and Jake Ingram, also a past president, were honored for their contributions to the restoration, preservation and promotion of Memorial Park.

New 2016-2017 officers include Karen McCombs, executive vice president, and Matthew Cochran, treasurer. They join Agnes Danciger, president, Robin Patton, secretary, Barbara "Bobby" Arnold and Patricia Houlihan, both vice presidents-at-large, on the executive committee.

New to the board of directors are Timothy Burleigh, Frank Bioteau, Alden Howell, Percy Rosenbloom III and Tim Tyler (returning), who join 13 other board members: Emmett C. Bearden, Janet H. Blackstone, David W. Foerster, W. Robinson Frazier, F. Terry Hallihan, Holly Keris, Emily R. Lisska, Elizabeth G. McRae, JoAnn F. Meyer, Joan W. Newton, Susan D. Ober, Paula Skitsko, and H. Warner Webb, M.D.

During first quarter, the Construction Task Force for drainage and irrigation – consisting of Co-chairs Houlihan and Michael Blackstone, and members Keris, Ingram, McRae and Arnold – will initiate the drain-

age and irrigation project at the center oval field, to be completed by fall 2016.

A fundraiser, Claws for a Cause, is planned for Saturday, March 5 at Cool Moose Café on Park Street. Last year the lobster bake, hosted by Tony and Laurie Jarvis, netted over \$1,000 for the park restoration fund.



Joan Van Vleck and Elizabeth (Bitty) McRae



Helen Lane, Bobby Arnold, Melissa Tyler

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