

October 31, 2023

TO: Anna Pernas, Director, Coral Gables Historic Preservation and Cultural Arts Department  
Kara Kautz, Assistant Preservation Officer Coral Gables HRCA Department  
Joanne Meagher, Chairperson, Coral Gables Merrick House Governing Board  
FROM: Gay Bondurant, Docent Coordinator, Coral Gables Merrick House

**RE: OCTOBER 2023 ACTIVITY REPORT: CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE**

As October shows up on the calendar, we know that the holiday season is soon to follow. Preparations for seasonal events are in the planning mode bringing more than average focus to the historic Merrick House.

The Merrick House has been invited to be one of the always special homes on The Villagers long awaited "2023 Holiday House Tour." The tour theme is "100 years of History" with all the homes on tour being built in 1923. The Merrick House is 113 years old, but it was felt it was time to show her off as we approach the City's centennial in 2025. Planning for tour day, December 9, has begun in earnest. We are delighted to be part of this annual tradition in Coral Gables. However, that means we are scrutinizing every inch of the house and grounds to make sure they are perfect. There are many issues which have been reported over the last several months which still need attention. I will defer to Ms. Meagher's up close and personal interaction with such things as the doors on the garage, the gapping hole over the sunroom fireplace, the stain over "Helen's" bedroom door, crack in the column on the front porch, a new item; the quality of cleaning on the interior and exterior of the house, the treatment of the array of ferns in the yard and many others.

More positively we hosted another unique presentation of "100 Voices" this month. On Oct 22 the sold-out venue welcomed Mr. Toby Muir, son of Miami pioneer, journalist and author of *Miami, USA* and *The Biltmore, Beacon for Miami*, Helen Muir. Mr. Muir recounted stories of his connections with such historic figures as Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, Carl Fischer and the Merrick family, especially Eunice Merrick. *(There was also a special, unexpected performance by Chairperson Meagher, just to add sparkle to the event!)*

The Elegant Red Hat Ladies group, mentioned in last month's report, arrived in all their vintage finery on October 25 for a tour of the House before going to tea at the Biltmore. The tour was conducted by Ms. Meagher and me.

We are also pleased to report that we are in the process of bringing on a new docent. She is a young woman, 28 years-old, employed at U of M in the Finance department. She will bring the docent count to 10 including me. More next month.

**TALLIES AND RECEIPTS:** Total visitors = 106; 49 guests unclassified, 32 Adults, 22 Seniors, 1 Student >12, 2 Free Passes. \$190 for 100 Voices; \$110 for Red Hat ladies; Total merchandise sales = \$45 for 3 poetry books; \$40 in tips. TOTAL = \$616 + any money from online payments.

Respectfully submitted,

*Gay Bondurant*

Docent Coordinator, Coral Gables Merrick House