

Marion Manley Historical Marker

Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables

Presented by Carolyn Robbins Manley, PhD.

Introduction

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address the Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables.

I am here to discuss the application and approval for an historical marker for Marion Manley, a pioneering architect whose work played a significant role in shaping Miami's architectural and cultural history. As Miami's first licensed woman architect, Manley helped define an early form of Tropical Modernism—designing buildings that responded thoughtfully to South Florida's climate, landscape, and community needs.

Manley's contributions were innovative, enduring, and influential. She designed much of the University of Miami, in addition to schools, civic buildings, and residences, many of which remain in use today. They are a testament to the lasting value of her work.

An historical marker honoring Marion Manley would correct a notable gap in the public record and ensure that her contributions are properly recognized as part of Miami's heritage. This presentation will briefly explain why her life and work meet the need for historical designation and why such recognition is both appropriate and overdue. We will also include the application for the marker, which will be submitted to the State of Florida, and ultimately approved and fabricated by them.

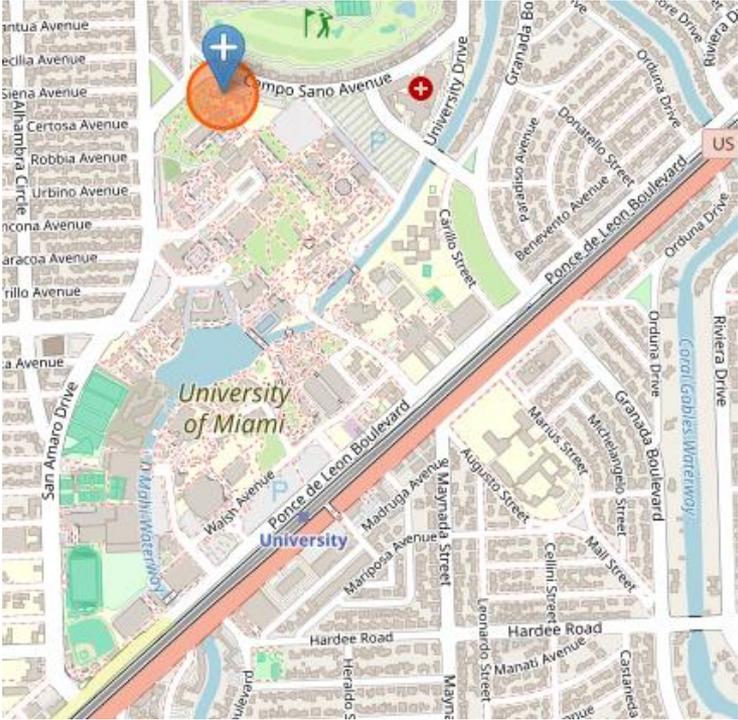
Sample Historical Marker



<https://coralgableswomansclub.org/marker/>

Proposed Marker Location – 1300 Campo Sano

The University of Miami's first administrative building, built by Marion Manley. This building is designated as a historical site by the City of Coral Gables.



Historical Markers Application

Florida Department of State
Division of Historical Resources
Bureau of Historic Preservation

Part 1: Resource Information

Name and Location

What is the Historic Name of the Resource?

Marion Manley

Address

1300 Campo Sano Ave

City

Coral Gables

Zip Code

33146

Details

What type of resource will you be marking?

Other

If other, please explain:

Person! The marker will honor Marion Manley, the first female architect in Miami. It will be located at the above address, a build she designed that has been designated as an Historical Site by the City of Coral Gables.

Is the resource listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

No

Description and Significance

Please describe the resource

The proposed marker site is located on the campus of the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, near the original core of campus buildings designed and influenced by architect Marion Manley in the late 1940s and 1950s. The University of Miami was founded in 1925, and after World War II it underwent a major expansion to serve returning veterans. During this period, the University commissioned Manley - Florida's second licensed female architect and one of the few women practicing modern architecture in the United States at that time - and architect Robert Law Weed to develop a new campus master plan and oversee many of the buildings' designs. The area represents one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of tropical modernist architecture in South Florida, characterized by open courtyards, horizontal lines, shaded walkways, and a strong integration of indoor and outdoor spaces suited to the subtropical climate.

Provide a statement explaining the significance of the resource

Marion Isadore Manley (1893–1984) was the first woman licensed to practice architecture in South Florida and a pioneer of modern design in the area. After earning her degree in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1916, she moved to Miami, where she developed a career that spanned more than five decades. Her work on the University of Miami's postwar master plan cemented her as a central figure in Florida's architectural history. A roommate and close friend of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Manley designed numerous campus buildings and helped shape the University's modern architectural identity, ensuring the spaces reflected both academic purpose and the tropical region's distinctive environment. Additionally, she designed Miami's U.S. Post Office and Federal Building, local school buildings, and numerous small, Spanish-style houses. Among Manley's many honors, awards, and positions, she was the President of the South Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Vice President of the Florida Association of Architects, a Fellow and Member Emeritus of the American Institute of Architects, and in 2024 was inducted into the Miami Chapter of the American Institute of Architects' Hall of Fame. The University of Miami, where her vision is most enduringly visible, provides a fitting location to honor her legacy. References: Marion Manley: Miami's First Woman Architect. Book by Catherine Lynn and Carie Penabad Most Welcome Breezes: The Story of Marion Manley, Documentary Film on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/5BSjBLa1EIY?si=3N3HTDBVA4ICZajU> <https://www.artdeco.org/women-architects> <https://aiamiami.org/about/hall-of-fame/2024-aia-miami-hall-of-fame-inductees/> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Manley

Part 2: Marker Information

Marker Details & Location

Will this be a new or replacement marker?

New Marker

Will this be a single or double-sided marker?

Single-sided marker (identical text on both sides)

Will the marker be located at the resource?

Yes

If no, please explain:

In which county will the marker be located?

Miami-Dade

What are the geographic coordinates of the proposed marker location?

Please use decimal fractions. (Example: 30.438659 or -84.284451). See [How to Determine Marker Coordinates](#) for instructions.

Longitude

-80.279177

Latitude

25.724497

What days and times will the marker accessible to the public?

24/7 - the administrative building at Campo Sano is reachable from public streets with no security

Marker Text

What is your proposed Marker Title

Marion Manley – Miami's Trailblazing Female Architect

Please provide your proposed Marker Text

The marker text may not exceed 1,235 characters per side. This character limit includes punctuation and spaces. See [Tips for Writing Marker Text](#) for additional instruction.

Side One

Florida's second licensed female architect and a pioneer of modern design, Marion Manley helped shape the University of Miami's postwar campus and the architectural identity of South Florida. She was an advocate of sustainable architecture long before it was fashionable. A 1917 graduate of the University of Illinois, Manley worked in Miami for more than 50 years, designing homes, schools, and civic buildings that blended functionality with sensitivity to climate and landscape, many of which still stand today in the City of Coral Gables. In the 1940s, she collaborated with Robert Law Weed on the University's master plan, creating open, light-filled buildings that reflected the ideals of modernism adapted for the tropics. These structures include the original student union, St. Bede Chapel, the Ring Theater, the first administration building (1300 Campo Sano), and four original School of Architecture buildings that were part of a compound built to house the returning veterans of World War II. Her leadership and vision advanced the role of women in architecture and left a lasting mark on Florida's environment.

Side Two (double-sided markers only)

What organization(s) and or individual(s) are sponsoring the marker?

Sponsored by the Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables, the University of Miami, and the Manley Family

Part 3: Contact Information

Resource Owner

If the resource is owned by an organization, provide the name and information of a contact person in that organization.

What is the name of the resource owner or organization contact?

First name

Jessica

Last name

Brumley

Organization name (if owned by an organization)

University of Miami

What is the address of the resource owner?

Address

1535 Levante Ave

City

Coral Gables

State

Florida

Zip Code

33146

Phone number of owner

3052845506

Email address of owner

jbrumley@miami.edu

Will the resource owner also be responsible for installation and maintenance of the marker?

Yes

Is the resource owner also the person that prepared this application?

No

Marker Caretaker

Please provide the contact information for the person responsible for installing and maintaining the marker if different from the resource owner. If this will be an organization, provide the name and information of a contact person in that organization.

What is the name of the of the marker caretaker?

First name

Jessica

Last name

Brumley

Organization name (If an organization will be the marker caretaker)

What is the address of the marker caretaker?

Street Address

1535 Levante Ave

City

Coral Gables

State

Florida

Zip Code

33146

Phone number of caretaker

3052845506

Email address of caretaker

jbrumley@miami.edu

Suggested Marker Text

Wording already approved by the University of Miami:

Florida's second licensed female architect and a pioneer of modern design, Marion Manley helped shape the University of Miami's postwar campus and the architectural identity of South Florida. She was an advocate of sustainable architecture long before it was fashionable. A 1917 graduate of the University of Illinois, Manley worked in Miami for more than 50 years, designing homes, schools, and civic buildings that blended functionality with sensitivity to climate and landscape, many of which still stand today in the City of Coral Gables. In the 1940s, she collaborated with Robert Law Weed on the University's master plan, creating open, light-filled buildings that reflected the ideals of modernism adapted for the tropics. These structures include the original student union, St. Bede Chapel, the Ring Theater, the first administration building (1300 Campo Sano), and four original School of Architecture buildings that were part of a compound built to house the returning veterans of World War II. Her leadership and vision advanced the role of women in architecture and left a lasting mark on Florida's environment.

Marion Manley Documentary

[Most Welcome Breezes: The Story of Marion Manley](#)



Thank You!