

Office of the Mayor The City of Coral Gables

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Coral Gables' founding visionary George Edgar Merrick was born on June 3, 1886 in Pittsburgh, the suburbs of Springdale, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of George Merrick is reflected in every aspect of what is today the City of Coral Gables. As the founder of our City, he is recognized foremost as an urban visionary who developed one of the nation's most iconic planned cities; and

WHEREAS, The Merrick Family moved to Miami, Florida from Duxbury, Massachusetts in 1898 when George was 12 years old. He attended Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida and upon graduation, moved to New York to study law until 1911 when his father's death impelled him to return to Miami; and

WHEREAS, in October 1915, Merrick was appointed by the Governor of Florida as County Commissioner in District 1. He spent the next 15 months on the commission championing the building of roads in South Florida, including major arteries that would later serve to connect his well-planned community of Coral Gables with the fast-growing City of Miami; and

WHEREAS, on February 5, 1916, Merrick married Eunice Isabella Peacock, daughter of Coconut Grove pioneers, R.A.S. Peacock and Lilian Irene Frow. Merrick built a home for his bride, located at 937 Coral Way, in Coral Gables, a designated historic landmark known as the Merrick Cottage; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1922, on 3,000 acres of citrus groves and land covered in pine trees which his father had left him, Merrick began carving out a town along the lines of the "City Beautiful". He designed the new town in detail featuring wide, tree-lined boulevards, delicate bridges and serene urban golf courses. Merrick's secret was his passionate devotion to aesthetics. He wanted to focus on the finest details of this town not just on the major ideas behind the project; and

WHEREAS, with Spanish architecture influence seen throughout the City, in 1927, Merrick was decorated by King Alfonso XIII of Spain with the "Order of Isabel la Catolica." The Order is a Spanish civil order in which membership is granted in recognition of services that benefit the country; and

WHEREAS, Merrick was a man with many interests who supported a civil society and places of worship. The first church built in the City, the Coral Gables Congregational Church, was dedicated to his father, Solomon Merrick, who was a Congregational minister and a poet; and

WHEREAS, on June 3, 1925, Merrick donated 160 acres and five million dollars to establish the University of Miami, a new academic institution within our City. He believed that all great urban areas warranted institutions of higher learning; and

WHEREAS, Merrick grew into the "modern man" of the 20th century—an entrepreneur and visionary. He was active in Coral Gables for less than a decade from 1920 to 1928 and built a brand new city, the "City Beautiful," which will turn 100 in 2025. While developing the City he contributed mightily to building new housing, churches, and schools for all communities; and

WHEREAS, on "Founder's Day", the City of Coral Gables salutes the man whose vision, determination and dedication gave life to our City.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, VINCE LAGO, as Mayor of Coral Gables, along with the members of our City Commission, do hereby proclaim June 3, 2022 as:

"FOUNDERS DAY IN CORAL GABLES"

IN OBSERVANCE THEREOF, as Mayor of the City of Coral Gables, along with the members of our City Commission and its citizenry, do hereby express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to our founder George Edgar Merrick, who demonstrated in many ways his deep and genuine love for our City, its residents, and his fellow colleagues, as we celebrate the 135th anniversary of his birth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the City of Coral Gables to be affixed on this third day of June A. D., 2022.

Vince Lago
Mayor

Michael Mena

Rhonda Anderson

Jorge L. Fors, Jr.

Kirk Menendez

Vice Mayor

Commissioner

Commissioner

Commissioner