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Tarpon Springs Public Library

Florida Library History Project

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Tarpon Springs Public Library

The Tarpon Springs Library has been a vital part of the life of this community since its founding around 1916 by Mrs. George (Julia) Inness, Jr., wife of the well known artist. She was also the daughter of the owner of Century Publishing.

From the first location in City Hall the Library went in 1921 to a small house on Orange Street. From there it moved to the Arcade building on Pinellas Avenue and remained there until a building on Library Lane, behind the Greek Church, was completed in 1937.

Then in 1964, when the population was about 6,800, a building on beautiful Spring Bayou was constructed. It became a city supported library at that time. The subsequent expansion in 1986 enlarged the building from 3,000 to 9,000 square feet.

Additional space was needed less than ten years later due to population growth and the development of the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative. The decision was made to construct a new building of 20,000 square feet in the middle of the downtown area a few blocks from the earlier building in the park. The new building was opened in January, 1997.

At the entrance to the building two life size tarpon models spring from a fountain 20' in diameter which is surrounded by a brick walkway. The bricks have been donated and inscribed to commemorate various members of the community.

The building reflects the town's Greek and old Florida heritage and features a high vaulted ceiling with clerestory windows. The lobby floor is green Mediterranean marble. The same marble is used on the circulation and reference desks which are faced with copper. A combination of red oak and light oak, as well as custom designed and upholstered furniture, enhances the library.

Several outstanding works of art add another special dimension to the building. A six by ten foot reproduction of internationally acclaimed artist Christopher Still's

"Changing Tides" is the focal point. The painting's colors of blue, green and purple are used throughout the building.

The Youth Services room is surrounded by six foot high panels of carved glass by artists Karen and Julian Mesa. The design is a playful depiction of underwater marine life and "merchildren." A tall lighthouse, shell shaped chairs and fanciful fish decorations contribute to magical moments in the storytelling area.