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The President’s Report

I am very proud that as we move into our twenty-eighth year, that the wishes and purposes of our founders still serve as the foundation and clear vision for the Tampa Historical Society. Our Mission, as adopted in 1971, is in part "To bring together those people interested in history, and especially in the history of Tampa and Florida.” We recognize the importance of publishing a journal of history as the principal means to, " . . . disseminate historical information and arouse interest in the past . . . “ The Sunland Tribune, first published in 1974, is today a widely respected journal of history.

We have enjoyed a very successful year. Our Society is in sound financial condition. The historic Peter O. Knight House is owned and maintained by the Society and has served as its headquarters since 1977. A well-attended Open House was held this past Spring during the City of Tampa Mayor's Archives Awareness Week. A week later, joined with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and proudly hosted the annual Oaklawn Ramble in 'Tampa’s oldest cemetery. Julius "Jeff" Gordon, the 1992 recipient of the D. B. McKay Award, was presented with a well-deserved "President's Award" for his many years of preservation and maintenance of Oaklawn and St. Louis Cemeteries. Also, the Society proudly hosted the annual meeting of the Florida Historical Society in May. Their program focus was on the events of 1898 and the centennial observance of the Spanish-American War.

We continue to place historical markers and several significant ones were dedicated this year including ones honoring Jessimine Flowers Link, founder of Tampa's first Girl Scout troop, and Charles Lafayette Knight for his long commitment to the development of the land known today as Harbour Island. In December a marker will be dedicated to honor pioneer developer William Benton Henderson.

Interest in Tampa's history, and the area known as Historic Hillsborough County, has never been greater. Recognizing the tremendous need for a local museum of history, the Tampa Historical Society has reiterated its formal approval and support of the mission of the Tampa Bay History Center. Funding will be used to bring to reality a much needed, and long overdue, regional history museum. As this volume of the Sunland goes to press, the hope is that the dedicated officers, board of trustees and staff of TBHC will be successful in receiving the necessary commitments and funding.

Your board of directors worked very hard in 1998 to present a variety of interesting and informative programs, events and publications. I owe each member of the board of directors my gratitude for their personal commitment of time. I know and appreciate the sacrifices it can mean. Special thanks to Richard Jacobson and his staff for making certain that each issue of the newsletter, Historical Horizons, went to press on time. And as always, Lois Latimer, a founding member, and long-time officer of our board. I offer my sincere thanks for always being there for the Society. The time and attention you give the Society is truly priceless. You are definitely our most committed "Member for Life!"
When I took over the editorship of The Sunland Tribune editorship year, I never imagined the time or depth of involvement the job would entail but I can say without any hesitation I have enjoyed the experience more than I would have ever imagined. The opportunity to work with the fine group of writers, historians, and staffs of our local history organizations has been very rewarding. I must thank our great friends at the H.B. Plant Museum and Tampa Bay History Center for the loan of historic materials, invaluable council and assistance all year. The history community and all the citizens of Tampa benefit from our cooperation and collaboration.

It has been a successful year and I thank you, the members, for your tremendous support of the Tampa Historical Society. I have gained so much from being your president. Thanks!

Frank R. North