

2000

## President's Report

Frank R. North

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I end three terms as your president, please allow me to reflect on the seven years that I have spent on the board of directors. I came on the board at the end of George Howell's term in 1992 and served on the board under five strong, incredibly committed presidents: Chuck Jordan, Barbara Reeves, Charles Brown, Kyle VanLandingham, and Ralph Beaver. Serving on the board under such responsible and visionary leaders was a real privilege. THS benefited enormously by their dedication and commitment. I also must acknowledge the incredible men and women I served with on the board who shared with me their knowledge and expertise of the workings of our Society, its history and its meaning to the community. They helped me grow in my role as a board member and later as president and made me a far better president than I would have been without their wise advice and counsel.

Lois Latimer, a founder, board member, treasurer and lifetime member of Tampa Historical Society provided endless amounts of support, encouragement, historical perspective and levelheadedness at all times and under all circumstances. Lois could always be counted on as she unselfishly served several boards of directors, officers, the membership, and the public over the past three decades. Thank you Lois for being there for *this* president.

Mary Judy Brown has steadfastly served as board secretary during my tenure as president and has done a remarkable job. Liz Dunham serves as our treasurer - much more than writing checks and balancing the books - and has performed her endless list of office duties effortlessly, without delay or hesitation. To each of you, including special friends in the history community including

Jeff Gordon, Lester Olson, Arsenio Sanchez, Leland Ilawes, Dr. Gary Mormino, Cynthia Gandee, Susan Carter, and the staffs of the Henry B. Plant Museum and Tampa Bay History Center, please accept my sincere gratitude.

The year 2000 has been fun and filled with exciting THS programs and activities. Your Society is in good financial condition and you can be proud of the Peter O. Knight House, its grounds and our collection.

We hosted two successful Spring events during the City of Tampa's expanded Archives Awareness Month in April. We held our annual Open House and revived the Old Timer's Day that was so popular with members in past years. At the end of the month THS hosted the annual Oaklawn Ramble in a solemn and moving ceremony honoring Tampa's mayors who are buried at the cemetery.

In July, the board began an informal information-gathering process to help determine our future and, perhaps, closer relationship with the Tampa Bay History Center. We have acknowledged our formal commitment to the Museum's goals with Board resolutions over the years, but a closer alliance may be to our mutual benefit. TBHC's relationships with the public school system, colleges, universities, local governments, foundations and private individuals portend a bright future for the Tampa Bay History Center. THS can only gain by a greater sharing of our combined wealth of resources.

In October, we welcomed guests to our Fall Open House. Again, we enjoyed the participation of military reenactors who added historical authenticity and color.

Twice this year THS had the honor of facilitating the dedication of new historical markers. Congregation Schaarai Zedek proudly unveiled their marker on Swann Avenue during a wonderful, music-filled ceremony of history and prayer. The Society also arranged for a marker for the Rotary Club of Tampa to honor the World War I dead who are memorialized in the two obelisk-style monuments and highway originally dedicated in 1921. One of the two monuments was recently reinstalled in a beautiful grassy park at Memorial Highway and Kennedy Boulevard, and the new historical marker stands nearby.

All in all, it has been a busy year of events, good friends, new members and great hopes and plans for the future of our Society. Just as we are experiencing the extraordinary twists and turns of this historic 2000 national presidential election contest, three compelling articles in the 200() volume of The Sunland Tribune bring into sharp focus Tampa's own colorful and chaotic election history - great reading in light of Florida's central role in this year's disputed balloting.

It has been a great and humbling experience to serve as your president. I have made terrific friends, met interesting men and women, and have always been proud of my association with THS. As in years past, thank you for every small and large contribution you have made to the Tampa Historical Society.

Your new Board and officers will provide clear direction and strong leadership in the year ahead. I look forward to their many accomplishments and your increased participation. My final request: Get more involved with THS and volunteer your time. You will be as richly rewarded as my family and I have been.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Frank R. North

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