

PIONEER DAYS TO INCLUDE HONOR FOR LOCAL HISTORIAN MCIVER

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Writing about the history of south Florida is extraordinarily interesting because of the unusual characters who live here.

That's the opinion of local historian Stuart B. McIver of Lighthouse Point who has written over a dozen books and countless magazine and newspaper articles about some of this area's unusual citizens.

McIver is scheduled to receive the 2003 Dr. Cooper C. Kirk Award at this year's Pioneer Days November 1 and 2. The honor will be given by the Broward County Historical Commission. Several other organizations will also be honored during the celebration for their contributions to local historic efforts.

"Most of the characters here are those who came from somewhere else," reflected McIver who, himself, is a transplant from North Carolina. "When they leave home, they are not tied to the traditions of their towns or restricted by their customs."

"Those who move around cut their ties with the past and thus their behavior is more unconventional and they get into intriguing activities," McIver said.

Among the area's most interesting people, McIver points to a man he calls "Mr. Brooke from Brooklyn."

"He was an important advertising man in Brooklyn before World War I," he said. "He retired here and became involved in local projects—the 17th Street Causeway is named after him."

"Mr. Brooke was probably the only man to ever kidnap a president and get away with it," McIver recalled. "He kidnaped president-elect Warren G. Harding in 1921 to show him a new community golf course."

McIver said that Brooke got away with the act because the local community leaders knew him and wanted Harding to see the golf course.

The historian, who has contributed articles to the old *Sun-Sentinel Sunshine* magazine as well as *South Florida* magazine, *Florida Sportsman* magazine and *American History Illustrated* has just finished a book, *Death in the Everglades*, the story of this country's first ecological murder.

"It's about the murder of an Audubon warden," he said. "It happened in 1905 at the tip of the everglades."

McIver said that it was hard to find out information about the murder. "I had to dig hard and long for it," he said.

One person who helped him gather information for the book was the late Dr. Cooper C. Kirk, Broward County's first historian for whom McIver's upcoming award is named. "I feel proud and honored to receive an award named after him," McIver said.

In addition to recognizing McIver, the Broward County Historical Commission will also honor:

- The Broward Trust for Historic Preservation for their efforts to preserve Broward County's historic resources and sites
- The Hillsboro Lighthouse Preservation Society for their successful efforts to preserve the Hillsboro Lighthouse
- The Old Davie School Historical Museum
- The Davie School Foundation, Inc.
- The Davie Historical Society
- The town of Davie

Individual cities and historical organizations have also nominated local citizens to receive awards in recognition of their contributions to the preservation of historical artifacts and sites.

The awards will be presented at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, November 2 in the old Davie schoolhouse.

The ceremony is part of a two-day event, Pioneer Days, which is celebrating its 31st anniversary this year. Activities, which will be held at the Bergeron Rodeo Grounds, 4271 Davie Road behind the Davie Town Hall, will feature historical and educational exhibits, entertainment and food concessions.

"The purpose of Pioneer Days is two-fold," explained Denyse Cunningham, curator of the Broward County Historical Commission. "It is a way for historical societies and cultural organizations to get together and talk, and it offers displays from 39 exhibitors to the community."

Cunningham said that exhibitors will include reenactments of local historical events, displays by historical societies and town governments from throughout Broward County, and information from local service groups.

"It is a great opportunity for people to talk about history and historical preservation," Cunningham explained.

Other activities at this year's Pioneer Days will include an antique car exhibit, the reenactment of Seminole Indians coming down the canals in canoes, a tree giveaway and activities at the old Davie school museum.

All of the Pioneer Days activities will be free and open to the public. The event will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. The event will kick off with a parade at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, November 1 featuring antique cars and fire trucks, train riders, rodeo people, bands and floats and other entertainment.

Information on Pioneer Days may be obtained by calling the Broward County Historical Commission at 954-765-4671.

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