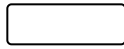




Venice Gondolier



Centennial celebration

Sarasota County starts to mark its first 100 years

By Morgan Simpson Staff Writer

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The historic courthouse dates back to 1926 and has undergone renovations to maintain the registered historic building.
Gondolier Photo by Morgan Simpson

SARASOTA — Sarasota County kicked off its Centennial Celebrations at the historic courthouse in Sarasota on Tuesday.



This event started the 100 days of celebrating and the countdown to the county's 100th anniversary on July 1.

Speakers at the event spoke of the county's history, the historical courthouse and the upcoming events to look forward to as the celebration continues.

Alan Maio, the Sarasota County Commission chairman, opened the event with remarks about Sarasota County's rich past.

He stated the county owes so much to important figures like John and Mable Ringling, Marie Selby, Bertha Palmer, and countless others.

“(They) saw the opportunity to create something special here,” Maio said.

Maio also commented on the county's resilience and that the county makes sure to look to its past as well as its future.

Remarks were also made about the historic courthouse built in 1926.

Karen Rushing, Sarasota County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County comptroller, spoke about the courthouse's history and the renovations made to allow the historic place to last for another 100 years.



Along with her speech on the courthouse, Rushing presented two plaques that stated the historic courthouse is now registered as a historical place both in the county and nationally.

After the speeches, attendees were allowed in small groups to tour the historic courthouse and see a piece of the county's beginnings.

Renee Di Pilato, the director of Libraries and Historical Resources, mentioned the 100 events the libraries will be hosting over the upcoming months.

"We've brought in a lot of expert speakers who will be offering workshops over the next 100 days," Di Pilato said.

The events will be virtual for the time being and include workshops and sessions on various topics including genealogy, architecture, famous people, the natural environment and many other topics highlighting the history of the area.

There will even be a workshop on the future of Sarasota County with futurist David Houle.

Apart from the 100 events, the library is also conducting interviews of 100 residents. Once recorded, the interviews will be in the county archives for years to come and will eventually be online.

"We are making history today, so we want to make sure we are not just focused on the past but collecting the history that is happening now," Di Pilato said.

The interviews will be from people all over the county and from all walks of life.

"Long term residents are great. We'd love to see how the county has changed over time and the perspective on that," Di Pilato said.



Those wanting to participate in the interview project can contact Sara Gassaway at sgassaway@scgov.net.

For more information on the different events happening over the next 100 days, visit the centennial website at www.sarasotacounty100.com.



Renee Di Pilato, the director of Libraries and Historical Resources, talks about the 100 events the library will host and the interviewing of 100 residents.

Gondolier Photo by Morgan Simpson