



# THE DISPATCH

Newsletter of the Matheson History Museum

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## New Ways to Support the Matheson

Folks, thanks to the hard work of Board Members David Chadwick, TJ Pyche, and our excellent staff, your Board of Directors has approved a vastly improved fundraising plan for the Matheson, which is now "live" on our webpage at [www.mathesonmuseum.org](http://www.mathesonmuseum.org). Just click on the "Donate" button or the "Support" tab, and you will be able to access all facets of it. It includes, for the first time, a Corporate Sponsorship plan which we believe will be very attractive to local companies as a way to demonstrate their community support and increase their business.

Now is the time to scour your personal networks and ask for their support of the museum. It is also a good time to review your estate plan and find a way to cement your own legacy as a member of the Matheson History Museum. Please renew your membership if it has lapsed, and increase your membership level if able to do so. We are grateful for your support!

**Robert Mounts  
Board President**

# CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP



A MUSEUM FOR THE COMMUNITY

JOIN US NOW

WWW.MATHESONMUSEUM.ORG

Corporate sponsorship is now available at the Matheson! We offer a unique opportunity for companies to meet their marketing, community relations, and philanthropic goals.

**Organization sponsors** support nonprofits year-round through regular giving and involvement. These will be companies with deep ties to our community. **Fundraising sponsors** support a nonprofit through specific events or campaigns. Corporations can donate money, volunteers, auction items, bar items, underwrite expenses, and more. For smaller nonprofits, corporate sponsors can significantly boost the bottom line by helping to offset operating costs and other expenses.

## Sponsorship levels

- Annual sponsor - \$1,500
- Individual program sponsor- \$1,000
- Exhibition sponsor - \$2,500+
- Exhibition title sponsor - \$10,000
- In-kind donations that support our mission and operations

Please visit our website at <https://mathesonmuseum.org/support-the-matheson/> to learn more about how your company can partner with the Matheson to support our mission and give back to the community.

## Collections Spotlight

### Gainesville Police Force photograph, after 1946

This historic photograph is of the entire Gainesville police force sometime after 1946. In 1946, under Chief William D. Joiner, the department employed its first African-American police officer, Oscar Lewis. Officer Lewis remained on the force until he retired in 1970. The city's Oscar Lewis Pleasant Street Annex is named after him. The Gainesville Sun states that his "25-year career emphasized community-oriented policing through walking or riding a bicycle to cover his patrol area."

Donated by Jeanne Street



# Annual Campaign Update

It is because of donors like you that the Matheson has been able to thrive and grow during these uncertain times.

Contributing to the Annual Campaign is an important step in ensuring the sustainability of this momentum. Your donations will support the museum's general operating, staffing, and overhead expenses in this ever-changing world.

**Each year, Matheson staff secure over \$120,000 of grant funding to pay for our exhibition and program expenses. However, grant funding comes with restrictions and often will not cover the general overhead required to keep the lights on and the doors open. We need to raise \$47,000 to cover 2022 mission critical operating expenses that grants don't cover, such as:**

- Utilities and maintenance for our four historic buildings
- Insurance
- Phone and internet service
- Landscaping museum grounds
- Staff salaries

This fall, as showcased on pages four and five, we will be hosting two original exhibitions and a variety of programs - ranging in topics from music history to civil rights to Florida literature. Your donation will go directly towards supporting our mission of being a museum for the community.



# Current Exhibitions

## We're Tired of Asking: Black Thursday and Civil Rights at the University of Florida

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The University of Florida was desegregated in 1957. The issue of civil rights was pushed even further with the partial integration of Alachua County's public schools in 1964. Even with these seemingly large strides toward equality, however, life remained largely unchanged for Black people in Gainesville.

In a great show of strength on April 15, 1971, Black students decided to take a stand in a protest at Tigert Hall on the UF campus. Their interaction with President Stephen O'Connell would change the course of the University of Florida forever.



**Black Thursday protest,**  
courtesy of UF Libraries

## Trailblazers: 150 Years of Alachua County Women (closing in August)

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This exhibition highlights the lives and accomplishments of eleven women from cities throughout Alachua County. We tell their stories, some for the first time, to call attention to the oft forgotten contributions of women in our history and in the history of Alachua County. While we are unable to call attention to every woman who has made an impact on the county, these eleven women represent various backgrounds, experiences, and fields of work, all of which are significant to the past and present success of Alachua County.



**Margaret Tebeau,**  
courtesy of the Matheson

## The Great Southern Music Hall - Opens September 14

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Between 1974 and 1978, the top concert venue in Gainesville was the Great Southern Music Hall, located inside the vintage Florida Theatre at 233 West University Avenue. The University of Florida campus featured concerts at the Florida Gym, Reitz Union and Lake Alice Field, but none had been designed specifically for live music. Jeffrey Meldon and Jim Forsman were determined to fix that by turning their theater into a state-of-the-art concert hall spotlighting national artists of legendary status.



**Florida Theatre,** courtesy of the  
Alachua County Library District

# Upcoming Events

## **Great Southern Music Hall Opening Reception**

**September 30, 7pm**

## **Camellias and Their Connection to Local Medical History**

with Dr. Alice Rhoton-Vlasak

**October 6, 7pm**

## **An African American and Latinx History of the United States**

with Dr. Paul Ortiz

**October 13, 7pm**

## **Not to Keep: A Brother's Story**

with Rebecca Johnston

**November 3, 7pm**

## **Dreams in the New Century: Instant Cities, Shattered Hopes, and Florida's Turning Point**

with Dr. Gary Mormino

**November 6, 2pm**

## **Indigenous People of Alachua County**

with Nicole Nesberg

**November 13, 2pm**

## **Downtown Festival and Art Show**

**November 19-20**

Come visit us at our booth and win a prize!

## **Holiday Homes Tour (paid ticket)**

**December TBD**

\*All programs are free (unless otherwise stated) but require pre-registration. Please visit our website at [www.mathesonmuseum.org/events](http://www.mathesonmuseum.org/events) to register.

Be sure to join our email list or follow us on social media to stay up to date with our programs and exhibitions. If you aren't subscribed to our e-newsletter please email Joanna at [info@mathesonmuseum.org](mailto:info@mathesonmuseum.org) to do so.

# Matheson Happenings



Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, Carl Milazzo, and Board member Kim Mullins joined other community organizations on June 4 at the Alachua County Library District's Summer Reader Palooza at Depot Park. Our chomping alligator craft was a big hit!



On April 13 we were honored to host a tour of the Matheson for a delegation from Duhok, Iraq, one of Gainesville's sister cities. The delegation included Duhok's governor - Ali Tatar Tawfiq. The group was taken on a whirlwind tour of Gainesville by Jessica Hurov of Visit Gainesville, so we are grateful to have been included!



Thank you to Katie Smith from UF's George A. Smathers Libraries who helped us assess books from the Matheson Family collection and offered preservation suggestions. One of the many ongoing projects at the Matheson that are supported by your donations and membership!



## BECOME A MEMBER!

### Sustainer Payment Plan

- Give monthly at any amount (\$5 minimum)
- You can register for an automatic monthly donation through PayPal. You do not need a PayPal account in order to participate.
- Go to [www.mathesonmuseum.org/membership](http://www.mathesonmuseum.org/membership). Click either the blue or yellow button at the bottom.
- When you reach the PayPal donation page enter the amount you would like to donate monthly and click the button next to "Make this a monthly donation."

### Annual Payment Plan

- Student - \$20
- Senior Individual - \$25
- Individual - \$35
- Family - \$40
- Historian - \$100
- Heritage Circle - \$250
- 1867 Society - \$500
- Lifetime - \$1,000

Visit our website at [mathesonmuseum.org/membership](http://mathesonmuseum.org/membership) to join today!

# In Memoriam

This year the Matheson and the Alachua County community lost two of its biggest supporters and change-makers: Mary Barrow and Mary Ann Cofrin.

## Mary Ann Harn Cofrin

Mary Ann was a Gainesville native and P.K. Yonge High School graduate. She attended the Florida State College for Women and the Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School in New York City. After World War II she met her husband, David Cofrin, in New York City and they were married in 1947. They moved to Gainesville in 1955 where Dr. Cofrin practiced general surgery and they raised their five children.

The Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art is named for Mary Ann's father. Mary Ann, her mother, and her two sisters pledged \$3 million to the construction of the museum, which opened in 1990. At the time it was the largest private gift ever given to the University of Florida.

Mary Ann was a tireless philanthropist and volunteer, supporting many causes and organizations throughout Alachua County. She served as a Matheson Board member and helped launch the museum's oral history project. She was awarded the Sarah Matheson Award in 2010. In 2017 the Matheson History Museum named one of our two galleries in her honor – the Mary Ann Cofrin Exhibit Gallery.

Mary Ann and her daughter, Mary Ann, at the opening of the Matheson Library & Archives in 2017, courtesy of Red Hot Pepper Photography



## Mary Besalski Barrow

Mary was born in Jackson, Mississippi, and graduated from UF with a bachelor's degree in education in 1958. She met her husband, Mark, on a blind date and they were married in 1959. They first lived in Bethesda, Maryland, while Dr. Barrow was working at the National Institute of Health. Gainesville eventually called them back home and Mary began her quest to preserve historic buildings in downtown Gainesville.

Her first project was the Tigert House in the Duckpond Neighborhood and over the next 20 years she and her company, Victorian Restorations Construction, would restore 21 historic houses. She was also a founding member of Historic Gainesville, Inc., a non-profit dedicated to historic preservation.

She and her husband, Mark, were instrumental in the founding of the Matheson History Museum. The country store exhibit in the museum was created by Mary and her friend, Jean Marshall. She received many awards over the years, including a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016 by Gainesville Magazine, which she shared with her husband.

Mary with  
Jean Marshall  
at the  
Matheson's  
country store  
exhibit in 2011



## Follow us on social media!



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Matheson History Museum

Website: [www.mathesonmuseum.org](http://www.mathesonmuseum.org)

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Our exhibitions and programs are  
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and the State of Florida.



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People empowered

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