

## **Miami Marine Stadium**

### **My Dreams for Miami**

Miami, as most water – edge cities is gifted with extraordinary qualities that have created a place in time for our hometown. From its early beginning merely one hundred years ago thru all of its growth Miami's allure and charm has rested comfortably on this special invitation that Nature has offered to all of our citizens.

As a young Architect in the early 1960s, enamored with this extraordinary privilege, I dreamt about how I could contribute, to not only mine, but to the extended aspirations of our citizenry, access to, communications with, and interaction by the water were an everyday present desire of most Miamians.

Early sunrise light playing over the tranquil waters of Biscayne Bay, followed by the shimmering reflections of brighter daylight and mystic moon and twinkling lights, build up our daily imagery of the Magic City. And quite frequently the image of beautiful man creations throughout history in similar settings was indeed a re-enforcement that we in Miami could aspire to more. Being a young City reminded us of how, reaching even further, an entire young Continent had expressed itself to the rest of the world thru an outstanding and beautiful water-edged edifice like the Sidney Opera House did for Australia.

Under these circumstances I was fortunate to have the opportunity to design for the City a marine gathering place where an entire host of activities could take place while at the same time assisting to define a recognizable image for Miami, forever. Our Architectural firm was commissioned to create a marine sports facility – a marine stadium and water course lagoon for Miamians and visitors to view, participate and enjoy in motor boat racing and other marine activities. The location was and is extraordinary at the strategic point where the new City skyline could joint the quieter southern Bay, celebrating the most fortune of multiple opportunities presented by the Bay configuration and threaded by the recently built Rickenbacker Causeway. Many questions and anxieties entered my mind – What kind of building could , at the same time, be a respectful component to such surroundings while creating its own image that could become forever part of our City? How can this building be sited to grow with our community, knowing that the future would bring new and diverse additional uses that the current budget did not include? What could some of these uses be and how can we prepare this precious location for that future?....

The answers to some of these questions become reality at the time that Modern architecture was passionately being revered internationally and quite significantly in Miami. These answers became a reality when the new technological advances allow us to design a series a “sail-like” structure hovering over the water course as a semi-transparent canopy over the stadium seating platform where approximately seven thousand viewers felt as if they were floating over the Bay, actually “growing out of the water” very much like some of the early historical structures in the City original buildings. These “sails” were sculpted out of reinforced concrete utilizing far reaching technology identified as “thin

Shells” that became the natural answer for large open, unobstructed areas for maximum viewing of the lagoon-race course, the many spectacles that could take place there and of course a fantastic, romantic view of the City and the Bay. These “concrete shells” were (are) by their own nature, the natural constructive answers for a facility that was to be erected over the salty waters of our Bay.

The sheer excitement of the imagery of this structure shaping up in the Miami profile was only matched by the citizens satisfaction who enjoyed its distinctive presence as well as that of the multiple users who attended various kinds of maritime events and the unique popular concerts and shows while seating on the stands or moored to hundreds of other boating enthusiasts who relished the unique experience that was only Miami’s. We, Miamians made national news for our unique enjoyment and setting.

Over the years, although the overall master plan for the site was never developed and a temporary parking area with minimal inadequate and unfinished landscaping was the momentary answer, the community at large envisioned other kind of popular uses where accessibility for all was paramount. As such, the Sunrise services for multidominational groups became a cherished tradition for many in our community. And all along the time, rowing, canoeing, and all other kind of non-power boats activities continue to enjoy the attributes of the course of and the stadium.

Over the years, as expected, the city grew and other uses, such as the Rusty Pelican and the adjoining Marina were developed; however, without a well thought out and sensitive comprehensive plan where the initial investment and users preference were considered at large. My dreams for Miami of 1960 are still alive and incomplete. The evidence of its happy beginning is still saluting daily those who drive on the causeway or continue to moore and exercise on the waters of the lagoon and enjoy looking back at the image of the stadium.

The answers that remain waiting to become reality are rather natural to anticipate. I envision, together with many others who have been proud of calling Miami Home, a celebratory development that will tie into a complete sentence the isolated elements that have been built over the years along the causeway on the stadium lagoon and further south. All these components have a strong basic commonality (roots) – the water and marine activity. In other words, they have the essence of Miami in common. The question at this time is how to complete the initial vision and finally develop one of the most significant “people’s harbor” right in the midst of our Magic City – a beautiful, low density, *marine park* with great views of the bay, city and water amidst a beautiful shaded canopy of trees that will offer the shade and breezes so associated with the proximity to the water. They key points are ■ the reaffirmation of the central piece to all these development – the refurbished Marine Stadium - as a totally public, accessible, citizens facility which will serve as the host piece for the multitude of marine interests that are clamoring in total frustration for a designated place to go, to congregate, to promote adults and youthful activities during a well planned yearly calendar of events for both, Miamians and visitors. ■ and a carefully programmed and sensitively located would be the necessary support components which will make the *Marine Stadium Park* an easy and comfortable venue to include as part of our daily lives. Much like greatly admired cities in the world, Miami shall rediscover and play up our unique qualities and expand them to include daytime and nighttime activities carefully highlighting its visual qualities and controlling the excessive size and commercial activities not conducive to be, above all, a good neighbor.

Some of these admired cities have done so after centuries of greatness as the legacy of contemporary generations.

Our opportunity is now. The beginning has been inherited by all of us, the replacement value of what is there now is impossible to duplicate and with great care and excellence of professional judgment, the 1960 dream of a green, shaded open park by the water as a popular gathering place for the young and old of our community to socialize, enjoy marine activities, popular concerts, and the exclusive popular pleasure of watching; watching the land and the water coming together and inviting all to see our City's beauty reflected day and night on the shimmering waters of our Bay.

My dream of 1960 is still alive and possible. To make it real should be our current goal.

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