

Martin County
Historic Preservation Board



Annual Report

2025





Introduction

The Martin County Historic Preservation Board (HPB) was created in 2003 when the Martin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance to ensure the preservation and protection of local historic sites. Members of the HPB are citizen volunteers appointed by the BOCC for a term of four years to assist with implementation of the ordinance.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Historic Preservation Board is to advance local designation of the county's historic structures and landmarks in order to raise awareness of the importance of the county's architectural and archaeological legacy to community identity and the preservation of Martin County's unique past.

Board Members

- Evan Anderson, Chair
- Robert Steele, Vice Chair
- Joette Lorion Rice
- Rodney Johnson
- Douette Pryce
- William Weiss
- Sherry Lee
- Jacqui May



Duties

Primary duties of the Martin County Historic Preservation Board include:

- Recognize archaeological geo-environmental zones as identified on an Archaeological Survey of Martin County.
- Designate historic sites and districts pursuant to section 4.584.
- Approve historical markers and issue certificates of designation.
- Establish procedures for the issuance of certificates of appropriateness.
- Recommend zoning and building code amendments to the proper authorities.
- Promote an awareness of the benefits of historic preservation to the community.
- Perform periodic updates to the historic archaeological and architectural surveys.
- Record and maintain records of the HPB's actions and decisions.
- Provide an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners.
- Review, develop and recommend ordinances to the Board of County Commissioners that promote the preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources.
- Seek out worthy projects for matching grants-in-aid from sources which have as their purpose the preservation for public benefit of properties that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture.
- Review applications for all buildings, properties and sites in unincorporated Martin County nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Establish criteria and procedures for the expedited review of certain projects by staff.
- Seek expertise on matters or proposals requiring evaluation by a professional or a discipline not represented on the HPB.
- Provide an annual budget to the Board of County Commissioners.
- Attend pertinent informational or educational meetings, workshops, and conferences.

The Martin County Historic Preservation Board meets on the third Monday of every other month starting in February with the addition of a March meeting leading up to Historic Preservation Month held in May. The information below summarizes the general activities, projects and accomplishments of this board.





General Activities

During 2025, a milestone year in which Martin County celebrated its centennial, the Historic Preservation Board and staff undertook the following activities:

- The Historic Preservation Board revised its goals and objectives for 2026 to include measurable baselines.
- Staff continued working with the multi-departmental Historic Preservation Working Group on coordinated promotional efforts.
- The Board recommended approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.
- The Board explored opportunities for establishing future historic districts.
- Evan Anderson accepted the Historic Preservation Month Proclamation from Martin County on behalf of the Board.
- Joette Lorion Rice accepted the Historic Preservation Month Proclamation from the City of Stuart on behalf of the Board.
- Douette Pryce accepted the Historic Preservation Month Proclamation from the Town of Sewall's Point on behalf of the Board.



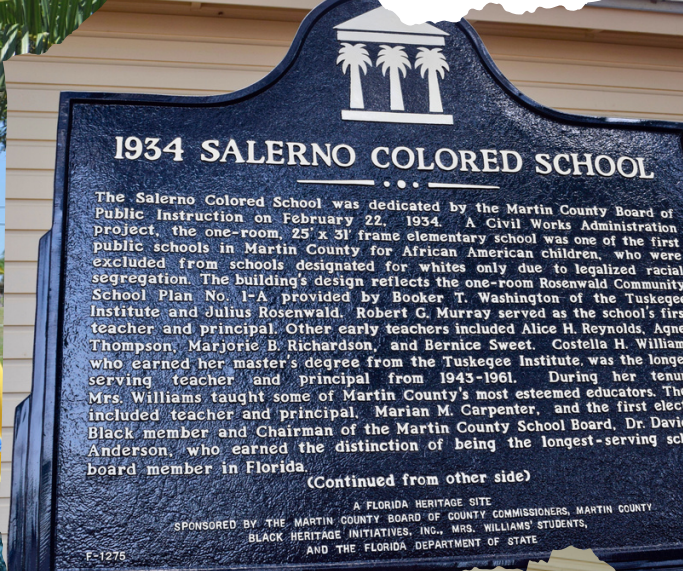
2025 Projects and Accomplishments

Historic Preservation Month

For more than a decade, the Martin County Historic Preservation Board (HPB) has coordinated a wide variety of events to celebrate Historic Preservation Month with the rest of the country. Each year, community support of this celebration has grown stronger. In 2008, the HPB's first year observing this very special month, the schedule listed a week of six events. In 2019, the HPB had a schedule of thirty-three events, with some repeating on different dates. In February 2020, the HPB began planning for the Historic Preservation Month activities but by May 2020, the HPB and its partners in preservation decided to postpone any and all events due to the COVID-19 worldwide health pandemic.

This year, the historic preservation community organized 33 events throughout the month of May. The 2025 schedule included a kickoff at the Stuart Heritage Museum, tours and open houses at historic sites, dramatizations of notable local figures, the Salerno Colored School Florida Historical Marker celebration hosted by the Martin County Black Heritage Initiative, the 100-year celebration of the Golden Gate Building, and the Historic Preservationist of the Year award reception. Historic Preservation Month offered a wide range of programs for all ages and interests. We also shared information about Martin County's unique history and preservation efforts across our social media platforms.





Saadia Tsaftarides, 2025 Historic Preservationist of the Year

Saadia's preservation efforts have brought renewed momentum and visibility to the historic Golden Gate Building, which proudly celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2025. Constructed in 1925, the building was added to the Martin County Register of Historic Places in 2006 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. In that same year, a collaboration of nonprofit agencies and community partners completed a full renovation, reopening the structure as the Golden Gate Center for Enrichment. Today, the two-story center, managed by House of Hope, features a library outpost, a computer lab, flexible classroom spaces, and free programming that supports education, life skills, employment readiness, health, and overall well-being for residents.

Under Saadia's leadership, this century-old landmark continues to move forward through important preservation and revitalization milestones. She has strengthened partnerships, elevated the building's historical significance, and ensured that its architectural character and community purpose remain central to its future.

Honored during Historic Preservation Month, Saadia's work reflects a deep and enduring commitment to heritage that will inspire future generations to cherish, protect, and take pride in the history of the Golden Gate community.



Multi-Departmental Historic Preservation Working Group

- Creation of a dedicated Centennial Website, www.martin.fl.us/centennial to highlight the County's 100-year history and key milestones.
- The ongoing Martin Digital History Project by the Martin County Library System at www.martindigitalhistory.org
- Use of #LoveMCHistory across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share "Then and Now" photo comparisons, Throwback Thursday posts with historic context, Historic Preservation Month activities, and more.
- Continued promotion of local history in the County Connection e-newsletter.

