



(Photos provided by the Indian River County Historical Society)

Florida Heritage Landmark Sign Dedication at Royal Palm Pointe

History will be made for the 3rd time for the Tony Young family as a marker will be unveiled at Royal Palm Pointe. On Saturday, March 23 at 10 a.m. Councilman and Centennial Co-chair Tony Young and family will unveil the marker. Tony's grandmother cut the ribbon for the first Vero Bridge (the narrow wooden bridge) on Labor Day 1920 as well as the ribbon cutting for the first Merrill Barber Bridge. Both were launched from the pilings and later filled extension of this first bridgehead. That causeway today – Royal Palm Pointe – and the placement of *The Bridges* landmark sign will have the view of the current Merrill Barber as its backdrop. The public is invited to attend this historic dedication. The Indian River County Historical Society is credited for the authorship and funding of this marker.

Enjoy some history of The Bridges described above: A parade of Model T automobiles crossed the first bridge to span the Indian River on Labor Day 1920. This made Vero the first community with a bridge to Orchid Island. Made of Sabal palm pilings and rough-cut planking, it began on the mainland side from a causeway created from dredged fill, and curved in the middle where the bridge tender's house was located. The bridge tender would open the metal swing span by hand for boat traffic. The tolls varied from \$.05 for pedestrians to \$.10 for a horse to \$.35 for a two-ton delivery truck. In the 1950s, after successful lobbying from Florida State Senator Merrill P. Barber, a new bridge was constructed using an extension of the dredged-fill causeway for its bridgehead. The Merrill P. Barber Bridge was designed in the Mid-Century Modern style, and had a steel bascule span with a booth for the bridge tender. In the 1990s, a new mainland approach was established to the north and the Barber Bridge was replaced with a concrete arch bridge. This second Barber Bridge is fixed, and is tall enough that the Atlantic Ocean can be seen clearly to the east. The old causeway and bridgehead became Royal Palm Pointe, a residential and commercial corridor with a city park on the river.

NOTE: The Indian River County Historical Society is also planning a mini-documentary called **The Bridges** that will have interviews with the children of the bridge tenders telling their stories of living in the middle of the river with their families. **The Bridges** video will also include the Quay (Winter Beach) Bridge and the Wabasso Bridge. A springtime date for this event is in the planning. For more information call Ruth Stanbridge 778-3435 or email:indianriverhisto@bellsouth.net. Visit their website www.irchistorical.org.

For more information on this and other Centennial Celebrations, visit the Centennial website www.VeroBeach100.org.
Event times, dates, locations and descriptions are subject to change. For more information contact Tammy Bursick at 978-9400.
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