



The Property Owners Association, Inc.
The Villages, FL

POA Hall of Fame Presentation (12-15-2009)

Good Evening. My name is Myron Henry, I live in the Village of Hadley, and I am one of your elected members of the Board of Directors for the POA. It is my pleasure to preside over the POA Hall of Fame ceremony this evening. We have two former officers of the POA who will be recognized by becoming members of the POA Hall of Fame. Both were unanimously elected by your Board of Directors at the December meeting and both served the POA with distinction during the tumultuous period from 1989 through 1991.

History

In 1989-90, what is now The Villages was called Orange Blossom Gardens (OBG). In 1989, the Orange Blossom Gardens Management attempted to alter certain privileges that had been granted to residents when those residents purchased their homes. In response and in accordance with Florida law, the OBG POA Negotiating Committee entered into what it hoped would be good faith mediation with Management regarding property owner rights that had been promised as a part of purchase understandings with Management. Mediation failed. Arbitration pursuant to Florida law followed, but that also failed. Management was determined not to discuss any of the grievances of existing property owners with the OBG POA, and went so far as to tell perspective new buyers that the OBG POA had no standing within the Orange Blossom Gardens community. But this assertion by

Management was false as the OBG POA was established through a formal 1975 vote (by a three to one margin) of all Orange Blossom Gardens residents.

After all “peaceful” avenues to address the legitimate concerns of residents with Management had been exhausted, members of the OBG POA voted at a regular meeting to peacefully picket Management in order to draw public attention to the injustices being imposed upon residents of Orange Blossom Gardens by Management. Picketers faced much harassment and bad press, but they were devoted to the just cause of assuring that Management lived up to the promises that had been made to residents of Orange Blossom Gardens. A lawsuit was filed by the POA, and the controversy ended in 1991 when Management agreed in an out of court settlement to live up to the promises they had made to residents.

The two people who are being recognized by the POA tonight as new Hall of Fame members were key leaders during the 1989-1991 controversy.

It is now my very great pleasure to present to you POA Hall of Fame member Eva Hawkins who served as President of the POA during that tumultuous time. She will present the first candidate for induction into the POA Hall of Fame. Friends, I welcome POA Hall of Famer Eva Hawkins to the podium.

Vincent (Vinnie) Palmisano

Eva says a few introductory words and then proceeds to the biography of Vincent Palmisano.

Vincent (Vinnie) Palmisano was born in New York City. He served in the U.S. Air Force and for a time was stationed in England. It was there where he met and subsequently married his lovely wife Pam. They eventually had six children.

After his Air Force service, Vinnie worked for thirty years for Eastern Airlines. During his working years, Vinnie came to appreciate the value of collective representation.

In 1986, Vinnie and Pam found their paradise when they discovered Orange Blossom Gardens (OBG), the original name for what eventually was to blossom into "The Villages." He and Pam soon joined the OBG Property Owners Association (OBG POA), the forerunner of the Property Owners Association (POA) of the Villages. Subsequently, Vinnie served the OBG POA with distinction in a variety of important capacities, eventually becoming the vice president of the POA and a member of the OBG POA Negotiating Committee.

Vinnie was put in charge of the picketing process by POA president Eva Hawkins during that time, and a parade permit was promptly and legally obtained. Materials were purchased to support the picketing efforts from the contributions of concerned friends. Signs were painted that expressed the grievances of residents of Orange Blossom Gardens. Vinnie supervised over 100 volunteers who became involved in the picketing process. Detailed instructions on how to picket peaceably and properly were provided through Vinnie. These instructions emphasized "staying calm" even as picketers were taunted by Management representatives. Information sheets on the purposes of the picketing

were prepared for distribution upon request to interested people. The picketing went on for two months, and although there were many provocations by representatives of Management, "Vinnie's troops" prevailed through organization and determination.

The entire picketing effort was a monumental task, and so much of the credit for the success of the picketing belongs to Vinnie for his careful and informed organizing and his leadership under fire.

Vincent (Vinnie) Palmisano has served the POA with courage, wisdom, and distinction. He is truly deserving of induction into the Hall of Fame of the Property Owners Association of the Villages.

Current POA President Joe Gorman and I will now present the Hall of Fame plaque to Vinnie Palmisano. Please join Joe and me in welcoming Vinnie Palmisano to the podium for the presentation.

Joe Gorman concludes by officially welcoming Vinnie Palmisano into the POA Hall of Fame.



Henry returns to the podium for the second presentation.

The second person to be inducted into the POA Hall of fame is Dorothy Morehouse Beeney. She died in 2009, so Dorothy Morehouse Beeney will become a member of the POA Hall of Fame posthumously. Dorothy Morehouse and Bob Morehouse moved to Orange Blossom Gardens in 1986. Shortly after that they joined the Property Owners Association (POA), and Dorothy served as treasurer of the POA from 1988 through 1991.

Dorothy was exceedingly active on behalf of OBG residents during this time. When the POA membership voted to seek the services of an attorney, almost all members came forward with cash contributions to cover the estimated costs of a law suit against the management. Dorothy managed all the funds and recorded all donations which ranged from \$4 to \$125. At the same time, she was one of the leaders in the picketing effort by OBG residents to restore the promised benefits that had been arbitrarily canceled by the developer.

As an officer, Dorothy Morehouse Beeney was one of the signers of the 1991 agreement with the developer that restored the benefits that management had cancelled. At the conclusion of the successful legal effort to restore promised benefits, the developer also reimbursed the POA for legal costs. Dorothy then wrote checks to all the donors. She was meticulous in keeping POA financial records and faithful to the principles and purposes of the POA.

Dorothy Morehouse Beeney is richly deserving of being awarded membership into the POA Hall of Fame, and members of her family will be pleased to know just how much the POA appreciates the efforts of Dorothy during the crucial period from 1989 through 1991.

Current POA President Joe Gorman will present the POA plaque to Eva Hawkins who will accept on behalf of members of the Dorothy Morehouse Beeney family.

