Patriot Plaza Newsletter
May 27, 2020

EXPERIENCE PATRIOT PLAZA 2021 AND BEYOND

NEWSFLASH!
ANNOUNCING THE PATRIOT PLAZA VIRTUAL TOUR!
The Patterson Foundation and The Collaboratory at Ringling College of Art and Design are excited to share that a virtual tour of Patriot Plaza is now available to the public allowing visitors locally, nationally and internationally the ability to experience Patriot Plaza. Eleven different videos were produced and directed by Ringling College of Art and Design students, representing different fields of study and grade levels, for the EdExploreSRQ experiential learning platform in the Sarasota County school system. The eleven different segments represent all the different portions of a full length tour, such as the introduction and all the different artworks and areas of Patriot Plaza. These segments were then developed into a full length tour able to be viewed by students and the public. You can start viewing this spectacular video tour HERE!

The virtual tour was originally produced to allow middle school civics students the ability to tour Patriot Plaza from their classrooms. Experiencing this outdoor amphitheater and museum at Sarasota National Cemetery is imbedded in the civics curriculum in the Sarasota County school system. You are still able to visit Patriot Plaza in person as an individual or in your own private group, however formal guided tours are still suspended until further updates from the National Cemetery Administration. Now you have the ability to take a tour of this lasting tribute to veterans and their families from your own comfortable space!
Above: Jim Robinson gives students an in person tour of Patriot Plaza in early 2020
Below: With each of the participants vaccinated against COVID-19, Patriot Plaza Guides and members of the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County met for in-person training in preparation for zoom conversations with students after they take the virtual Patriot Plaza tour
(Pictured from L to R: Samantha Wuerfel, Jim Robinson, Frank Quinn, Bob Arnet, Ria Cooper and Jim Shirley)

Eventually in-person guided tours at Patriot Plaza will resume, but part of the new virtual tour experience includes the opportunity to have a Patriot Plaza Guide join you after viewing the video for a Question and Answer session. The first of those interactions with students are planned for later this month! We will bring you an update in our next newsletter.

Patriot Plaza Guides are Sarasota National Cemetery volunteers that have taken additional training with the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County in order to give guided tours to students, private groups and the public. Always quick to adapt, the Patriot Plaza Guides are learning new ways to interact and are ready to join you after your virtual tour for a Question and Answer period. Contact the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County if you would like to receive training to become a Patriot Plaza Guide or to schedule a tour for you, your neighbors, friends and family.

THE VOICES ON THE VIDEO

The voices you hear on the virtual tour are our very own local radio personalities, Maverick and Lulu. They each have family members interred at Sarasota National Cemetery and a passion for our community and our veterans.

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Maverick Johnson over the last 29 years has been an on air radio personality locally in Manatee & Sarasota Counties. Maverick has a strong passion for our great country and supporting our military. His father, Denis V. Cooper, was a Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. He served as a Helicopter Crew Chief, who flew on hundreds of missions during his service in Vietnam. Maverick's father now rests at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

Maverick founded a military wish-granting 501 c3 non-profit in his father's name in 2014, the Denis V. Cooper Foundation - Wishes For Heroes.

Lulu is the morning radio show co-host of "The Maverick and Lulu," show, on 92.1 and 103.1 WCTQ. Her radio career expands over 24 years with successful shows in Nashville and Cleveland before joining WCTQ in 2011. As a proud supporter of our military, Lulu volunteers with Wreaths Across America. Both of Lulu's parents are resting at the Sarasota National Cemetery. She is also a proud supporter of our law enforcement, firefighters and first responders. Throughout her career, Lulu has been involved with many charitable organizations and is very passionate about serving her community.

We asked Maverick and Lulu to tell us what Patriot Plaza and Sarasota National Cemetery mean to them:

"Patriot Plaza and the Sarasota National Cemetery is a special place for me and my family. Like thousands of others, my Dad who is my Hero is resting there. He loved being a United

Like thousands of others, my Dad who is my Hero is resting there. He loved being a United Marine States Marine. He volunteered to serve our country in Vietnam. I can still remember the conversation we had, when he told me about seeing a Vietnamese Mom on TV asking for America to help. It was at that moment, he decided he would enlist. He served as a Helicopter Crew Chief in combat and talked about those experiences, occasionally. He loved our country and would do anything for it and for those oppressed around the world. It is breathtaking to walk the beautiful grounds, to soak it all in, what it means and most importantly to remember all the sacrifices that have been made, for our freedom. Our family will always feel at home there, as my Dad rests in eternity with his brave brothers and sisters." Maverick
"When I was asked to join this wonderful project about Patriot Plaza for The Patterson Foundation, I did not hesitate. I automatically said yes! I love and respect our great country and all the men and women who serve and sacrifice for our nation. Past, present and future. I come from a family of men who served in our military. My father served in the Army in WWII and my uncle served in the Korean War. Both have now passed on. My father and mother are both laid to rest at the Sarasota National Cemetery along with thousands of others who served and protected all of us. It was my true honor to do something to give back and be a part of telling the story of the sacred place we are so fortunate to have in our community, Patriot Plaza. Thank you to The Patterson Foundation for the making of this beautiful project and for letting me take part." Lulu

EXPERIENCE PATRIOT PLAZA WITH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY BOOKS

November 2020

The first edition of the Family Engagement Activity Book focuses on what is a Veteran, what is Veterans Day all about, and information about each of the Armed Forces of the United States. Fun activities include coloring the seals and a word search with words that are found throughout Patriot Plaza artwork and walkways. Click HERE to download or view a copy.

February 2021

The second edition of the Family Engagement Activity Book focuses on the history of national cemeteries, symbols at Patriot Plaza and traditions such as how to fold a US Flag. Fun activities include a word jumble, coloring Abraham Lincoln and matching military ribbons to the mural artwork found at Patriot Plaza. Click HERE to download or view a copy.
The third edition of the Family Engagement Activity Book focuses on the Artwork and the Process. The artwork comes in many forms such as mosaics, bronze metal, granite, marble and photography. Each artwork tells a story about courage, endurance, valor, love, support, loss, pride and most of all - mission and patriotism. Fun activities include a recipe for your own sculpture to mold and paint, and also a word search puzzle. Click [HERE](#) to download or view a copy.

The United States Armed Forces Code of Conduct states "I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense." On this Memorial Day 2021 we honor the men and women who have given their lives in defense of our nation. The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3:00 pm local time on Memorial Day for one minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the U.S.
The Sarasota National Cemetery and Patriot Plaza are open to the public daily from sunrise to sunset. The Sarasota National Cemetery Director, staff, and the SNC Advisory Committee will present the Virtual 2021 Memorial Day Commemoration Ceremony on the morning of Monday, May 31. At 10:00am there will be a live stream from Patriot Plaza followed by the prerecorded program. You are encouraged to tune into the Memorial Day Tribute at Sarasota National Cemetery Facebook page.
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STAY CONNECTED

Share this newsletter with friends, family, and co-workers. Click HERE to be added to the distribution of the Patriot Plaza Newsletter.

Follow and "Like" our Legacy of Valor Facebook page for inspirational and informative posts covering national and local topics concerning veterans.

#PatriotPlaza

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