HONORING GEORGE GILLESPIE
A PATRIOT PLAZA GUIDE

George Gillespie 1940-2019

The Patriot Plaza Guides are the pulse of Patriot Plaza as they honor veterans, inspire patriotism and pass the meaning of freedom on to others when they lead tours and assist at Sarasota National Cemetery events. Starting in June 2014 when Patriot Plaza was first dedicated to the community the guides have provided tours to enhance the experience of Patriot Plaza. By sharing the history and telling the stories behind the art and architecture of this lasting tribute to veterans and their families, the Patriot Plaza guides provide an invaluable service to the public, our school children and different private groups that have been given tours by these stalwart volunteers. It is with sad hearts that we bid a final farewell to George Gillespie who will share your story

SHARE YOUR STORY

Please share your experiences after visiting Patriot Plaza by sending your stories to Linda Gould at LLGouldsrq@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW?

Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery is available free of cost for you and the community to use for events honoring veterans.

Events at Patriot Plaza need to:
1) Be free and open to the public
2) Honor veterans
3) Maintain the dignity of a national cemetery

Download the Event Hosting Guidelines and contact John Rosentrater, Sarasota National Cemetery Director at john.rosentrater@va.gov or (941) 922-7200 to request holding an event at Patriot Plaza.

Click here to learn more about Sarasota National Cemetery.

GUIDED TOURS & EXPLORATIONS

Public tours of Patriot Plaza are currently conducted every Tuesday at 10am, except on federal holidays. Private group and school tours can be scheduled Monday through Friday.

Through a partnership with The Patterson Foundation and the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County, Guides are recruited from the Sarasota National Cemetery (SNC) volunteers and trained on the history and meaning of the art elements...
bid a final farewell to George Gillespie who will be interred at Sarasota National Cemetery. Thank you George, not only for your service but also for honoring your fellow veterans by volunteering at Patriot Plaza and leaving your legacy through your stories.

THE PATRIOT PLAZA EXPERIENCE

Visiting Patriot Plaza has become a Must-Do for all ages. From visiting dignitaries to Chamber of Commerce Leadership Programs to students on EdExplorations as part of the EdExploreSRQ experiential hands on learning platform. Recently we had a particular day where all those potential scenarios converged into one incredible intergenerational day of visitors. The impact of the art and architecture evoked stories from some and questions from others. Click here to read the blog capturing this day of storytelling to good listeners.

SOUTHEASTERN COUNCIL OF FOUNDATIONS

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Wreaths Across America 2018 involved thousands of members of our community who came together to lay wreaths at over 13,000 gravesites at Sarasota National Cemetery. This year was a coming together of many families from the community, a truly intergenerational showing of support to veterans and their loved ones interred here. There was such respect as wreaths were placed and the name of the veteran or loved one was spoken aloud in order to remember. The national office for Wreaths Across America is located in Maine and chose the live wreaths with red bows to honor veterans through their motto of Remember, Honor, and Teach. The colors are non denominational and not intended to signify any specific religious belief. Families that do not wish a wreath to be placed at their loved ones gravesites are able to notify the Director of Sarasota National Cemetery ahead of time and the staff checks after the program that day to ensure families' wishes are honored.
Southeastern Council of Foundations

Leading them along the outer path of plinths, the marble slabs with 49 photographs ranging from the Civil War to present day, this crane ambled along ensuring that the group slowed down and enjoyed the nature surrounding Patriot Plaza as well as the architecture. On this particular day the tour guide for two of the private tours was Linda Gould, Community Connection consultant with The Patterson Foundation, who spent time sharing the stories of the Patterson family, along with the art and architecture which honors veterans and their families with Janine Lee, President and CEO of the Southeastern Council of Foundations (SECF), Dena Chadwick, Executive Vice President of Operations for SECF, who were in town visiting from Atlanta. Janine is very interested in sharing the idea of private foundations honoring veterans in their communities as The Patterson Foundation did by this first-ever collaboration with the National Cemetery Administration to use private funding to build an enhancement at a national cemetery. They were also so impressed with Sarasota that they look forward to bringing conferences to our area as well as return visits.

LEADERSHIP ENGLEWOOD

Terry Redman and 18 members of the Leadership Englewood Class of 2019 listening to the tour guide
Leadership Englewood Class of 2019

Leadership Englewood is sponsored by the Englewood Florida Chamber of Commerce and its main purpose is to bring together people that share an interest in the Englewood Community and a desire to improve their leadership skills. Terry Redman, pictured above, planned a robust agenda for their February monthly meeting which included a trip to Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery.

WOODLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL TOUR

Linda Tittle, Patriot Plaza Guide, explains the Guardian Eagles at the West Entrance of Patriot Plaza

Many thanks to Maverick Johnson and Meisha Richardson for their leadership and tireless efforts supporting Wreaths Across America Sarasota
Over 88 Woodland Middle School Civics students, in two separate groups, visited Patriot Plaza with their classmates as part of a program with all civics classes in Sarasota County Schools. During any tour at Patriot Plaza there is usually a funeral going on since there are 8-10 funerals a day at Sarasota National Cemetery. This group of students and their Patriot Plaza Guide paused when they heard TAPS being rendered as part of the funeral service.

Tampa Bay Community Foundation sponsors an annual trip to Patriot Plaza for Veterans and their families. This is the 4th year for Tampa Bay Community Foundation’s community outreach to veterans and their families in the Hillsborough County area. Over 50 veterans and family members came by bus from the Tampa area to tour Patriot Plaza and then have lunch at Der Dutchman in Sarasota. The group was the largest yet and split into four groups with each group having a Patriot Plaza Guide to give them a private tour and enhance their experience of the art and architecture that honors veterans, inspires patriotism and embraces freedom.
Harry Moses, Patriot Plaza Guide

Harry Moses, a Patriot Plaza guide, recently returned from the regional Veteran's Creative Dramatic Arts Festival held in St. Petersburg, Florida where he was 1st in 4 separate categories. "The Folded Flag" won the Dramatic Patriotic Monologue and also in the Dramatic Prose categories. The "I Am Your Flag" won in the Personal Experience-Patriotic and the Patriotic Prose categories. Now he is onto the National competition and hopefully on to Kalamazoo in October. Congratulations Harry!

STAY CONNECTED

Share this newsletter with friends, family, and co-workers. To be added to the distribution, send your request to Linda Gould at LLGouldsrq@gmail.com.

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

#PatriotPlaza
@ThePattersonFd

UPCOMING EVENTS AT PATRIOT PLAZA

Vietnam War Commemoration Event
Saturday, March 30 at 10:00am

Memorial Day Remembrance Program
Saturday, May 25