

## *SPOT LIGHT* *Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve*



*Richardson Park Manor House. Courtesy of the Wilton Manors Historical Society.*

Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve, located on the south fork of the Middle River, offers a unique setting for both formal special events and casual outdoor fun. Archaeological evidence indicates that for millennia this area was a strategic waypoint for Native-Americans roving between the Atlantic and the Everglades.

Wilton Manors founder, E. J. Willingham, had his estate on the site beginning in 1925. In 1936, the Richardson family built Broward's third golf course on this and adjoining property. The City of Wilton Manors acquired the family's remaining 5.4 acres of land for the park in 2002.

Now fully renovated as an event venue, the 1950s-era Richardson Park Manor House serves as a quaint and inviting location for both social occasions and meetings. It is also home to the Wilton Manors Historical Society, housing its archives and vintage displays. Beside it stands the Carriage House from the Willingham estate, a wood-frame structure built in the 1920s. The Wilton Manors Historical Society has recently commissioned historic preservation architect Susan M. McClellan to perform a preliminary assessment of preservation-sensitive enhanced uses of the Carriage House.

In the nature preserve area the park offers interpretive trails, boardwalks, visiting boat dockage and weekend kayak rental. There is also a fully-equipped pavilion suitable for groups up to 150.

Richardson Historic Park and Nature Preserve is located at 1937 Wilton Drive, Wilton Manors. To learn more about the Wilton Manors Historical Society, visit [www.wiltonmanorshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.wiltonmanorshistoricalsociety.org). ■