Board of Directors

George C. Kakouris
Chair

Eduardo Hernandez, Esq.
Vice-Chair

Zeke Guilford, Esq.
Treasurer

Jeannett Slesnick
Secretary

Susan Wills Amat

James Beauchamp

Rhonda B. McNeal

Arva Moore Parks

Dulce "Pupi" Perez-Abreu

Shelley Daniel Rutherford

Kara Kautz
Historical Resources Director
City of Coral Gables

Director of Operations
Christine Rupp

Coral Gables Museum Corp.
PO Box 141687
Coral Gables, FL 33114
Phone: 305-910-3996

e-mail:
info@coralgablesmuseum.org

www.coralgablesmuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2008
Contact: Christine Rupp
chris@coralgablesmuseum.org
305-910-3996

CORAL GABLES MUSEUM RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM GENERATIONS OF FIREFIGHTERS

The Coral Gables Museum, which will be housed in Coral Gables' original Police and Fire Station, received a donation and a pledge of on-going support from a group of Coral Gables firefighters representing the Coral Gables Firefighters Benevolent Association, the Coral Gables Professional Firefighters Association and the South Florida Council of Fire Fighters Charities. Meeting at the 285 Aragon Avenue site, Museum Chairman George Kakouris accepted donations totaling $1500 from Batallion Commander Dan Thornhill, Secretary/Treasurer Coral Gables Professional Firefighters Association Local 1210.

The firefighters' contributions, however, are not only monetary. On a recent tour of the old station, a group of retired firefighters, including Batallion Commander Dick Gossett, Bo Bennett, one of the first paramedics in the State of Florida; and Captain Charlie McGarey, spoke to the history of the building and its use as Fire Station #1 from 1939 to 1975, when the station was moved to its current location at 2815 Salzedo Street. "Call boxes used to be located at intersections and addresses came in on an old ticker-tape machine", recalled Dick Bennett. "The system rang the bells throughout the station. The number of rings corresponded to the location in the city, and the bells would continue to ring in the station until the crew arrived at the scene of the call box, turned a key and disengaged the alarm". Walking through the old station, the three fondly remembered the location of equipment, Chief Matheson's office, the old kitchen and their duty to feed the prisoners at the jail. Firefighters were enlisted to feed federal prisoners housed at the jail during World War II and the tradition continued until the move to the new facility.

Gossett, and his son, Jim, also a Gables firefighter and current President of the Firefighters Benevolent Association, will assist the Museum in compiling memorabilia and gathering retired firefighters who worked out of old Station #1 for interviews about their memories as Gables firefighters. For information, contact Christine Rupp, Director of Operations at 305-910-3996 or via e-mail at chris@coralgablesmuseum.org.

Photos attached: Firefighter David Vargas, Batallion Commander Dan Thornhill, Museum Chairman George Kakouris, Lt. Steve Bush and Firefighter Brian Shaw.

Retired Coral Gables Firefighters Bo Bennett, Charlie McGarey and Dick Gossett at the future entrance to the Coral Gables Museum.