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How It All Began - Century Gardens at Century Village

BY RUTH BERNHARD-DREISS

Because my late husband, Arthur Bernhard was a real estate licensed Sales Manager for Century Village, selling approximately half of the 7,854 units, I feel like an expert about those times. Allow me to share with you how buyers came to Century Village.

They were bussed up from Miami Beach to learn about what Century Village had to offer and what they could expect in and around the community. At the onset, there were no 3- and 4-story buildings yet. They were all garden apartments... a 1-bedroom 1-bath, a 1-bedroom 1-1-1/2 bath and a 2-bedroom 1-1-1/2 bath. Prices started from \$8,990 for a 1-bedroom 1-bath. More about the cost of units and monthly maintenance a little later in this article.

Construction of units began about 1968 and the complex was completed in 1974. Not all areas were Century Gardens. There were other developers who built Golfs Edge, Stratford, Oxford and Plymouth. The 3- and 4-story buildings were not in existence yet.

The Century Gardens brochure offered a 1,000 seat auditorium, card room, sewing center (no longer available), outdoor pool and heated indoor pool and saunas, and an art studio, library and billiard room. There was a snack restaurant in the clubhouse which was forced to close because residents spent hours over a cup of coffee and the operator could not survive. There was an 18-hole executive golf course available to residents at special rates. This was not part of Century Village. It was

owned by the developer who later sold it. It will now become the site of Reflection Bay housing.

The units were equipped with Hotpoint appliances with a choice of two colors, and a choice of shag or sculptured carpet. The community was surrounded by doctors, dentists and professional services, and houses of worship. The supermarket of the day was Food Fair and what is now the outlet mall, was an enclosed mall with department stores such as Jordan Marsh, JC Penney and Richard's, and more than 80 individual specialty shops, three major restaurants and a savings bank...The Mall Bank. There were parking spaces for 6,000 cars. Your automobile was your passport to all of these features, plus there was tram service inside the Village. Buses were to come

years later, when in the early 80s, Judge Poulton ruled that residents could have bus transportation if they paid for it. And so they did on a prorated basis, according to percentage of ownership.

Back to the cost of units and monthly maintenance. 1 bedroom, 1 bath started from \$8,990 up to \$10,990 with monthly maintenance of \$34 to \$38; 2 bedroom, 1-1-1/2 bath began at \$11,290 to \$11,990 with maintenance of \$44 to \$48. Costs of the units were based on upper and lower floors and interior and exterior locations.

You have seen a myriad of changes over these 50 plus years if you still live here. Even our area code changed from 305 to 561, and we have our own zip code 33417. We are larger than some cities in the US.