

County History Center unveils historical marker in Newtown Sept. 6

The Sarasota County History Center and the Sarasota County Historical Commission will dedicate a new historical marker 10 a.m., Thursday Sept. 6, at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, 1845 34th St., Sarasota.

The Robert L. Taylor Community Complex grew out of the “Colored Service Men’s Club” building that was constructed with private funding during World War II for black soldiers. In 1950, Sarasota City Manager Ken Thompson proposed adding recreational activities to the responsibilities of the city’s parks department. He hired Robert L. Taylor to develop and operate a recreation program for the Newtown community.

Taylor’s job with the city required that he gain support from the community, but previously he had not developed relationships with community adults. Robert “Bud” Thomas, former semi-pro baseball player, local barber and community leader, helped Taylor make those necessary connections. In 1957 a swimming pool was added to the Newtown Community Center at a cost of \$75,000.

Robert Taylor retired after 36 years of dedicated service. When the Newtown Community Center was rededicated as the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex on February 15, 2005, Taylor commented that he and the Newtown Community Center grew up together.

For more information contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex.