

FKWBC Dedication Honors Gintels

2008 was a year of national economic disaster. In the relatively isolated Florida Keys, there was one quiet episode of a person, and her gift to the Keys, caught up in the national tragedy. Fortunately, there was another person with both the ability and magnanimity to intervene.

In 1983, Laura Quinn was enlisted by local veterinarian Dr. Robert Foley to provide a place for wild birds that he had treated to receive rehabilitation and release when possible, and when not, a sanctuary for the rest of their lives. Laura, a widowed, retired school teacher, established this sanctuary under and around her small ocean-front stilt-home in Islamorada. It grew, and gained permits and licenses, and was established as the Florida Keys Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center, Inc., (FKWBC), a 501(c)(3) charity. The Center became known as the place to take rescued birds and to visit and view the sanctuary for pelicans, herons, hawks and more, all done with donations and Laura's own limited funds.

Then Code Enforcement decided that the Center did not belong in a residential neighborhood. It would have to be relocated, with all the bureaucratic complexities.

Laura's funds were tapped to relocate the Center to 4 1/2 acres of mostly wetland bay-side in Tavernier, the Center's current location. Opened in June of 1990, the Hospital and Offices were located under the stilt house, below flood elevation, with living quarters for Laura and interns above.

Laura had always extracted the maximum out of every day of the week and every dollar available. This physically, financially, and emotionally demanding regimen was taking a toll on her stamina.

The Center was consistently receiving over 1,000 birds and 12,000 visitors a year. Laura would occasionally resort to home equity loans to continue feeding the birds and paying the staff - until August of 2008, when it became evident that there would not be enough income to survive September and October.

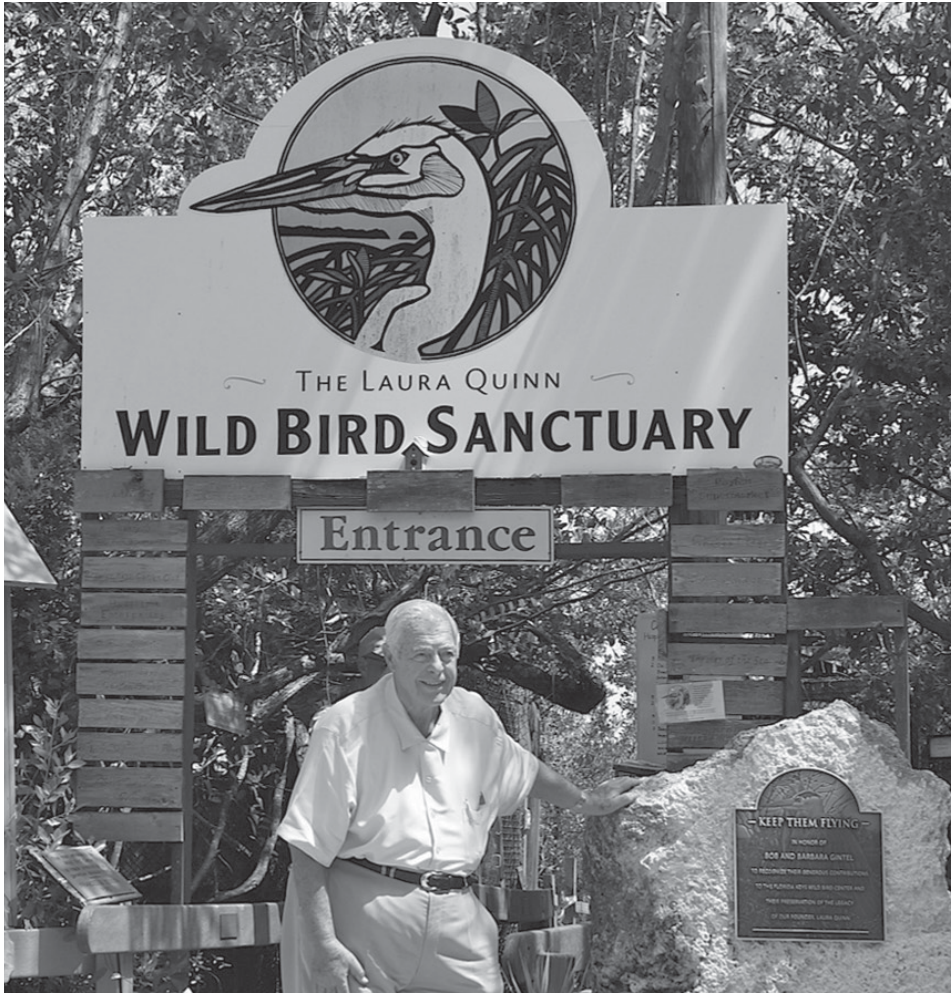
A "Hail Mary" email letter to potential supporters was sent. One addressee was Robert Gintel.

Mr. Gintel knew nothing about Laura or the FKWBC. A discussion with the e-mail sender led to a rescue donation to keep the Center from going under and an in-depth inquiry into the merits of the Center and its founder. The realization that here was an 80-year-old retiree giving all her waning energy and resources to the care of wild birds and their rescuers was enough to warrant deeper involvement. The Center had to be saved!

Bob provided not only funds but also his time, for the salvation of the Center and to ease Laura's worsening health. His business and financial acumen saved the Center. Bob spent several days a week at the Center helping with the many issues confronting it. His personal networking for additional funds was immediate. Reconstituting and enlarging the Board of Directors was essential.

Among the issues was a pending Code Enforcement case about the Hospital and Offices being below flood elevation. Bob helped fund their relocation to a nearby former chiropractor's office, where they are today.

Nature was immune from the down-turn in resources of 2008. With Laura's strength continuing to diminish, the Center needed a licensed



Bob Gintel stands next to the plaque awarded him

On Saturday, June 8th, 2013 the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center held a dedication ceremony honoring Bob and Barbara Gintel for donating the necessary funds to purchase the Laura Quinn Wild Bird Sanctuary and Visitor Center for the FKWBC. Special thanks to FKEC, LaRocco Enterprises, Brett Eckblom - Native Construction for donating the Coral Rock for the Dedication Plaque, ASAP for positioning the rock, Betsy Keteltas & Holly Hight - Island Equity Real Estate; Florida Keys Sun Wear - Joani and Randy Towe, Monroe County Sheriff's Office; Printing Plus; Key Largo Rotary; Gonsalves Electric and for all of the attendees who made the dedication so special.

The FKWBC Laura Quinn Wild Bird Sanctuary and Visitor Center is located at 93600 Overseas Highway, Tavernier and is open to guests from sunrise to sunset daily. The FKWBC Hospital is located at 93997 Overseas Highway and hours of operation are 8am-4pm. If you have a "Bird"gency please call 305-852-4486.

Rehabilitator to perform the essential medical care that the continuing intake of wild birds required. As there weren't any licensed Rehabbers in the Keys, one was located in Palm Beach. She and her assistant had worked at a foundation-established Rehab Center that did not survive 2008. They both needed a place to live in the Keys. Again, Bob came through with the funds to set up a two-bedroom apartment for them.

Another vital issue that needed to be addressed was Laura's ownership of her home and the property that consti-

tuted the Sanctuary. With Bob's donation of funds, FKWBC Inc. purchased the property. Laura did not have to be concerned about the perpetuation of the Center.

As Laura's health continued to decline, a caregiver was needed, and again Bob came through with funding. With the knowledge that the work of her life would continue, Laura passed away in September, 2010.

It is only through Bob's continuous generosity that the Center survives today. Bob Gintel has surely made the greatest contribution to "Keep Them Flying."

Saturday July 20th 2013

Full Moon Party

AT MORADA BAY
ISLAMORADA, FLORIDA KEYS

Music On The Beach • Parade • ABC Circus
Barbecues • Bonfires • Fireworks



ISLAMORADA, FLORIDA KEYS

21 & Over

\$20 / Morada Bay Beach
\$30 / Pierre's Lounge

moradabay-restaurant.com • pierres-restaurant.com
81600 OVERSEAS HIGHWAY, ISLAMORADA, FL 33036 • 305 664 0604