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Another stadium, another preservation effort

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Courtesy of Friends of Miami Marine Stadium

Around the same time architects were fighting to keep the city from razing [Memorial Coliseum](#), another mid-century modern stadium was facing a similar fate, but in a more tropical setting.

After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the city of Miami condemned Miami Marine Stadium, a 6,500-seat stadium nestled against the blue waters of the Virginia Key. Today, graffiti artists have covered the structure from top to bottom.

Despite being home to the floating stage that saw Sammy Davis Jr. hug Richard Nixon, the city of Miami in early 2008 released a master plan indicating the water sports stadium designed by 28-year old Cuban immigrant Hilario Candela should be leveled.

But Miami resident Don Worth wasn't about to let that happen. Working with the Dade Heritage Trust and others, Worth and the Friends of Miami Marine Stadium encouraged the city to instead designate the stadium as a historic structure, which it did in October 2008.

"Sitting inside the stadium, you look down and see it's built over water," Worth said. "You look up and you see a concrete lip the size of a football field. You look North and East and you see a nature preserve. You look west and Miami looks like the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz. You walk into this place and you gasp."



Courtesy of Friends of Miami Marine Stadium

Worth has been hard pressed to find a profitable use and a partner with the financial backing to make Miami Marine Stadium successful again. Boat racing and live concerts were once popular at the stadium, but a combination of competing indoor facilities and a lack of promotion and proper management by the city led to a gradual decline in events, according to Worth.

"The city should not be running things like a stadium," Worth said. "It's a different skill set. You have to program it, book it and market it and those qualities aren't there from the government side. We want a public-private partnership where we lease the stadium to a private group that keeps it open for the public."

One of the unanswered questions in the quest to redevelop Memorial Coliseum, as well as Miami Marine Stadium, has been which of the numerous proposals have the financial wherewithal, as well as the property management experience, to keep the city from having to redevelop again in another ten years.

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