

OPINION

JOHN S. KNIGHT (1894-1981)

DAVID LANDSBERG, PUBLISHER | AMINDA MARQUES GONZALEZ, EXECUTIVE EDITOR | MYRIAM MARQUEZ, EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

JAMES L. KNIGHT (1909-1991)

THE MIAMI HERALD | EDITORIAL

Things looking up for Marine Stadium

OUR OPINION: Keep public access to waterfront facility a priority

The process to give the drooping Miami Marine Stadium a grand and deserving facelift has been moving along in fits and starts — or maybe nips and tucks. Nevertheless, a long-overdue process to restore the beloved stadium to its previous glory is under way — finally.

Now, both the city and the private-sector entities that have come together to save the stadium simply have to make it work. Its members include architect Hilario Candela, who designed the original stadium; Skanska USA, a respected construction firm; and The Heat Group, which would operate the new and improved Marine Stadium — already having such experience from AmericanAirlines Arena.

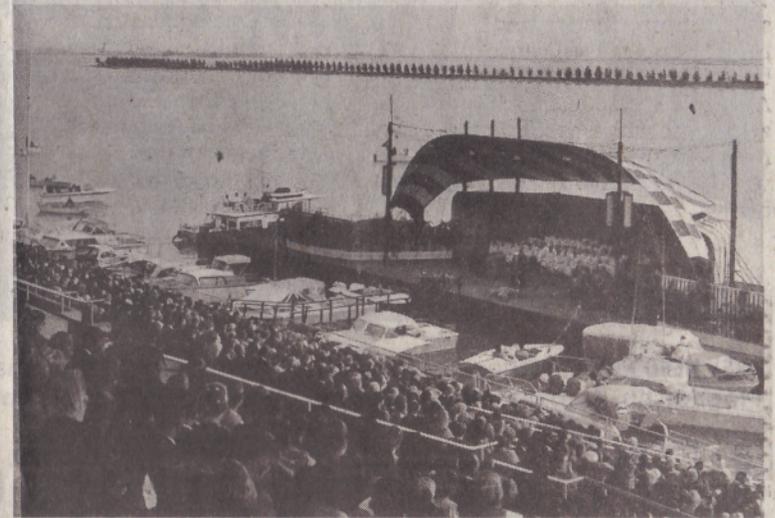
The Friends of Miami Marine Stadium (FMMS) is a community-based organization whose members have coalesced around the goal of revamping the historic venue; creating recreational green-space to its east; and a marine museum that that would stand west of the stadium. FMMS would be solely responsible for raising the \$30 million needed to restore the stadium and for the continuing costs of maintenance; as well as scaring up the \$40 million estimated for the museum and for Stadium Green.

For the city of Miami's part, its quasi-independent Miami Sports & Exhibition Authority and FMMS and The Heat Group would enter into an agreement to

give the private Friends access to this public property. In return, the city is off the hook for contributing any funds to the project.

This is a good deal for the city, as long as public access — and public input — remain front and center as negotiations proceed. The city ran the property for almost 30 years, after which the stadium was allowed to fall into disrepair. This shameful fate came after a generation of Miamians flocked to the stadium for concerts, boat races and sunrise services on Easter.

The city should insist on the greatest number of days possible for free public events, in addition to those events that charge for access to this jewel of a waterfront property.



Marine Stadium was the site of interdenominational Easter sunrise services.