

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Amber L. Ernst-Leonard
Assistant Director, Public Relations & Communications
305-809-3531/ amber.ernstleonard@fkcc.edu

FKCC Welcomes Tugboat “Mary P.”



Photo 1: (L to R) FKCC Provost Dr. Randy Charles, FKCC Trustee Spencer Slate, FKEF Board member Adam Gersten, FKCC President Dr. Boyle, “Mary P.” donor Dr. Hammaker, FKEF Board member Bob Cardenas; children: Hunter, Bella, and Morgan. Photo 2: Keys Division Commander, Russell Dewey Jackson, of the Coast Guard (center) officially commissions the Mary P. as FKCC President Dr. Jill Landesberg-Boyle and tug donor/godmother Dr. Susan Ford Hammaker look on.

Key West, FL, June 19, 2009—Florida Keys Community College welcomed a new addition to its fleet this past Thursday—a perky, red and black miniature tugboat by the name of “Mary P.” Festivities, geared towards children, were held at the FKCC lagoon and included music, juggling performers, storytellers and boat rides.

The godmother who donated the one-of-a kind boat, Dr. Susan Ford Hammaker, had the honor of christening the vessel, with help from FKCC President Dr. Jill Landesberg-Boyle and Mary P. builder, William Stanard. The Keys Division Commander, Russell Dewey Jackson, and Auxiliary Coordinator, Jim Dennon, of the Coast Guard officially commissioned her.

Dr. Hammaker, a member of FKCC’s Upper Keys Advisory Committee, generously donated the Mary P. to the Florida Keys Educational Foundation, a direct support organization of the college, in May of this year. It will be used in the college’s Marine Engineering and Diving programs. Dr. Hammaker has a long history as a philanthropist, community servant, and change agent in several states. She serves countless organizations and boards in the Keys, including the Florida Keys Wastewater Assistance Foundation, Upper Keys Rotary Club, and Baptist Health’s Mariners Hospital Foundation.

Stanard built the 16'7" "Godzilli" design tugboat in 2007 using the highest grade mahogany and to Lloyd's of London standards. Although not an ocean boat, she has been clocked at speeds in excess of 15 knots with her 50 horsepower engine.

The tug's namesake, Mary Prather, now in her 90's, is described by her granddaughter, Natasha Prather, as a "spitfire" family-oriented woman, who was ahead of her time. "She has a strong personality", says Prather, "and has persevered through many hardships, including the great depression."

Dr. Hammaker believes that Mrs. Prather's many years of living life proactively and surviving "seas" of challenges is somewhat emblematic of FKCC—with its perseverance and growth in uncertain times. "Hurray for Mrs. Mary Prather and all that she symbolizes for Florida Keys Community College and its Lockwood School of Diving and Underwater Technology."

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