



Left to right, Bob Post, James Lawless and Nancy Hilton look over clippings from Port St. Lucie's history before the premiere of "City of Dreams. PHOTO BY JUAN DALE BROWN

Anniversary docudrama stirs emotions in Port St. Lucie | Photo Gallery

By Alexi Howk

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PORT ST. LUCIE — More than 1,000 people gathered at the Civic Center on Wednesday night in celebration of the city's 50th anniversary and for the premiere of "City of Dreams," a 92-minute docudrama detailing the city's history.

The film took viewers through a time capsule beginning in the early 1960s from when the area was nothing but a swamp and a dream of the Mackle brothers, who initially developed the city along with General Development Corp.

Several parts of the film brought some viewers to tears, including interviews with local Korean, Vietnam and World War II veterans and locals affected by segregation in the 1960s.

An interview with Lorne Lyles, husband of the late CeeCee Lyles, a flight attendant who grew up in Fort Pierce and died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, took viewers back to that fateful day and stirred up emotions.

"I just sat here like spellbound," said Port St. Lucie resident Cathy Kicker, who moved to Port St. Lucie in 2000 from Atlanta. "It was very moving. To see what this community has gone through from inception to today, it was just amazing."

The creation of the film, spearheaded by Richard McAfoos, chairman of the Port St. Lucie Historical Society, took three years and eight months to make and cost about \$300,000, much of that cost paid for with donations from the private sector.

"The citizens of Port St. Lucie had an anniversary tonight unlike ever before, and it won't recur for many, many years to come," McAfoos said. "Port St. Lucie is so many good things to so many good people, and too often the negatives overpower that, and that is wrong. And this week is intended to show that this city of 165,000 people is here to stay and it's got credibility, and is not to be undermined by people who only know how to say bad things."

The film was put together by several people with impressive backgrounds, including Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Carol Connors, who wrote the film's theme song, "City Within a Dream," which was sung by 17-year-old Port St. Lucie High School student Alana Ferraro

Connors sang the 1958 hit song, "To Know Him is to Love Him" as lead singer of the Teddy Bears. She ended up dating Elvis Presley, who was captivated by her voice, for several years. She also co-wrote the theme song, "Gonna Fly Now," from the movie "Rocky."

Also credited in the film is award-winning composer and musician Mark Barnes, who composed the music for "City within a Dream."

The docudrama was directed and co-produced by veteran filmmaker Jose Garofalo. Nicky Wood, a 15-year-old home school student with a wide background in theater production, also produced and directed the film.

Mayor JoAnn Faiella called the film "phenomenal."

"I can't tell you the feeling that I have," Faiella said. "I'm so proud of the historical society putting this together. They should be complimented and commended. All the accolades go to them."



