Dick Pope: The Father of Florida Tourism, Exhibit Brochure

2007

Tanya Jo Ormseth
Sandra Varry

Find similar works at: http://stars.library.ucf.edu/lib-rosen-exhibits

University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Part of the Tourism and Travel Commons

Recommended Citation

http://stars.library.ucf.edu/lib-rosen-exhibits/19

This Dick Pope is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rosen Library Exhibits by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact lee.dotson@ucf.edu.
The Universal Orlando Foundation Library at UCF’s Rosen College of Hospitality Management is devoted to the study of the hospitality and tourism industries. The Library is located near International Drive and the heart of central Florida’s tourism area.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY:

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

♦ Artifacts loaned by
  • Cody Yerian, Special Events
    Cypress Gardens Adventure Park

♦ Images courtesy of
  • The Orange County Regional History Center
  • UCF Libraries Special Collections Department

♦ Exhibit & brochure by
  • TJ Ormseth, LTA Supervisor
    Universal Orlando Foundation Library
  • Sandra Varry, Sr. LTA
    Universal Orlando Foundation Library

DICK POPE:
FATHER OF FLORIDA TOURISM

Rosen College of Hospitality Management
August 20th - December 14th, 2007

With Material Loaned from:
Cypress Gardens Adventure Park
WHO IS DICK POPE?

Dick Pope and his wife Julie opened the very first theme park in Florida on January 2, 1936—over seventy years ago. The self-described ‘Salesman of Sunny Florida’ carved a lakeside garden out of a swamp during the great depression. By 1938, the gardens had over 8,000 varieties of tropical and subtropical plants from all over the world and electric boats that toured the carefully landscaped park on the shores of Lake Eloise.

Pope’s publicity talents helped to build Central Florida into the tourism mecca it is today. Pope utilized the new technologies of photography, and later, film, to capture the beautiful scenery of his park which he sent to newspapers across the nation. Pope called his marketing formula, OPM²—‘Our pictures plus other people’s money squared.’

THE GENESIS OF ‘AQUABATICS’

Dick Pope’s talents didn’t just lie in publicity. He was also a daredevil boat driver and an early water skiing talent, being credited as the first person to jump over a ramp in 1925. But Dick was in the Army Signal Corps when his wife Julie arranged for an impromptu family ski show for visiting airmen in 1943. The show was a hit, and Cypress Gardens became the site of many skiing championships and record breaking feats he called “Aquabatics.” Dick’s son, Dick Jr., was credited as the first to ski barefoot in 1947. Dick diversified into skiing merchandise and authored a book on waterskiing.

Left: A postcard of an ‘Aquamaids’ pyramid circa 1950’s

WHEN DICK POPE MET DISNEY...

Walt Disney began looking at Central Florida in 1963 as a possible location for his ‘Eastern Disneyland.’ Pope invited him to Cypress Gardens. Disney reportedly stood outside the gates and counted the day’s visitors. After Walt died, Roy Disney visited too, and the two became friends. Roy rewarded Dick for his hospitality and friendship with the first lifetime pass to Walt Disney World when it opened in 1971.

Dick Pope (left) with Roy Disney, (right) late 1960’s.

THE DICK POPE INSTITUTE

In 1979, The Dick Pope Institute for Tourism Studies was established at UCF. Its mission is to improve the tourism industry in Central Florida through research, public awareness, and education. Dr. Abraham Pizam, who is the Dean of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, serves as the Institute’s Director.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:


*Ros Gen Coll GV 1853.3.F62 C97 2006*


*Ros Gen Coll F 312.K57 2006*