

Committee of the Islands elects Barbara Joy Cooley as First Woman President since 1992

March 31, 2010

The Committee of the Islands has elected Barbara Joy Cooley as president, marking the first time a woman has led the Committee since 1992.

Cooley was elected by the Committee's Board of Directors immediately following the group's annual membership meeting today. The board also elected Mike Gillespie as Vice President, Bud Reinhold as Treasurer and Susie Marks as Secretary.

Barbara has served two prior terms on the Committee of the Islands board and was vice president for two years. She has also chaired the organization's Environment Committee, where she became actively involved in area water quality issues, especially after devastating releases of polluted water from Lake Okeechobee in 2004 and 2005.

Independently, Cooley established an e-mail news service for area leaders to keep them informed of water quality media coverage throughout the state and beyond. She was also a founding director of People United to Restore our Rivers and Estuaries (PURRE).

Recipient of Community Leadership Award

Barbara began coming to Sanibel in 1977. In 1990 she and her husband Tom bought a home here and in 1999 officially became Sanibel residents. Professionally she has pursued a career as a science writer and communications manager, in addition to strategic planning and work on behalf of environmental and community organizations both here and in her native state of Ohio. Efforts of this kind led to her being awarded the Distinguished Leadership Award of the National Association of Community Leadership Organizations.

Barbara has also served as chairperson of the Sanibel Shared Vision public information committee and is a member of the Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva, the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ, and the Sanibel League of Women Voters. She assisted the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and the Committee of the Islands in establishing their first web sites, and she was webmaster for the Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva. She has served as president of the Gulf Pines Property Owners Association and currently assists in managing its web site.

Board Members Elected

The general membership also elected new members of the Committee of the Islands board. Elected for their first two-year terms were: Barbara Joy Cooley, Mike Gillespie, Mickie Kaplan, Claire Mallon, Susie Marks, Bud Reinhold and Larry Schopp. Allan Silberman was elected to a second two-year term.

The Committee of the Islands was founded in 1975 by those who helped incorporate Sanibel as an independently governed city within Lee County. Today the Committee of the Island's mission still reflects the group's purpose as reflected in its founding documents: To ensure a continuity of good local government; to help promote and maintain an enduring standard of living consistent with the environmental quality of the island; and to assure harmonious and integrated planning to preserve Sanibel's unique and natural characteristics.