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Take a Drive Through Sarasota County's Architectural Gems

Sarasota, Fla. (June 3, 2009) – Sarasota County's (www.sarasotafl.org) rich architectural legacy takes center stage this summer as a self-guided architecture tour spotlighting structures associated with the Sarasota School of Architecture as well as other significant symbols of architectural ingenuity (www.toursarasota.com).

Sarasota's architecture has been attracting worldwide attention since the early 1900s. Later, architecture played a key role as the vacation destination defined itself as a patron of the arts with inspirational design.

All the buildings included on the map are architecturally significant and are visible from the public right of way. They represent three periods in Sarasota's history:

- before 1940, for historical and architectural context
- 1940 - 1970, from what is commonly known as the Sarasota School of Architecture
- after 1970, features architecture that continues in Sarasota today

The majority of the buildings represented on the map celebrate a body of regional architecture recognized throughout the country as unique to its environment. This collection of structures, built from 1940 to 1970, is commonly known as the Sarasota School of Architecture.

The Sarasota School of Architecture emerged post-World War II and allowed young architects to inject modern influences and an expression of optimism into the city landscape. The pioneering architects became world renowned later in their careers.

The architecture is characterized by its attention to climate and terrain and incorporates large sunshades, innovative ventilation systems, floating staircases and windows and sliding glass doors that dominate. It also incorporated what was then advancements in building technologies as a result of the war and introduced for residential construction.

While this new self-guided tour is comprehensive, it leaves out some important buildings because they are not accessible to the public, did not fit in the geographic boundaries of historic Sarasota or have been renovated so that the original architect's intention is no longer visible from the street. Therefore the tour gives a mere taste of the architectural heritage of Sarasota, yet still offers more than 70 locations on the map.

The architecture tour was created with the support of the Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB), Sarasota Architectural Foundation, Sarasota County and Ringling College of Art and Design. It is presented as a full-color booklet and map with key information about each building. It is intended as a self-guided driving tour that can be completed in approximately two hours. It is available for \$10 at the SCVB Visitors Center, 701 North Tamiami Trail, Sarasota or by ordering online at www.toursarasota.com.

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Sarasota and her string of eight islands are located along Southwest Florida's Gulf Coast between Tampa and Ft. Myers. Sarasota and Her Islands is comprised of Sarasota, Longboat Key, Lido Key, St. Armands Key, Manasota Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Englewood, Nokomis, North Port, Osprey and Venice. In addition to sandy beaches, Sarasota and Her Islands also offer numerous cultural and ecological attractions. For more information on discovering Sarasota & Her Islands, call the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 522-9799 or visit www.sarasotafi.org.