



January 15, 2010

Thomas N. Foster, Executive Director  
Bullion Plaza Cultural Center & Museum  
P.O. Box 786  
Miami, Arizona 85539

Dear Mr. Foster:

Last year, I accompanied Arizona State University's Professors of History and Chicano/Latino Studies, Peter Iverson and Paul Espinosa, on a historical tour and visit to Miami. We brought 20 ASU History graduate students to the Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum for a wonderful tour and discussion of Miami's history. Our host, Roberto Reveles, Museum Board Member, provided our group with an insightful and historical perspective of the history of copper mining in Miami; the history of the Bullion Plaza School, founded in 1923; and a social history of the community, rich in ethnic and racial history. The students learned that Miami has produced men and women who have made important contributions to the history of Arizona and the United States: Arizona's Congressman Ed Pastor; former Arizona State Representative Alfredo Gutierrez; United States Ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and California's Senator, Esteban Torres; Romana Bañuelos, United States Treasurer, appointed by President Richard Nixon. They learned about the Miami Sports Hall of Fame, housed at the Miami Memorial Library, which highlights the athletic achievements of the students of Miami High School: Arizona's 1951 state basketball champions and their MHS English teacher and coach, Ernest Kivisto; the basketball championship teams coached by Dick Vargas; football and tennis championship teams and other outstanding athletes. We learned about the importance of historical landmarks in Miami: the YMCA building; the churches; schools—and the Bullion Plaza Elementary School! The students also learned about the historical significance of mining companies such as the Inspiration Consolidated Copper Company; the Miami Copper Company; the International Smelter, the Bluebird Mine. They learned about the town founder, Cleve W. Van Dyke and the importance of labor unions in the history of Miami and about the importance of the Bohme ranching family, whose artifacts are being preserved in the museum. They also learned about the patriotism and sacrifice of Miami's military service personnel, men and women who have served in our nation's wars and conflicts.

I bring all of this to your attention because the Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum preserves the history of Miami in its exhibits and artifacts: the same history that I have mentioned in my letter; the same history these ASU graduate students have seen in the historic photographs and artifacts and cultural exhibits housed in the Museum; the same history that welcomes tourists and visitors-- with money --to the museum—and all which brings more statewide visibility to the community of Miami.

I understand that Miami's fire chief has made an appeal to the town council to allow the first floor of the museum's south wing, or half of Bullion Plaza, to be used by the Town of Miami Fire Department for training purposes and schooling. In my opinion, the relocation, destruction, dismantling, or removal of the Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum will be a devastating blow and a tremendous loss to the people of Miami and to other Arizonans--like the graduate students from Arizona State University who will write about the history of Miami in their graduate History courses, or dissertations—and who, as academic professionals representing other universities, will bring their future students to Miami and the museum again and again.

It is my hope that you and members of the Board of the Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum will convince the members of the Miami Town Council to reconsider any attempts to reallocate the present space used by the Cultural Center and Museum, the same space which the Fire Chief is attempting to acquire. Once Miami's historical Cultural Center and Museum is gone, so goes Miami's history. And so goes Miami's historical legacy, one being preserved by the Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum for the community and for its students of all ages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a rectangular box. The signature appears to read "Christine Marin, Ph.D.".

Dr. Christine Marin, Archivist/Historian  
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