

Neighborhood Post

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2011

A weekly section of The Palm Beach Post

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: *Rick Hartman, 60*

Great-grandson of Stuart's first mayor works for county's future

By JULIUS WHIGHAM II
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PALM CITY — Rick Hartman recalls a time when there were fewer than 40,000 residents in Martin County and only one public high school.

But while speaking to residents at the Stuart City Hall Commission Chambers recently, Hartman, 60, shared stories of a time before Martin County's existence.

Hartman's ancestry traces back to a time when the city of Stuart was still part of Palm Beach County.

"R.R. Ricou moved to Jensen in 1893," Hartman explained. "(He) was my mother's grandfather. J.B. McDonald, who was my dad's grandfather, he moved here in 1912 and the two of them were really instrumental in getting Martin County established."

Hartman and his older sister, Karen Hartman-Malfregot, shared their family history Nov. 8 during a program hosted by the Stuart Heritage group.

"It was interesting," said Hartman, who grew up in Stuart and now resides in Palm City with his wife Janet. "I didn't think anybody would show up, but we had a full house."

Hartman, one of six siblings, said he spent a good deal of time working on a ranch and tending to cows before graduating from Martin County High School in 1969. He earned a degree in agricultural economics from the University of Florida and



ALYSSA ORR/Staff Photographer

Rick Hartman, 60, of Palm City, is a native of Martin County whose family history in the area precedes the county's founding. His paternal great-grandfather, J.B. McDonald, helped incorporate Stuart and Martin County and served as Stuart's first mayor in 1914. Hartman is a real estate broker at the firm that his father, Ralph Hartman Jr., founded in the late 1950s.

spent several years selling agricultural feed.

For the past seven years, he has been a commercial and acreage real estate broker and helped run Hartman Real Estate, which his father, Ralph Hartman Jr., founded in the late 1950s.

Hartman said his family's history in Martin County has inspired him to be active in many local organizations.

"I feel a responsibility to make sure we do things right," he said. "I'm involved in a lot of (things) that you don't get paid for. ... But you do it because you want it to be good for your grandchildren, which is what my dad did and what my grandfather and my great-grandfather (did)."

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Q&A

What are your hobbies?

'Spending time with the kids and grandkids and working with cows. And we do have a boat. We do spend a lot of time with the grandkids and kids in the boat out on the river.'

What's the best advice you've been given?

'Do as you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it.'

Who would you like to meet and have dinner with?

'Claude Kirk. I've just read enough about him. He sounded like a real (character).'

If you could switch jobs with anyone, who would it be?

'I don't know of anybody I would change jobs with. I'm pretty content.'

What's your favorite song?

'Willie Nelson's *Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys*.'

What's the most unusual item that you own?

'I've got a pair of homemade sidewinder spurs. ... I've had them for over 30 years.'