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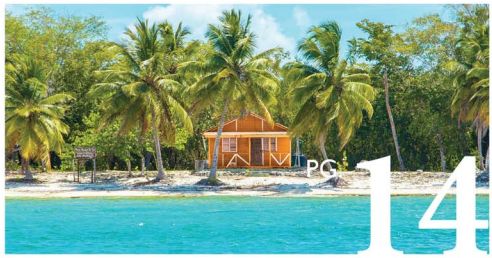

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Featured on the Cover: Dr. Miguel Diaz from Islamorada Medical Center

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Prescribing a Dose of Faith

When you walk into the Islamorada Medical Center, you can rest assure you are more than just a number.

Doctor Miguel Diaz, grew up in Miami but he loves his Keys community and is thankful that he can call the Keys home.

Why does he stand out from the rest you might ask? It's all in his relationship with his clients. He enjoys getting to know each patient, listening to their stories, and praying with them.

Dr. Diaz knew from an early age he wanted to help people.

"I had my calling when I when I was 17 in high school," he said. "My mom was the HR director for a Miami hospital and there was an opening in the ER for a transporter. So, my job was to take patients from the emergency room to get X-Rays, MRI's, CAT scans."

After serving in the Navy, he worked as a nurse in an intensive care unit and then an ER. That is when he decided to go to medical school. He trained in Alabama, where he got his family medicine board certification.

After visiting and vacation in the keys for many years, he finally made the keys home in 2015 with his wife, Beth, and their 5 children. Beth is also a physician who works at the practice part-time because her first priority is being a full-time mom. For fun, their family loves to go on their boat together, hang out in their backyard, and play board games.

To make sure the community and his 6,000 plus patients are getting the best care possible, he began to think of ways to expand his practice. Dr. Diaz did not want just anyone to join his practice, the doctors that joined his practice needed to have similar views as his current team.

Dr. Xavier Ramos and Dr. Nikole Czapp are both relocating to the Keys with their families in July to become part of practice at Islamorada Medical Plaza.

Dr. Ramos went as far back as high school with Dr. Diaz in Miami. Not only did they go to the same high school, but they also attended the same medical school.

"This opportunity has just been a Godsend. Dr. Diaz is someone that I trust that I've known for

Continued on the next page

Continued from the previous page

many years, someone that is a hard worker, that is dedicated, and we think very much the same. So, this opportunity is very exciting for me," Dr. Ramos told us.

Dr. Ramos specializes in internal medicine. He told us that Dr. Diaz reached out to him on social media about joining the practice and that he is very grateful that he did because he thinks it's going to be an excellent start for a new life in the Keys, where he will be joined with his fiancée, Cynthia. The happy couple will be getting married in July!

Dr. Nikole Czapp came into the picture in a much different way.

After going to medical school in the Caribbean, she knew she wanted that island kind of lifestyle. So, she Googled several practices in the Florida Keys and stumbled upon Dr. Diaz.

"(Dr. Czapp) just randomly picked up the phone and called me. I said, 'look if you're interested you can do a rotation down with me and if you like the clinic then I'll offer you a job at that point," said Dr. Diaz.

Dr. Miguel Diaz expands his Keys practice thanks to new doctors

So, she got permission from her program director, booked a flight, paid for a hotel, and went to work with him.

When Dr. Czapp came to the Keys to work with Dr. Diaz for a couple of weeks in October, they immediately hit it off. They both share similar goals and plans regarding what they want for the future of the practice.

"It seems to be a match made in heaven, for Dr. Diaz and I. He was looking for someone with my beliefs and work ethic and I was looking for a place to begin my career and a community to call home", said Dr. Czapp, who is finishing her residency in Philadelphia.

Dr. Czapp explained that Dr. Diaz really takes the time with his patients and the patients appreciate that he listens to them. She could tell how much the patients trust Dr. Diaz and that was a big part of her decision to join his practice.

Continued on page 20

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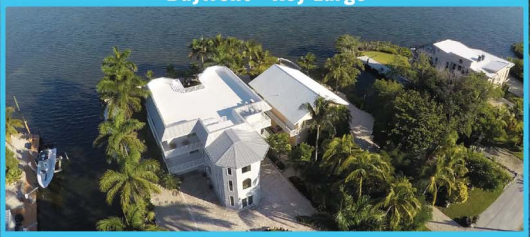

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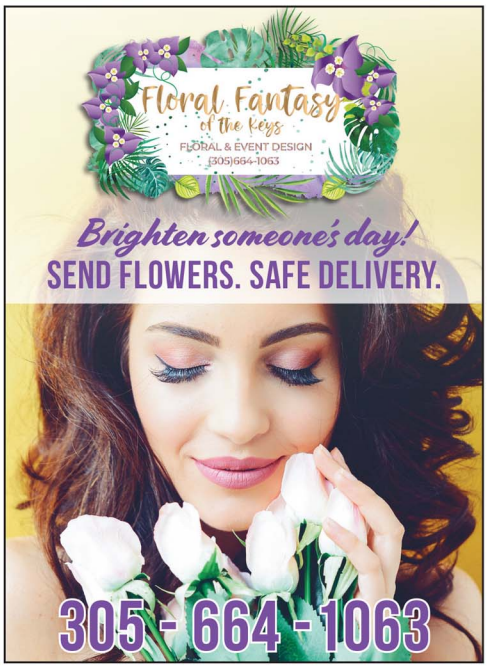

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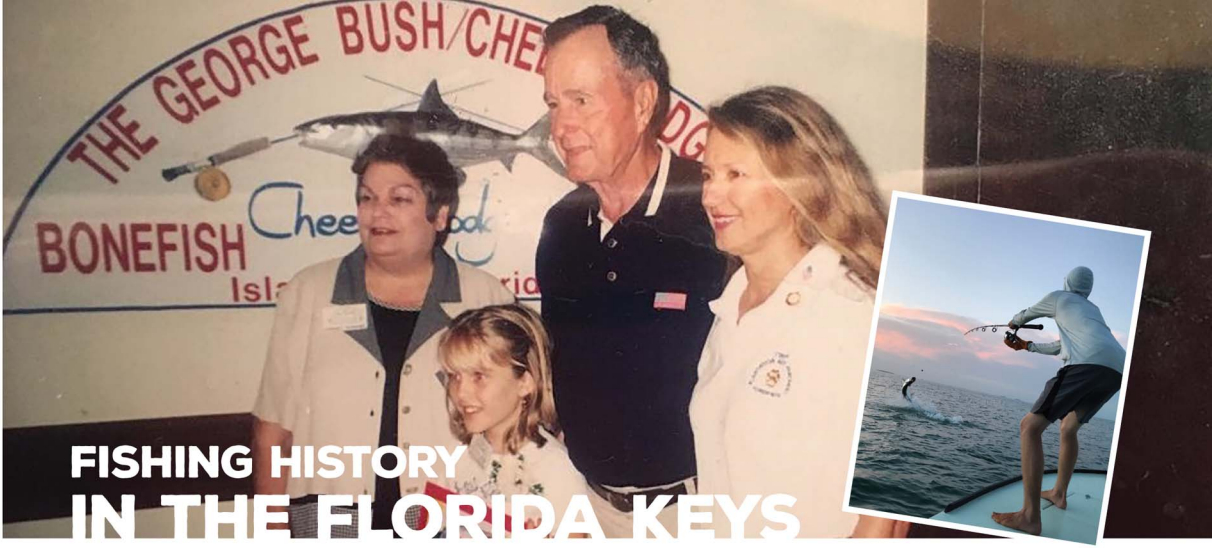


FISHING HISTORY IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

The Local Fisherman's Tradition

Fishing history in the Florida Keys is long and illustrious and being made to this day. Renowned authors Zane Grey and Ernest Hemingway helped put Florida Keys fishing on the map, and presidents and fishing guides have helped to sustain its legendary status ever since.

President George Bush was the featured angler at the All American Back Country Tournament at Cheeca Lodge. which currently honors war heroes over Veterans' Day weekend. Anglers seek five different species of inshore fish Snook, Redfish, Bonefish, Tarpon and Permit, which traditionally have been sought-after catches in Florida Bay and in the Atlantic Ocean.

Offshore, Hemingway's exploits similar to the quest written about in the Old Man in the Sea convey the excitement -- and sometimes exhaustion -- of seeking enormous ocean inhabitants such as marlin, swordfish, sailfish and more.

Of course, catch and release is common practice in the Keys now, as saving the memory via photographs is more environmentally conscious than displaying catches at the dock, as used to be the norm.

While Hemingway's home can be visited in Key West, Grey's stomping grounds at the Long Key Fishing Camp is only a memory, destroyed in the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935. However, Bass Pro Shop's Zane Grey lounge in Islamorada regales the author and conservation-minded sportsman with photographs and mementoes of Grey's fishing expeditions in the Keys.

According to Keys historian Jerry Wilkinson on his keyshistory.org website, Long Key's amenities circa 1909 were a 75-room guest hotel, general store, a post office and 14 cottages. Normally, a fleet of 12 fishing boats and guides were available.

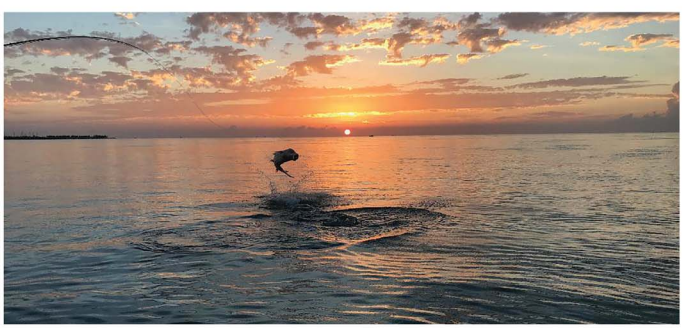
In yesteryear, Long Key guests arrived by boat or Henry Flagler's Oversea Railway, and included Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Andrew Mellon, William Hearst and Charles Kettering.

A chronology of legendary captains and anglers can be found at the Florida Keys History and Discovery Center in Islamorada which opened in February 2013. Captains Cecil Keith, George Hommel and world record-holder Stu Apte -- famous for solely using 12-pound class fly tippet -- guided baseball Hall of Famers such as Ted Williams, presidents and more, and influenced and contributed to the museum's display entitled Legends of the Line.

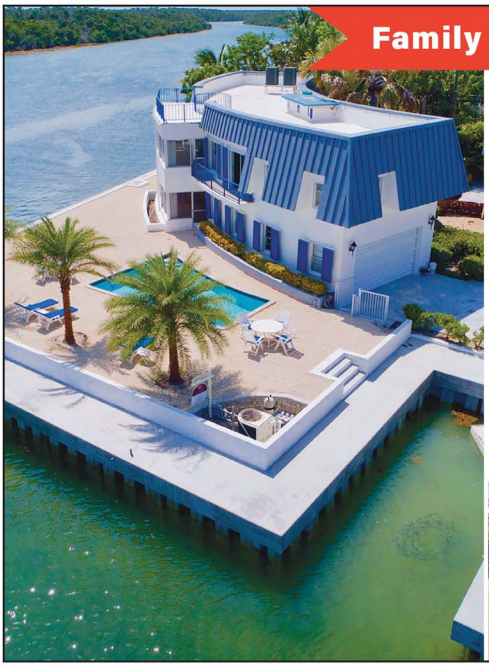
Slugger Williams was a mainstay as a celebrity angler in the Redbone Celebrity Tournament Series, founded in 2008 by Captain Gary and Susan Ellis of Islamorada. When they learned their daughter Nicole, now 34, had cystic fibrosis, an often fatal genetic disease, they launched the Redbone Tournament to "catch the cure" bringing celebrities such as legendary saxophonist Clarence Clemons, NFL Hall of Famer Ted Hendricks, Jim Kelly, NFL quarterback John Beck and actors such as Ed Marinaro of Hill Street Blues and James Sikking to fish the Keys and raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. To this day, Astronaut Bruce Melnick and Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs participate in Redbone tournaments, and for the first time, Redbone is hosting a virtual tarpon tournament on Father's Day weekend in memory of Gary Ellis.

Books sharing the story of the first bonefish intentionally nabbed on fly by Capt. Bill Smith in 1939 in the Keys, and other amazing catches are noted and discussed at places such as the current Islamorada Fishing Club and bars and restaurants throughout the Keys.

Who caught what, where, on what tackle and how big are never-get-old type questions in the Florida Keys. While Florida Keys fishing captains now have water quality as a challenge requiring more of their time and energy than ever before, youngsters raised in the Keys are earning their captains licenses and keeping fishing traditions alive. If it's up to young captains like James Klein and Pauly Ross who choose to follow in their fathers' footsteps, the fame and allure of Florida Keys fishing will continue far into the future.



Jill Zima Borski is an Islamorada based writer and avid cyclist. Her website is www.jill-zima-borski.com
Photo provided by Sandi Biceglia



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Continued from page 20

Dr. Czapp specializes in women's health, pediatric, primary care, urgent care, and community medicine. She said she cannot wait to move to the Keys with her partner, Matt, and become part of the community.

Both Dr. Diaz and Dr. Ramos said they believe it's very important to have a woman in the practice for those patients who want the option to choose.

Not only does Dr. Diaz pray with his patients, but he also wants to engage with them on a personal level. He says his mission is to provide affordable care to their patients, despite the challenging road with dealing with insurance companies. His practice

Continued on the next page

Continued from the previous page

is a Christian based clinic and he credits God for his success and growth.

Dr. Diaz likes to call the Islamorada Medical Center a one-stop-shop for all healthcare needs. They will have primary care, pediatrics, urgent care, dermatology, laboratory testing, rehabilitation, and a pharmacy, all under the same roof. The idea is if you can put everything in one spot, you can reduce the cost for the patient, which is better for the family and the community.

"So, you're getting world-class care in a small, little setting which is unheard of, and it has been a dream of mine since graduating residency," Diaz told us.

When many businesses were closing up shop, Islamorada Medical Center stayed open. They saw all their patients, working long hours to make sure the community's needs were met. Much of their work went online, changing how they operate their practice. His office also started the process to start COVID-19 testing as soon as possible.

Dr. Diaz said it's important to help out the underserved in the community, during good times and bad. His practice offers reduced prices for X-rays, medical visits, and other services. Dr. Diaz says over the years, he has provided a lot of free care in the Keys.

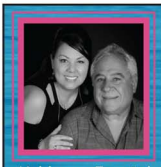
"When you're blessed and you're doing something that you love to do then you generally want to help people," he said. "You just love people and try to help them."

Dr. Diaz hopes with Dr. Ramos and Dr. Czapp coming on board, they'll be able to make a bigger impact on the community.

Changing the way patients are treated and cared for hasn't been easy. And he admits it won't get any easier. But he's confident he'll be able to help more, as long as he has his two new doctors and his faith.

"For me, God gives me strength," said Dr. Diaz. "That's what drives me."

Daniella Hume- award-winning journalist, writer, photographer, and cook, who loves to spend time with her husband and dog.



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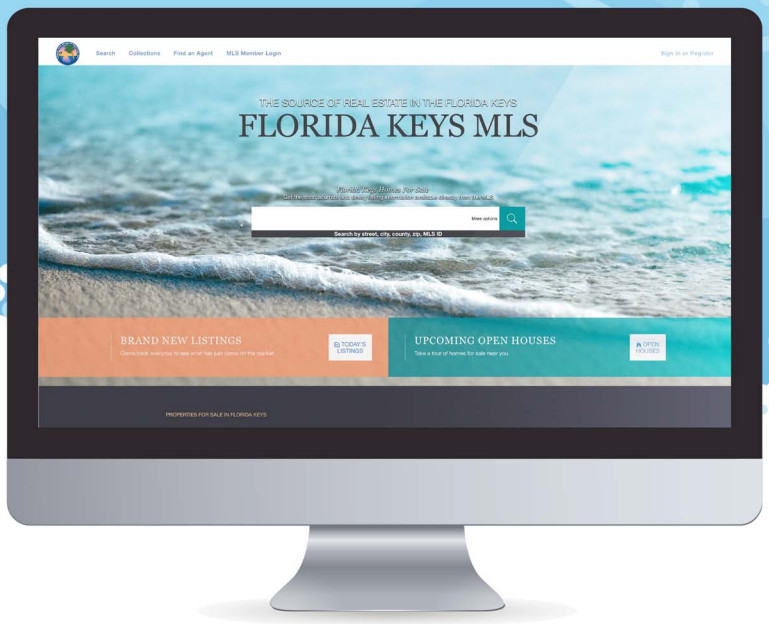

FloridaKeysMLS.com updates daily to show new listings & virtual open houses!

The Florida Keys Board of Realtors is pleased to introduce an innovative consumer-friendly website for those searching for property in the Florida Keys Visit https://www.floridakeysmls.com to get started! Potential buyers and sellers now have one place to visit to find the perfect home or a real estate professional to connect with.

From Key Largo to Key West, the Florida Keys is rich in culture and history. The new site gives consumers an idea of what each area has to offer from modern luxury homes to historic conch cottages. The Florida Keys has something to offer everyone.

When asked why the FKBOR felt it necessary to offer a site that included all listings and professionals, Anthony stated, "with the real estate landscape being so competitive, we wanted to offer one site for consumers to browse where homes and knowledgeable professionals are in one place. This also is a benefit to our members to have the opportunity to form relationships with prospective customers."

If you are interested in listing your home, purchasing a home then visiting https://www.floridakeysmls.com is your first step!

Lynda Anthony, CEO of the Florida Keys Board of Realtors

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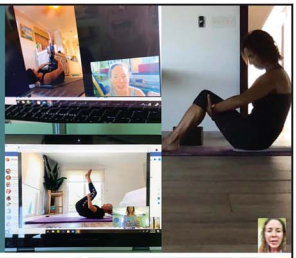

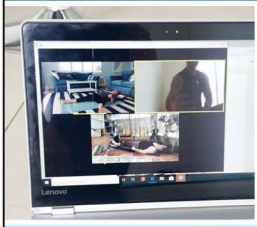

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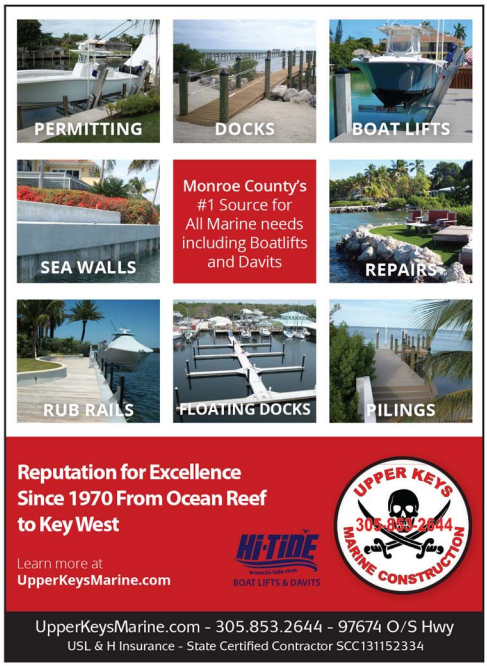

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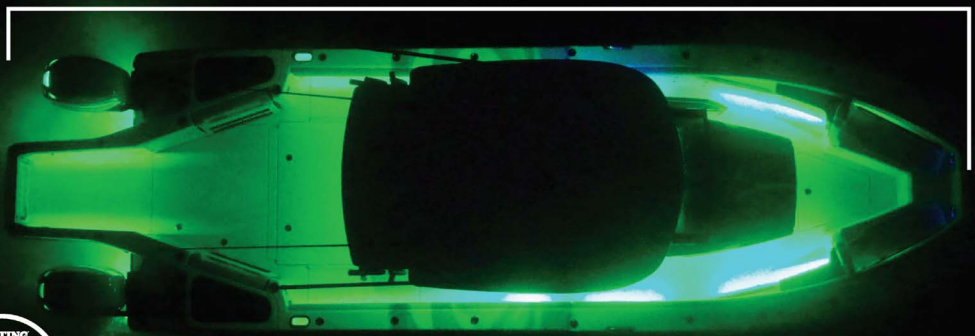

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