

RETURN FORM BY EMAIL OR MAIL TO: Broward County Historic Preservation Board c/o Rick Ferrer

Email: hpb@broward.org or rferrer@broward.org

Mailing Address: Broward County, Urban Planning Division - Historic Preservation Program
1 N. University Drive, Box 102, Plantation, FL 33324

2025 PIONEER DAY NOMINATION AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM

In selecting a nominee for Broward County Pioneer, please include as a primary consideration the individual's contribution to his/her community. Length of residence in Broward County should not be the basis for selection. Please include sufficient biographical information and 2 photographs of the nominee (1 current; 1 'historical').

Nominating Entity (Including email, phone number):

City of Fort Lauderdale

Pioneer's Name:

Ward Eshleman Jr

Pioneer's Mailing Address (Including city, state, zip):

Ward's Marine Electric
617 SW 3rd Ave
Ft Lauderdale FL 33315

Pioneer's Telephone and Email:

954-605-2138 cell 954-523-2815 office

Pioneer's Place and Date of Birth:

Fort Lauderdale. 8/7/1948

Date of arrival in Broward County; if born elsewhere:

Spouse/Domestic Partner Name (if applicable):

Trudy Eshleman

Child(rens) Name(s) (if applicable):

Kristina Hebert , Ward Eshleman III

Mother's and Father's Names:

Ward Eshleman Sr

Education:

University of South Florida

Memberships/Hobbies/Volunteerism:

MIASF

Chair - American Boat & Yacht Council

US SuperYacht

Habitat for Humanity

Waterway Clean Up

Plywood Regata

Reminiscences of the Pioneer's Life in Broward County:

The 75 year Legacy of the Eshleman Family and Ward's Marine Electric

William Ward Eshleman, born in 1915, moved to Fort Lauderdale from New Jersey in the late 1930s, just after the creation of the deep-water Port Everglades. A self-taught electrical expert, Eshleman worked on the U.S. Navy's PT fleet during WWII and became a vital problem solver in the growing city—from working on farm generators in the Everglades to repairing jukeboxes and even police cars for Sheriff Walter Clark.

In 1950, he founded Ward's Marine Electric, focusing on dockside marine electrical services. Over the decades, he built the business from a solo venture to a 20-person operation by his retirement in 1983. Known affectionately as 'Senior,' he was an innovator and community leader. He introduced air-dispatched marine technicians to South Florida, flying himself to clients as far as the Bahamas in his Piper airplane. He was also a founding force behind the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF), advocating for marine infrastructure, such as bringing shore power to city docks.

Mr. Eshleman became widely respected for his expertise in marine corrosion and created a saltwater testing tank to study and improve marine electrical systems. His contributions to corrosion testing and survey protocols helped establish Ward's as a leader in marine corrosion mitigation, with yacht manufacturers and system providers like Capac relying on his insights.

Following his wife Lucille's untimely death, Eshleman raised their five children, including his eldest son, Ward Eshleman II, who began working in the family business as a teenager. In 1980, Ward II purchased the company from his father and took the helm with a vision to expand and modernize the business.

As President and now Chairman of the Board, Ward Eshleman II has grown Ward's Marine Electric into a globally recognized marine electrical powerhouse with over 50 employees and multiple facilities. Under his leadership, the company expanded services to include engineering, surveys, compliance testing, manufacturing, production, and retail sales. He opened the parts counter in the 1980s and developed in-house systems that preserved quality and efficiency.

Ward II has also made a significant mark on the marine industry through his longtime involvement with the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC). He is the immediate past Chair of ABYC and continues to serve as the Chair of its Electrical Committee, where he has been instrumental in setting and refining national marine electrical safety standards. His deep knowledge and leadership have made him a key authority in the field, influencing everything from yacht design standards to technician training across the country.

Additionally, Ward II served on the MIAF Board of Directors in the 1980s, further continuing his father's legacy of industry advocacy and advancement. His commitment to marine safety, technical excellence, and workforce development is widely respected across the industry.

"My father gave me the foundation to proudly follow in his footsteps," Ward II once said, "but I also developed my own vision to take the business to the next level."

His daughter, Kristina Hebert, now serves as the company's CEO and also former President of MIAF, making

Reminiscences of the Pioneer's Life in Broward County:

Ward's a third-generation family-owned business deeply woven into the fabric of South Florida's maritime identity.

Today, Ward's Marine Electric is known for its integrity, innovation, and excellence. The company's evolution mirrors the transformation of Fort Lauderdale from a sleepy coastal town to the Yachting Capital of the World. The Eshlemans' legacy—built on expertise, resilience, and a commitment to service — continues to shape the future of the global marine industry.