

## Former hotel for Blacks gets needed facelift

*Historic Ward House is  
Overtown's newest art gallery*

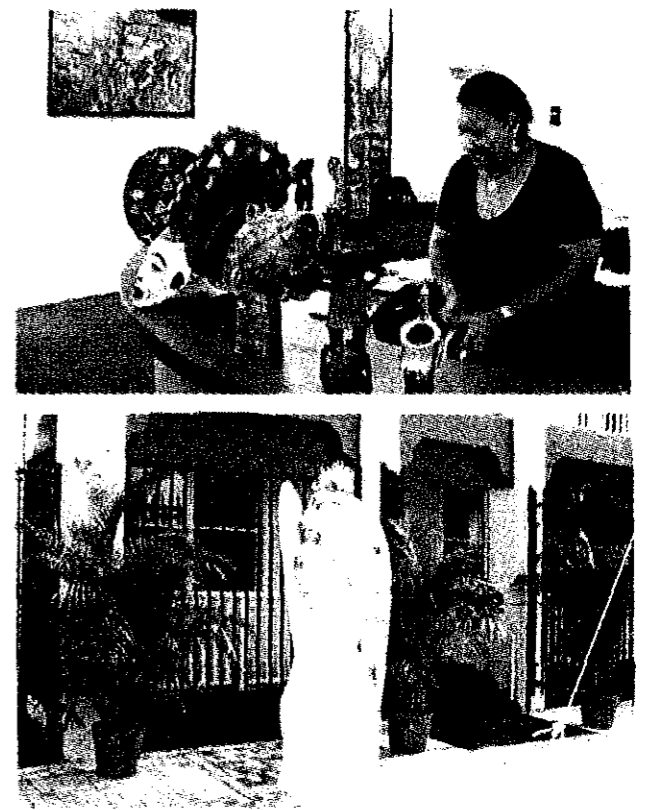
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The Ward Rooming House, 249 NW Ninth Street, was built in 1925 and was a resting place and safe haven for both Blacks and Native Americans in Miami. In those days it was the only place that was available as most downtown hotels refused to serve or admit Blacks. Even Black laborers could stop at  
Please turn to **HOTEL 6C**



—Photos: CRA

Scenes from the recent ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Historic Ward House and some of the works from the art gallery.



# Collaborative efforts 'reinvent' Ward House

## HOTEL

continued from 1C

the home of Shadrack and Victoria Ward for a cool drink and a few moments of rest.

Now the once-crumbling and forgotten landmark has been restored well beyond its original splendor and is Overtown's new Ward Rooming Art Gallery and Exhibition Hall. At a recent ribbon cutting ceremony, Dorothy Fields, founder of the Black Archives History and Research Foundation, shared reflections about the House's history.

"We're talking about a struc-

ture that was built and had its glory years when Blacks were limited in many facets of their lives," Fields said. "It [Colored Town] was a neighborhood with a sense of community and it was a self-contained community because we were not welcome downtown."

In recent years, several city agencies have partnered in order to both revitalize the Overtown community and the Ward Rooming House. As part of the Miami Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) efforts to turn the district into the Overtown Historic Folklife Village, work has been done to

improve the Lyric Theatre, the D.A. Dorsey House and most recently, the Ward House.

Renovation was done to the tune of \$1.05 million dollars with all-new mechanical, electrical and plumbing work, new mezzanines and a two-story high open space. The new building will serve as an art gallery and exhibition hall.

According to CRA Chairman and City Commissioner, Richard P. Dunn II, the newly revitalized building will bring considerable joy to Overtown residents.

"It is especially fitting that

the building will now be home to an art gallery featuring the work of local artists because art captures the essence of a community and serves as a bridge to generations in the future," Dunn said. "If we don't know our own history, we don't know ourselves."

The Ward Rooming House stands as one of the few remaining buildings of its time — a seemingly ordinary rooming house that was much more significant due to the larger role it played in preserving the history and architecture of Miami's Black community.

was reported that it took more than 10 people to break up the fight.

Cops drawn by the noise responded to the ruckus, but by the time they arrived Brown was gone. Brennan, who bailed Brown out after her last arrest, declined to comment about the incident or press charges against her client.

## DIDDY HIT WITH \$996,000 LAWSUIT

New York City is suing producer, Sean "Diddy" Combs. The Bad Boy mogul's flagship establishment, Bad Boy Entertainment, is being hit with a lawsuit for illegally pinning up promo posters throughout the city, which has resulted in a \$996,000 bill that has yet to be paid. The City's financial commissioner, David Frankel, is after Diddy and other NYC residents for a debt totaling \$1.9 billion. Remy Ma and Doug E. Fresh are also being investigated.

## CHRIS TUCKER OWES OVER \$11.5M IN BACK TAXES

We all know that the IRS does not play. Now poor Chris Tucker has fallen victim to owing stacks upon stacks to Uncle Sam . . . Chris Tucker's ongoing tax problems have reached Nicolas Cage