

Coral Shores building named for Wilkinson

She was pioneer in education in the Upper Keys

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The new Coral Shores High School administration building will be named after one of the Upper Keys' grand dames of education, K Wilkinson.

Monroe County School District Superintendent Mike Lannon proposed the idea at the July 28 board meeting, and it was unanimously approved.

"She was so instrumental in education for the Upper Keys," Lannon said. "This was just the right thing to do for all the years she gave in service at school, as well as [to] the American Cancer Society."

"It is also appropriate because Wilkinson was very influential in getting the high school built, said long-time friend Van Cadenhead.

"She's the one who started the push in 1949 to get Coral Shores High School built," said Cadenhead, 52, who has known Wilkinson since he was 7. "It took her three years, but she got it built. She really led the way."

Once the school opened, Wilkinson was the registrar for a



WILKINSON
... honored

long time, Cadenhead said. This past spring, she moved to Jacksonville, where she lives in a rehabilitation center for a number of ailments.

"She's not doing that well. She's recovering from a series of medical problems, broken ribs, a virus, then a minor stroke. Then, a stomach impaction that they had to surgically remove. Then she got bed sores," said Cadenhead, who visited her in Jacksonville last month. "It was all too much; she's 84 years old."

Lannon said he spoke with Wilkinson's daughter Katherine, and asked her to pass the idea of the building's name along to her. Her daughter said Wilkinson was thrilled, Lannon said.

Wilkinson, who moved to the Keys in the 1930s, was also instrumental in getting the high school rebuilt on its current site.

Lannon said he has many fond memories of "Miss K banging her cane on the floor" to get the board's attention to punctuate points she was making.