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History of First Guaranty Bank

1947

Following World War II six directors led by attorney Julian E. Fant introduced banking to western Jacksonville with the birth of Riverside Bank on May 29, 1947. With thousands of servicemen returning from the war, the River City thrived as the home of three busy naval stations. Jacksonville was on the brink of becoming a major health, insurance, and banking center. In the midst of the new prosperity, sleepy Park Street became the first home of Riverside Bank. Nestled among soda shops and drug stores, Riverside Bank would become a neighborhood centerpiece as the only bank between downtown and Green Cove Springs.

1952

After just 5 short years, the bank outgrew its space on Park Street and moved to its current King Street location.

1963

Julian E. Fant, Jr., better known as "Hickory," joined his father in the banking business. This father and son team would lead the bank for the next two decades.

1965

Bank officers broke ground for the bank's third expansion. The additional 50x69 foot space enlarged the massive lobby, made room for the addition of the Trust Department, and extended the safe deposit box area.

1967

The Riverside Bank changed its name to First Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, to reflect its newly established Trust Department. At that time, First Guaranty Bank was the only bank in western Jacksonville granted the authority to offer trust services.

1982

Hickory Fant (now chairman) initiated an idea that would become one of the bank's hallmarks. The concept was to provide the bank's clients with the ultimate banking experience. On the level of private banking, this account relationship became known as the Gold Club.

1984

First Guaranty Bank threw a party for its "Park Street Pioneers"—those who were the first to open accounts when the bank opened in the late 40s and early 50s. The party, complete with nostalgic music and mementos, was attended by 140 Pioneers—all of them clients for more than 35 years. At a time when automated banking was taking over the industry, party-goer Erma George summed up the feelings of First Guaranty Bank's long-time patrons. "Over here, we're not just a number."

1997

First Guaranty Bank and Trust Company celebrated its 50th year in Jacksonville. At such a milestone, many would reflect on past glories...not First Guaranty Bank. Julian E. "Hickory" Fant, Jr. announced that for the 50 year anniversary, First Guaranty Bank & Trust would give \$200,000 back to the community in four equal endowments of \$50,000.

The first of the \$50,000 donations was gifted to Jacksonville Community Foundation—an organization dedicated to local philanthropy to enhance the quality of life in Jacksonville. Subsequent donations went to Habijax, the Ortega Preservation Society, the Alzheimer's Research Clinic at Jacksonville's Cypress Village, and Mayo Clinic.

A ground breaking ceremony for the new Ortega Financial Center was held on January 30, 1997. The new 5,000 square-foot center opened in October with four drive-in tellers and one drive through ATM lane.

First Guaranty Bank celebrated its 50th anniversary during a luncheon with their Gold Club members at the Prime Osborn Convention Center on May 29, 1997...50 years to the day that the bank opened. First Guaranty Bank's milestone year included several national awards and accolades including the 1997 Winners' Circle award for outstanding performance by the Community Bankers of Florida, a five star Bauer's rating, designation as a "Blue Ribbon Bank" and selection as best bank in north Florida by New HomeLIFE magazine. It also marked the bank's best fiscal year thus far in terms of earnings.

1998

The Trust Department of First Guaranty Bank moves into a new headquarters for wealth management. The new location at Riverside Avenue & Riverside Park Place became available as part of a property swap with Riverside Presbyterian Day School. The former Five Points Guaranty Bank is now the Early Learning Center at RPDS.

1999-2006

Over the next several years additional First Guaranty Bank locations were opened. Today, there are a total of eight locations across Jacksonville. King Street is still the main bank office with financial centers in Riverside, Ortega, Argyle, Bartram, Mandarin, Baymeadows, and Kendall.

2008

Don Roberts was named President of First Guaranty Bank bringing over 35 plus years of banking experience with him.

