

Pinecrest

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JULY 3 - JULY 16, 2000

Positive PEOPLE in Pinecrest

JEREMY LARKIN



Jeremy Larkin's work goes far beyond his Kendall commercial real estate office in. From volunteering in religious groups to his work with professional organizations, Larkin is committed to working with the community and making it a better place.

Serving on the board of the Bet Shira Congregation, including a term as president, has been one of Larkin's biggest projects.

"I got involved at Bet Shira because they were having financial troubles," explained Larkin. "I came in with a myriad of people over a course of 10 years to basically resurrect and rehabilitate the finances, get the synagogue's financial house in order and hopefully make it a better, friendlier, warmer, nicer place to be."

For Larkin, being the president of the synagogue was an enjoyable yet

challenging experience.

"It was fun being president of the synagogue because it was a second full-time job," said Larkin. "You've got 500 families, 1,200 to 1,500 people, and 1,700 different opinions. Learning the ebbs and flows of how to balance that, along with the requirements of the religion and needs of the professional staff is difficult. You can't make everyone happy, but you can resolve everything acceptably for all parties."

The results of Larkin's work proved to be successful as congregation membership increased by 15 percent while he was president. The synagogue also was able to make an important renovation — the addition of stained glass windows.

Also on Larkin's list of community projects is his work with the Pineair Commerce Park Association in Homestead where he served as chairman for four years. This is a group that worked to reinvigorate the business community after the devastation of Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

"I bought property down there to try to create a platform where the business people could help the city become more proactive for business development and worked to create an organization that would set up grants and have economic benefits," Larkin said. "At that point there wasn't much to bring people down there."

One aspect of the organization was renting out space at a low cost to businesses that had little money. Although not every business succeeded, the ones that did were able to grow extensively, some more than doubling in size.

Larkin has been involved with a number of other groups in the community. He formerly served on the board for Jewish Vocational Services for six years, also working to put its finances in order.

He also was part of the Young Leadership Council for the Jewish Federation.

Currently, he is involved in the Real Estate and Allied Trades Division for the Greater Miami Jewish Federation. He recently assumed a position on the board of directors of Greater Miami Hillel, an organization that provides synagogues and programs to Jewish college students.

Larkin also is on the programming committee for the International Council of Shopping Centers for the Dade County Division and is a member of the Pinecrest Business Association.

Originally from Boston, Larkin earned his degree in finance from the University of Alabama and received his MBA from the University of Miami.

Larkin has worked in the South Florida business community for 21 years, starting as a banker in commercial real estate lending. He continued to work at a Brickell investment firm for eight years.

Three years ago, Larkin started the company Larkin, Schmidt and Weidenbaum, a commercial retail operation specializing in office and retail properties throughout the state.

Of all of his many community activities and business projects, Larkin's favorite job is raising his children - Amanda, 13, Jaclyn, 12, and Daniel, 6 — with wife Elyse.

As for working with the community, Larkin says it just comes naturally.

"I do it because I am supposed to," he said. "I take from the community and it's my obligation to give back, to make the community better. It's a circular type of thing. If someone does something for me and I can do something for someone else, then everything can improve."

By Marjorie Golub