

Main Line Times

Village View: Main Line's Ron Rubin honored by Jewish Museum

By Bonnie Squires Updated Dec 22, 2016 Comments

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Ron Rubin has played a leading role for decades in the region's economy and development, and he was honored recently at the Only in America Gala of the National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH). I suspect because Rubin owns the Park Hyatt-Bellevue hotel, the event was held there. And it was elegance personified, from start to finish.

There were several reasons why I wanted to be there for Rubin's honor. His late mother, Dorothy Rubin, was one of my mentors years ago in what was then the American Jewish Congress. Dottie, as we all called her, was a great mediator and could calm any arguing parties with her wit and wisdom.

She and her husband, Richard I. Rubin, bore three amazing children — Ron, George and Judith. Ron and his late friend George Ross played vital leadership roles in launching the drive to create and fund the new location of the National Museum of American Jewish History, now located close to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. NMAJH is the only museum that presents a comprehensive history of Jews in America and that aims to inspire in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation of the freedoms to which all Americans aspire.

Rubin and his wife Marcia are Main Line residents, as was Ross and his wife, Lyn, who still lives on the Main Line. There were Main Line residents wherever you turned last week, among the 500 or so supporters of the museum who came to pay tribute to Rubin. As Governor Ed Rendell said in his remarks at the tribute, Ron Rubin saved the hotel and breathed new life into it decades ago, making it an icon on Broad Street. And now his company has turned its sights on Market Street East with an exciting new plan.

But the people who came to pay tribute to Rubin were admiring his devotion not only to the Jewish community, but also to the community at large.

The museum was able to raise \$1.3 million the night of the gala, with Main Liners Steve and Sandy Cozen and Rubin's brother George and his wife Lorraine as co-chairs. Ivy Barsky, the museum's CEO and Gwen Goodman, director, had lined up a wish list of sponsors for the gala. You name the outstanding, award-winning Philadelphia region personalities, and they were all present and accounted for.

People came in from New York and Florida for the event, including those who either used to live on the Main Line or who still maintain residences here. People like Marc and Nicole Rayfield, of CBS Radio. Renee and Joe Zuritsky, of Parkway parking. Madlyn and Len Abramson. Several former presidents of the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Philadelphia, including Len Barrack and his wife, Lynne, and Sherrie Savett, Esq., Main Liners all, were there. Current officers of Federation were everywhere. Constance Smukler and Constance Williams, Dr. Larry Kaiser and his wife, Lindy Snider, and their sons, were among the throng at the cocktail reception.

Governor Ed Rendell gave a terrific salute to Rubin. Rubin's brother George, who also is a partner in the firm which started out as their father's real estate firm, gave a loving and funny testimonial to his brother. Steve Cozen, of Cozen O'Connor, spoke highly of Rubin's generosity and dedication. And Ron Rubin himself gave a delightful self-deprecating talk, departing from his prepared text and telling funny stories about his own experiences. He was also quick to point out that his family were immigrants initially, an important fact in these challenging times.

But Rubin's philanthropy extends well beyond Jewish causes. Rubin served as past chairman of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and has served or is on the boards of the Franklin Institute, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Tel Aviv University, American Friends of the Hebrew University, Continental Bank, and Midlantic Bank (now PNC), retired from Exelon Corporation, and continues to serve on the Board of PECO Energy Corporation, University of the Arts, the United Jewish Appeal, and the Kimmel Center. He is also a Trustee of the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers).

Whew! All this — and he still goes in to work each day! Rubin's self-deprecating remarks included a spontaneous anecdote which had just happened that morning. Rubin decided that he needed a haircut before the gala, even though his bald pate shone in the spotlight. So he drove to a barber shop and found a 15-minute parking spot. A police officer approached him initially to warn him that he was in a limited parking spot until the officer noticed Rubin's hairline and concluded — oh, you'll be back before then.

Ron and Marcia love Italy, Italian food and decor and Italian opera. So it was appropriate that the committee had engaged the world-famous tenor Andrea Bocelli as the entertainment. To hear the angelic tones of Bocelli fill the Bellevue ballroom was such a treat! Especially when the accompanist announced that Bocelli would perform a tribute to Philadelphia — and in English the opera superstar sang Mario Lanza's "Be My Love."

Gwen Goodman, the founding director of NMAJH and a Main Liner was all smiles at the event.

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