

Russell Hugh John Marchner, M.A.

3/8/30 - 9/25/11

Alhambra Ballroom Biltmore Hotel
1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Russell Hugh John Marchner, M.A. award winning statesman, Miami Herald suburban reporter, executive director emeritus Miami-Dade County League of Cities, and founder of Florida Association of Nonprofit Organizations, died at age 81 on Sunday, September 25, 2011 with his wife, Marina Pavlov, at his side.



Born with a Gift: In the middle of the Great Depression, Russell Hugh John Marchner (Russ) was born, Saturday, March 8, 1930, to George John and Lucy Juliana Memmel Marchner and Sister Betty in Irondequoit, NY, a suburb of Rochester. Always precocious, Russ learned the value of music, sports and school at an early age. As a musician he was appointed as Marching Band Major, First trumpet in the High School Band, Lead in the regional traveling minstrel show trio and a member of the University Band. As a baseball player and avid fan (Cardinals & Marlins), Major League scores were a daily staple for 70 plus years starting at age 4 when his Uncle Rudy taught him to play. Russ led his high school and was elected class vice president and edited the school newspaper. He was educated by the Jesuits at John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio, where he also managed football ticket sales; at the same time student Don Shula, future NFL Hall of Fame coach, was a defensive back. In 1955 Russ earned a masters degree from New York's Columbia University School of Journalism, preparing him for his dream career as a sports reporter; instead however, he played "tackle football" with local politicians. His newspaper stories integrated the beaches of Florida, jailed a crooked sheriff and "suspect" State Attorney and shook up accounting procedures at City Hall. In Russ's own words, "I must have done a good job because I was sued twice for libel and beat both."



War and Justice: The Korean War was what set the stage for Russ's journalism career. After basic training, he served in the Army's prestigious CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps processor of the CIA) in a top security post performing special duties and espionage-type assignments. That training served him well. As a reporter Russ managed to be "in the middle of all the action" at the: Wall Street Journal, Plainfield (NJ) Courier News, Cleveland Plain Dealer, and the Palm Beach County bureau and later city desk of the Miami Herald. While in the 2 person bureau of Palm Beach County, also dubbed by many as "the Wild West of the South", Russ was "center stage" in the courtroom of Florida Judge Curtis Chillingworth, on the day the judge failed to show up. As a rookie

reporter Russ was on the scene covering this nationally publicized manhunt starting from the Judge's Manalapan home, where it was first discovered that Judge and his wife Marjorie were dragged into the sea. The bodies were never found but four-years later three culprits including Judge Peal were sent to prison.



Then at a time when segregation was still the norm at most beaches, Russ wrote a story and quoted a County Commissioner announcing the Palm Beach beaches were "NOT segregated". Russ was center stage again for the "black versus white standoff" on the beach the next day. It was during this time that Russ began a lifelong friendship with fellow activist and civil rights attorney Claude Pepper. Pepper later was elected Senator and US Representative with Russ as campaign manager.

Finally, while covering the city beat in North Miami Beach, Russ wrote a series of investigative reports which resulted in jail time for the local solicitor and earned Russ a well-deserved Pulitzer Prize nomination; supported city editor Al Neuharth founder USA Today and managing editor George H. Beebe who hired Russ when he knocked on his private Waldorf Astoria Hotel room and brazenly applied for a job.



Power of the Pen: Russ's articles often hit the AP wire. After one of those incidences on "fixing tickets", the city of Hialeah realized it was better to be on Marchner's team than the alternative. Russ agreed and accepted the newly-created position of Public Relations Director of Hialeah under the Leadership of Mayor Henry Millender which lasted 21 years. Russ was a master at creating publicity, giving Hialeah national and international prominence which helped make Hialeah one of the fastest growing communities in the Nation. To that end, he helped position the city's interest in Hialeah Race Track and he appeared in Guinness Book of World

Records for organizing the largest Hula Hoop contest in 1973.

For the next 50 plus years Russ specialized in public relations. He founded Russ Marchner & Associates, and became a registered state and local lobbyist, testifying regularly before the Senate, House and Cabinet in Tallahassee, Metropolitan Dade County and Broward County. Clients were: Miami Springs, Opa-Locka, Key Biscayne, Miami, Port of Miami, Municipal



Code Corporation, International Longshoremen's Association, Avis Car Rental, Industrial Association of Dade County (IADC – Executive Secretary); National Association of Industrial Office Parks (NAIOP – Government Relations Director), and Real Estate Action Committee of Dade (REACD - Founder) and more.



His main client was the Miami-Dade County League of Cities. During his tenure of 41 years as Executive Director of the League, Russ stopped the County from incorporating all existing cities into a single metropolitan government. He became the voice to retain the rights of cities and fought off challenges year after year by the County and the State protecting the citizens living in municipalities.



Under his direction he raised \$1 million in startup funds for both Miami-Dade Crime

Stoppers and the Homeless Trust through the League membership. In 2005, he was honored by resolution with the perpetual status of "Executive Director Emeritus" of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities allowing his legacy to continue serving the "greater good".



Legacy of the Heart: Underlying all of Russ's success was his generosity, good will, and sense of community. As a very young humanitarian Russ worked with his like-minded father in the apple-drying business to feed the hungry in Germany during the European depression of the 1930's.

He organized and founded: Gold Coast League of Cities, Municipal Tourism Crime Task Force, Local Government Hurricane Andrew Emergency Response, Earthquake Relieve in Managua, and the Florida Association of Nonprofit Organizations (FANO now serves 54,000 nonprofits in Florida). Under his leadership and grassroots lobbying a joint resolution of the 1991 Nonprofit Bill of Rights and 2001's restructured qualification of Nonprofit Sales Tax Exemption was achieved. He also served as Chairman of both Keep Dade Beautiful and the Hialeah YMCA and was honored at a Dade League Fundraising Roast.

To honor his public service contributions he was awarded: National League of Cities Don Stutz Municipal Government Employee of the Year Award, Art Guild Volunteer of the Year Award, Bill Held Tribute for Government Service, Florida League of Cities Resolution Recognition of Service, 911 Starter Award for founding the widely used emergency system, DOT Appreciation for I-95 Completion, Census 2010 Appreciation, North Miami appreciation for legislation mandating equitable treatment of Haitian immigrants, and Generous Contributions to Summit of the Americas from President Bill Clinton. Russ was also presented with the key to the Cities of North Miami, North Bay Village and Hialeah.



In 2004, The Russ Marchner Outstanding Municipal Official Service Award was created. Subsequently, the Russ Marchner Award has been presented to six honorees whose work carries on his legacy. Russ had a personal relationship with 8 Florida Governors and thousands of local government officials which established his reputation as the father of local government.



Final Curtain: Russ Marchner is survived by his wife of 20 years Marina Pavlov; his 8 children: Carol Ann Westmoreland, (Jim) Tallahassee FL; Robert John (Jane) Port Arthur TX; Laura Jean Marchner, Tallahassee, FL; Kim Louise McMahan (John) Atlanta, GA; Todd Gregory Marchner, LaJolla CA; Darren George Marchner, Glendale, AZ; Annamarie "Amy" Young (Michael) Key Largo, FL; Harris Christopher "Harry" Moyer (Ingrid), Plantation, FL; and grandchildren Sergio Barrios 19; Samantha Jane Marchner 13; Harris Mason Moyer 12; Sophia Elizabeth Marchner 6; 2 brothers: Andre Pavlov (Kakie Pope and 3 children Nicholas, Julia, Sophia) Tallahassee;



Clockwise Russ with: Mayor Dan Pearl, Rep. K. Sorenson, President Carmine Priori, Introducing Jack Valenti, SouthCom General



Michael Pavlov (Arikka and 4 children Hillary, Joseph, Karina, Kristina) Kingston, NY; and three sisters Tanya Picone (Joe) Fort Lauderdale; Natalie Duerkopp (Karl and 5 children Melanie, Stephanie, Christopher Justin and Joshua) Seattle, WA; Katrina Arnhold (son Phillip (Mary and 2 children Michelle and Christopher) Herndon, VA; and also a niece Barbara Baldeck (Gerald), York, PA and nephew Jim Winterroth (Martha Ann), Land O'Lakes, FL. Russ often laughed about having two grand-dogs Floyd and Ellie May, Key Largo, always hoping up to greet him.



Memorial: In keeping with Russ' love of life and ever-present sense of humor, a New Orleans-style memorial service to celebrate 8 decades of life will be held. Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong tribute band, with Troy Anderson as Satchmo on Trumpet complete with the signature gravelly voice, will console Russ' family and friends as requested by Russ himself.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to the Russ Marchner Education Foundation, 1511 South Ocean Drive, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316. Please call 954.522.0477 for more information.

