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Commercial Real Estate

Iconic developer Tibor Hollo dead at the age of 96



Tibor Hollo, founder of Florida East Coast Realty
NICK GARCIA



By **Erik Bojnansky** – Reporter, South Florida Business Journal
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Tibor Hollo, a prolific developer who built the tallest tower in Florida and forged much of downtown Miami's skyline, has died at the age of 96.

Hollo passed away this week. A service was held on Friday, May 3.

"The Hollo family is grieving the loss of Tibor Hollo and would appreciate privacy at this time," a family spokesman said.

Born in Hungary and raised in France, Hollo was sent to a concentration camp when he was a teenager. He and his father survived the Holocaust. His mother did not.

Soon after the war, Hollo returned to France, earned an architecture degree, and journeyed to New York with less than \$20 in his pocket. Still in his 20s, Hollo started his own general contracting company that reportedly grew to become one of the largest in the U.S.

In 1956, at the age of 29, Hollo moved to Miami and went into real estate development. At first Hollo built houses and small apartments, but by the 1960s he founded Florida East Coast Realty and built much larger projects – such as Centre House, a 20-story mixed-use commercial building now known as Dominion Tower. In 1968, when Centre House was completed, it was the tallest building in Miami.

Other Hollo projects include Omni Mall, Rivergate Plaza, Biscayne Bay Marriott Hotel and Marina, and Plaza Venetia. More recently, in 2007, FECR completed Opera Tower, a 56-story condominium in Miami's Omni area that opened in 2007. In 2018, FECR finished Panorama, a 868-foot tall mixed-use tower at 1100 Brickell Bay Drive that now holds the title of tallest building in Florida.

Besides Miami, FECR completed projects in Coral Gables, Hallandale Beach, New York, and other parts of the U.S. In the past 60 years, FECR built more than 60 million square feet of development including residential high-rises, single-family homes, marinas, warehouses, retail, hotels, and telecommunication centers, according to the company's website.

Even in his 90s, Hollo continued to lead FECR alongside two of his sons, Wayne and Jerome, and his grandson Austin.

And the last few years have been active. In April 2022, FECR sold a 2.5-acre parking for \$363 million, to multibillionaire Ken Griffin, who intends to construct a new headquarters on that site for his Citadel financial services companies. FECR is also preparing to demolish a 1950s-era office building at 100 S. Biscayne Blvd., where the company was based for decades, and replace it with a 1,049-foot-tall tower called One Biscayne Plaza.

Hollo and his wife contributed to charitable local causes through the Tibor and Sheila Hollo Charitable Foundation.

"He had a huge impact that will be felt for generations to come, and not just in the real estate world, but for the community at large," said Russell Galbut, managing principal of Miami-based Crescent Heights.