

Tibor Hollo

IN MEMORIAM (1927-2024)



Florida East Coast Realty, LLC
60 Years / 60 Million sq ft of construction

Tibor Hollo, 96, a pioneer and visionary in the development of Downtown Miami, passed away the morning of Wednesday, May 1, 2024, surrounded by his family.

Fluent in more than 10 languages, Tibor was born to a Jewish family in Budapest, Hungary and moved to Paris, France in 1933 where he was raised. In 1941, he and his parents were arrested after the German occupation of France and sent to the Drancy internment camp outside of Paris. He never saw his mother again. He and his father were liberated by the U.S. 11th Armored Division on May 5, 1945. He then returned to Paris and obtained a degree in architecture from Ecole Polytechnique Institute before immigrating to the United States with \$18 in his pocket.

In New York, Tibor worked at a curtain factory before landing a job as an estimator for a general contractor. Noticing that most contractors turned down work on the New York waterfront because it was difficult and dirty, he started his firm and was able to underbid the few competitors he had. After winning and completing many jobs, his reputation allowed him to win larger projects around the city and nationally. By 1956, his contracting company was ranked amongst the ten largest in the United States.

In 1956, after falling in love with Florida on a business trip, Tibor sold his contracting company and moved to Miami. Recognizing that Miami had limited space, as it was defined by the ocean on the east and the Everglades on the west, he believed that the city's future was in vertical, downtown residential living. He founded Florida East Coast Realty (FECR) in 1972 and completed his first major building in Brickell Avenue.

In 1975, Tibor's company built the Omni International Mall, the 810-unit Venetia, and Sea Isle Marina & Yachting Center, among others, on six blocks of blighted waterfront property next to the Venetian Causeway. Using his political capital with Mayor Maurice Fere, he secured Miami's second-ever tax-increment financing zone for the Arts & Entertainment District (then Omni), which used property taxes to improve the streets, utilities, and infrastructure in the neighborhood.

Tibor's philosophy was to work on only one major project at a time. He went on to build the U.S. Justice Department Building, Vizcaya Tower, Biscayne Bay Marriott, Plaza Venetia, Opera Tower, Bay Parc Plaza, 888 Brickell, the Club at Brickell Bay, and the 868-foot Panorama Tower, the tallest luxury residential building south of New York City. The company is currently working on the 1,049-foot One Bayfront Plaza.

Tibor has built over 60 million square feet of construction, including landmark residential and commercial high-rises, single-family homes, government buildings, marinas, high-end retail centers, warehouse complexes, and telecommunications centers.

Tibor and his wife Sheila enjoyed giving back to the industry and community that had been so generous to them and their family. The Tibor & Sheila Hollo Charitable Foundation helped establish and support the unique HealthCorps program to Miami-Dade County high schools. HealthCorps is a non-profit organization founded by Dr. Mehmet Oz to help educate local high school students on nutrition, fitness, and mental resilience. Additionally, in 2012, the Foundation partnered with Florida International University (FIU) to create the Tibor and Sheila Hollo School of Real Estate in the College of Business, which has become the leading graduate degree program of its kind in the nation, benefitting FIU and the community, and cultivating the next generation of Miami's business leaders. Just last year, Tibor accepted their inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award.

On May 1, 2023, Tibor and Sheila received a Proclamation from the City of Miami celebrating “Tibor and Sheila Hollo Day” to rededicate the coveted 35,500 square foot park located at 1814 Brickell Avenue that so many urban Miamians have grown to love and enjoy. Dignitaries from the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County officially honored Tibor and Sheila Hollo, recognizing the vast amount of time and resources they have invested in the redevelopment of the Brickell corridor. The heavily landscaped park includes enhanced playground equipment, shade structures, beautiful views, decorative fencing, modern lighting, meditation benches, and a dog park. The park also features a memorial created from one of the last remaining steel beams unearthed from the ruins of the World Trade Center. In 2014, the Tibor and Sheila Hollo Charitable Foundation donated the funds necessary to acquire the land and pay for park improvements.

Tibor took great pride in grooming his sons, Jerome and Wayne, to lead the company. Well into his 90s, he would come into the office to review plans and reports and discuss upcoming projects with his two sons and grandson, Austin, the company’s COO.

Tibor Hollo was highly regarded by his peers as a pioneer and one of Miami’s true visionaries. Over 60 years ago, he forged a path for the future by constructing the very first high-rise building on Brickell Avenue. The concept of living, working, and playing in the urban core long had been his dream, brought to life through his many developments, especially in the Omni/Venetia area and the Brickell corridor. His vision now is truly taking shape on a large scale, as evidenced by the growth and excitement permeating the areas in and surrounding our beautiful Downtown.