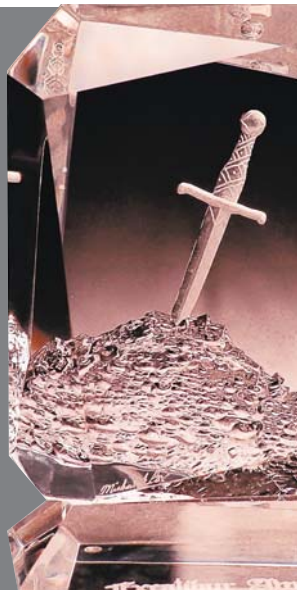




EXCALIBUR AWARDS 2008



ROBERT AND DEBORAH KORNAHRENS

Business Leaders, Broward County

By **Marcia Heroux Pounds**
STAFF WRITER

Rob Kornahrens' career in roofing began 25 years ago with the thrill of hurricane chasing.

Today, his wife and business partner Deborah grimaces as he tells of patching an airport roof in Orlando in 2004 while Hurricane Charley rolled in.

"I was up on a roof with a crane and lightning," he says.

The Kornahrenses are founders of Advanced Roofing, a Fort Lauderdale company started in 1983, and are the 2008 winners of the Sun Sentinel Co.'s Excalibur Award as Business Leaders, Broward County. The couple was recognized for entrepreneurial achievement Thursday evening at the Boca Raton Resort & Club.

Rob Kornahrens is described as a risk-taker who plans ahead. As a result, Advanced Roofing has become one of the largest roofing companies in the Southeast. The company employs 350 people, and despite Florida's construction crisis, generated an estimated \$85 million in revenue in 2008 compared with \$79 million a year earlier.

"He is a very decisive executive. ... It can wreak havoc on his competition," said Dick Wessel, former senior executive at IBM in South Florida who is a Broward Workshop board member with Kornahrens. "He's absolutely not afraid to take risk."

In the early days of the company, "we worked very hard to keep it together. It wasn't easy," said Deborah Kornahrens, who was caring for their twin boys while her husband traveled to build the business.

She understands the determination it takes to make a family business work, said Tom Foster, chair of The Executive Committee, a South Florida CEO group.

Deborah now manages Advanced Roofing's building logistics and fund-raising activities, including an annual cycling event. Rob and the TarPeddlers' team ride 75 miles each way from Miami to Key Largo to raise funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Together, Rob and Deborah have built a roofing

» **KORNAHRENS** PAGE 9



Carey Wagner photos, Sun Sentinel

About the winners

POSITIONS: President, Vice President

PERSONAL: Married since 1982; parents of twins Michael and Kevin, 25

EDUCATION: Rob graduated from the University of Arizona; Deborah from Daytona Beach Community College.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Rob spent 10 years working for Triple M Roofing before founding Advanced Roofing with Deborah in 1983.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Rob's a founding member of RoofConnect, an organization of experienced roofers that service multi-state companies; Rob and Deborah are fundraisers for the South Florida chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Habitat for Humanity volunteers, and Kids in Distress fundraisers.

HOBBIES: Rob enjoys cycling, rugby and fishing; Deborah enjoys decorating, gardening and working out.

About the award

The Sun Sentinel Co. gives the Excalibur Award annually to business leaders in South Florida who have distinguished themselves and contributed to the improvement of the region's communities.

Each fall, the Sun Sentinel Co. requests nominations for the Excalibur Award from the community. In November, several former Excalibur recipients and Sun Sentinel Co. executives select the winners.

The nominees are judged on three main criteria:

Ability to build and innovatively develop their company.

Ability to increase company profits or stock value for shareholders, enhance customer service or create jobs or career opportunities within their company.

Contributions to the South Florida community, especially in their commitment to actively participate as a leader in charitable and civic groups.

The small business award honors an outstanding small business owner who is the sole proprietor of or who owns a controlling interest in their business.

More winners

Find a list of past winners and meet the Palm Beach County winners » **Page 2**

ARMANDO LEIGHTON JR.

Small Business Leader, Broward County

By **Doreen Hemlock**
STAFF WRITER

Armando Leighton Jr. started a business at age 23 selling airplane parts from his mother's garage in Hialeah, with his mom as his first employee.

Today, his Fort Lauderdale-based company posts \$27 million a year in revenue and employs 62 people, in five U.S. cities and England. CRS Jet Spares makes some of its own parts, certified by the Federal Aviation Administration. And it plans to expand into India, China and Dubai this year.

Most days Leighton's mom Mirta is still the first one at the office, eager to help her son — and two daughters — at the company. "I can't get her to retire," Leighton said.

For his entrepreneurial achievement, Leighton was named the 2008 winner of the Sun Sentinel Co.'s Excalibur Award as Small Business Leader, Broward County. The award was presented Thursday night at the Boca Raton Resort & Club.

Leighton's success stems from family loyalty, hard work and an uncanny knack for learning jet-part numbers and characteristics.

He's the son of a Panamanian mom and Colombian dad who immigrated to Milwaukee where relatives lived, then moved to South Florida for warmer weather. He helped the family as a teenager by working after school for a neighbor with a business selling airplane supplies. He swept floors and packed boxes, figuring he'd become a veterinarian one day.

But science proved tough at



college, and after a business degree, Leighton found a job in aviation — with a company that soon folded.

He launched his own firm in 1982, working so many hours he'd often fall asleep at his desk. He drove during the day to find, buy and deliver parts, and he spent evenings logging costs, prices and availability to be ready to fill orders fast despite a small budget for inventory.

His mother built lasting bonds with clients, asking warmly about their families and pets.

Leighton's first break came when he figured out that some private jet parts he supplied were identical to those for military jets and cheaper at military surplus

» **LEIGHTON** PAGE 8

About the winner

POSITION: Founder and chief executive of Fort Lauderdale-based CRS Jet Spares, which supplies parts for private jets.

PERSONAL: 50; married with two children; raised in Hialeah.

EDUCATION: Associate degrees from Miami-Dade Community College in business and marketing

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Started business in mother's garage in Hialeah in 1982; Federal Aviation Administration certified one of CRS' own replacement parts in 2005; expanding business to New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Cincinnati and Farnborough, England

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Gilda's Club South Florida; Jack & Jill Children's Center.

HOBBIES: Fishing, cooking, collecting watches, palm trees and art.

Excalibur Awards 2008

Past winners

Past Excilibur winners and the companies with which they were associated when they won:

- 2007**
Jim Cummings, James A. Cummings Inc.
- Ed Iacobucci**, DayJet Corp.
- Beverly Raphael**, RCC Associates Inc.
- Mark Llano**, Source One Distributors Inc.

- 2006**
Alan Levan, BankAtlantic
- Tim Petrillo**, The Restaurant People Inc.
- Wally Sanger**, Royal Professional Builders
- Christine King**, Get Fit Inc.

- 2005**
Mike Jackson, AutoNation
- Patricia Lebow**, Broad & Cassel
- Desmond and Catherine Malcolm**, Jerk Machine
- Jorge H. Garcia**, Garcia Stromberg

- 2004**
Mark Templeton, Citrix Systems Inc.
- Sean C. Guerin**, U.S. Imaging Solutions
- Robert Kneip**, adjunct professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University
- Rick Gonzalez**, REG Architects Inc.

- 2003**
Rick and Rita Case, Rick Case Automotive Group.
- Al Fernandez**, ANF Group Inc.

- Bruce Nelson**, Office Depot Inc.
- Wendy Sartory Link**, Ackerman Link & Sartory

- 2002**
Ray Ferrero Jr., Nova Southeastern University.
- James R. Dunn**, J.R. Dunn Jewelers.

- Susie Walsh**, Eastern Metal Supply Inc.

- 2001**
Scott Adams, Cenetec.
- Charles Boothe**, Charlie's Pastries.

- Pat Moran**, JM Family Enterprises.

- 2000**
Keith Koenig, City Furniture.

- Tom Lynch**, Plastridge Agency Inc.

- 1999**
Anthony Catanese, Florida Atlantic University.

- Steve Halmos**, Reunion Group and Halmos Holdings.

- 1998**
Ramon Rodriguez, Madsen, Sapp, Mena, Rodriguez & Co., P.A.

- Rudy Schupp**, Republic Security Bank.

- 1997**
James Cassidy, NationsBank.

- Thomas Shea**, Right Management Consultants.

- 1996**
William D. Hager, National Council on Compensation Insurance.

- Jim Moran**, JM Family Enterprises.

- 1995**
Steven Berrard, Blockbuster Entertainment Group.

- Carl DeSantis**, Rexall Sundown.

- Thomas P. O'Donnell**, Sun-Sentinel Co.

- 1994**
J.P. Bolduc, W.R. Grace.
- Linda Gill**, Gill Hotels.

- 1993**
David I. Fuente, Office Depot.

- Thomas Miller**, Miller Construction Co.

- 1992**
Walter Banks, Lago Mar Resort.

- Wanda Thayer**, Personalized Air Conditioning.

JOEL ALTMAN



Susan Stocker, Sun Sentinel

Business Leader, Palm Beach County

By Paul Owers
STAFF WRITER

When designs come back from the architect, residential developer Joel Altman doesn't just take a quick peek and move on. He pores over every excruciating detail, making sure the bathrooms have linen closets and the window sills are tall enough.

Altman reminds workers to picture themselves living in the apartments and condominiums they're building.

"Just remember," he says, "when the concrete is cast, it's too late to come back and do a good job."

Altman, 65, runs Boca Raton-based Altman Cos., which has developed, built, acquired and managed more than 16,000 multifamily units in Florida and five other states during the past four decades. The privately held firm employs 304 people and generated more than \$240 million in revenue last year.

For his entrepreneurial success, Altman was named the 2008 winner of the Sun Sentinel Co.'s Excilibur Award as Business Leader, Palm Beach County. The award was presented Thursday evening at the Boca Raton Resort & Club.

Altman communities stand out for their amenities, robust occupancy rates and construction quality, said Hampton Beebe, a vice president with Apartment Realty Advisors, a Boca Raton firm that's selling one of Altman's developments.

"He's always been ahead of the curve," Beebe said. "It's little things, like vaulted ceilings on the second and third floors, and Roman tubs in the master bathrooms. He's extremely professional, and he has really sharp people working for him."

The Altman Cos. celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2008 as the nation's housing slump completed a third year.

"Needless to say, these are very, very difficult times," Altman said recently from the plush sales center of Satori, an apartment complex he's building in Fort Lauderdale. "I have never seen anything like this."

"The condo market has fallen off the face of the earth," he said.

In recent years, condo buyers have balked at honoring the sales contracts they signed during the housing boom. Some have tried to use contract loopholes and sued to get out of the deals, while others simply walked away.

Five years ago, 2,400 people waited in line for a chance to buy 128 condos at Altman's Harborage development in Stuart. The project sold out immediately, but now a quarter of the condos are available.

At the Astor in downtown Delray Beach, a third of the development is for sale again. The firm has challenged the lawsuits for the right to keep the deposit money or to force the buyers to follow through with the sales.

"There are attorneys running around specializing in

About the winner

POSITION: Chairman and CEO, the Altman Cos.

PERSONAL: 65, married to Beverly Raphael; two children, two step-children and four grandchildren

EDUCATION: Attended Michigan State University

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Altman began as a summer laborer at age 12 in Philadelphia. In 1968, he formed the Altman Cos. to build apartments and moved the company to Boca Raton in 1987. Seven years ago, he entered the condominium market.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Altman founded Kids @ Home, a charity that provides life skills to youngsters leaving foster care. He also contributes financially to the Dan Marino Foundation, St. Jude Children's Hospital and the American Red Cross.

HOBBIES: Licensed pilot; season-ticket holder for the Miami Heat and Miami Dolphins.

promising these people that they can get them a full refund," Altman said. "But we do everything by the book."

"It's put us in a very difficult position," he said. "We have an obligation to build the building and to pay the lender back. We don't get to tell the bank, 'We can't pay you because the buyers didn't pay us.'"

Backing out of a deal is a sore spot with Altman, friends and family members say.

"Joel is the kind of person who believes you say what you do and do what you say," said his wife, Beverly Raphael, head of a Deerfield Beach general contracting firm and a 2007 Excilibur winner. "That means everything to him."

Louis Beck, Altman's longtime friend and business partner, said his sense of integrity is refreshing

in an era when greed and fraud are rampant.

"He's an astute guy who will drive a very, very hard bargain," Beck said. "But once he commits himself, he will absolutely live within that framework. And that's pretty rare these days."

Even rival developers salute Altman.

"Joel has been a steady force in the market for quite some time," Steve Patterson, head of Orlando-based ZOM Inc., said in an e-mail. "His attention to detail and quality have been an inspiration to me personally for decades."

A licensed pilot and season-ticket holder for the Miami Heat and Miami Dolphins, Altman began his career at age 12 working for his father, a builder, in Philadelphia. He continued in the housing industry while attending Michigan State University in the 1960s.

Later, when the builder he was working for passed on a land deal in East Lansing, Altman bought it himself, building 84 student apartments. In 1968, he went out on his own.

Altman built in Michigan before expanding into Florida and the Southeast. By 1983, he opened a regional office in Boca Raton, then moved the entire company here in 1987.

He focused exclusively on apartments until seven years ago, when he entered the condo business, which was just beginning to flourish in the early days of the housing boom.

Today, it's a buyer's market. "The values out there for a buyer are incredible," he said. "We're selling some units at below cost, but we are selling units."

Altman is convinced he'll survive the housing crunch by sticking to the principles that got him this far.

"Building a building is like doing a mosaic," he said. "At the end of the day, if you do a good job, you have a beautiful picture."

Paul Owers can be reached at Powers@SunSentinel.com or 561-243-6529.

» LEIGHTON PAGE 1

Armando Leighton Jr.

stores. He passed savings on to customers.

"Success is seeing the opportunity and being able to seize it," Leighton, 50, said.

Leighton nurtures a culture of family and teamwork, rewarding receptionists and packers alike when sales targets are met.

Barry Ellis, of Fort Lauderdale charter operator Hop-a-Jet, said he keeps buying from CRS because it offers a large inventory of quality parts at reasonable prices, with efficient service, a knowledgeable staff and Leighton's readily available.

"They're very trustworthy," said Ellis, who has known Leighton for about 20 years. "And Armando has a good eye for opportunity."

Leighton and his wife Diane are perhaps best known for community service at Gilda's Club South Florida — named for late comedian Gilda Radner and dedicated to

helping people with cancer, their families and their friends. The couple became active in 1998, as Diane's only brother Rich battled bone cancer, succumbing six years later at age 40.

Alicia Laszewski, of the Red Cross-Broward County, sat on the Gilda Club's board and calls the Leightons' volunteer work there "truly remarkable."

"They've been very generous with their time, their money and introducing others that can benefit from and provide benefits to the Club," she said.

Leighton also serves on the board of Jack & Jill Children's Center.

This year, Leighton will add more travel to his schedule, as he seeks to expand to faster-growing

"They're very trustworthy. ... And Armando has a good eye for opportunity."

Barry Ellis, of Fort Lauderdale charter operator Hop-a-Jet, who has known Leighton for about 20 years

nations amid the U.S. recession. "The world is shrinking, and jets go everywhere," Leighton said. "And even if a jet sits, it still needs maintenance and still needs parts."

Doreen Hemlock can be reached at dhemlock@sun-sentinel.com or 305-810-5009.