

# Sun-Sentinel

## COMMUNITY

# CHAMPIONS

Presented by Broad and Cassel

## Armando Leighton, Jr.

### *Devoted Community Volunteer*

Armando Leighton, Jr. wanted to be a veterinarian before a high school job opened his eyes to the vast business opportunities in the aircraft spare parts business. Instead of animals, he proudly cares for thousands of aviation parts, which are neatly shrink-wrapped, labeled and lined up on shelves in the massive and spotless CRS Jet Spares warehouse near the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.

He started the private jet replacement parts business in his mother's garage in 1982, the same month he earned degrees in marketing, management and business from Miami-Dade North Community College. Today, CRS has seven offices worldwide and is one of several other companies owned by Armando, including Thrust-Tech Aviation, an FAA certified repair station; Jet-Tech Engineering, an aircraft parts manufacturer; and Harbour Beach Jet Management, a private jet brokerage business.

Just after celebrating his 40th birthday, Armando realized that he had a drive and a duty to start giving back to the community where he had lived since age 4. He started with the Gilda's Club, because he and his family were personally touched by the work of the organization. When his brother-in-law,

Rich, was diagnosed with bone cancer, Armando witnessed how the organization helped Rich's wife and their three young girls cope during a more than six-year battle with the disease.

"I knew I had to get involved," he said.

That was 10 years ago. He now serves as board chair, recently led a successful capital campaign and raised funds for a garden. His wife, Diane, daughter, Alyssa, and son, Aram, also are involved in projects and events. Additional board memberships include Jack & Jill Children's Center, Broward Workshop, and Holiday Park and Recreation.

Philanthropy has grown to become an important part of the Leighton household, where his children contribute a portion of their allowance to charity and participate in numerous volunteer activities.

"Children need to understand how philanthropy works so they can make a difference and experience how good it feels to give back," he said.

*Thank you, Armando, for making a difference in our community.*

The statewide law firm of **Broad and Cassel** is proud to support *Community Champions*, a monthly feature on an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to our local community.

*Community Champions* are not affiliated with **Broad and Cassel**.

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