

## Harold Rosen Transcript

**Kathy Hersh:** Let's talk about your being mayor of Miami Beach from '73 to '78 since we were on that subject. How – well you said you got -- you became mayor because the predecessor died in office.

**Harold Rosen:** That's correct.

**Kathy:** But so you were suddenly thrust in that role?

**Harold Rosen:** No. What happens is this. Under our ordinances, the surviving members of the city commission have to appoint someone from within their group within 30 days after death to take his job as mayor. I was the vice mayor. You don't automatically go into office as vice mayor. So I took like six votes as to who should be the mayor. I didn't want to be the mayor, because frankly, I just didn't have the time.

And I took six votes; it was always tie of three and three. The guy by the name of [phonetic][00:46] Haber, whose a psychologist and a guy named [phonetic][00:53] Lenny Weinstein, who died, there was always a three, three tie. So in order to finish up the tie and I did want to go out to the public because the public it was just a – they just don't know if we do respect. The public is only interested in one thing. If it affects them in the pocketbook then they come to the floor. So I said to these guys, I'm going to be the mayor. I'll take the job. They said, how come? I said, who's going to vote against me? And I became the mayor. That was it.

**Kathy:** What was it like being mayor of Miami Beach in those days?

**Harold Rosen:** I loved it. It was like an ego trip to me. I had a chauffeur, a guy by the name of Louis Garcia, who is now running for the legislator -- for the house in Washington. He was my driver. And it was a lot of fun. It was a lot of work and my business went down the drain because I was so busy going to meetings and things like that. So I had to get out of it after about three and half years as mayor. I was in in office for about eight years altogether as a commissioner and mayor. But after eight years, I retired out of there so I could learn a living again.

**Kathy:** So what was -- what were the predominant issues during that time that you had to deal with?

**Harold Rosen:** The one issue that I dealt with and I dealt with it even before I became a commissioner, I wanted to get rid of -- we had rent control here. A lot of people didn't know that, rent control in Miami Beach. It inhibited our growth to no end. People used to live in these hotels and used to have little cooking facilities in their hotel rooms and everything else and we had rent control. And all the old people, most of them were retired, and Jewish, and they didn't want any change, but I wanted change. And finally after six years, I got the other commissioners, or they were called, what they weren't called commissioners, they voted with me four to three to get rid of rent control in 1976. Once we got rid of rent control people that owned the buildings started to rehab their buildings, condos were

restarting to be built. It was like a new era in it was probably '78,'79 and '80.

**Kathy:** It sounds like it was a close vote though. It must've been controversial.

**Harold Rosen:** It was very controversial, because the people, the elected officials were afraid because everybody – there was, you know, we had primarily retired people down here, and the population they didn't want any change and they were the voters. So the commissioners at that time, or the councilmembers, they didn't want to go against the votes. I couldn't care less because I wasn't going – I didn't want to go any higher beyond the city commission. So it never bothered me. I finally persuaded three more like myself and I had good write-ups in the paper from the people in the newspapers. They used to send me letters, you know, don't start your car, hangman nooses and everything else, you know, because I was so anti- that the rent control.

**Kathy:** So what happened to those people that were in rent control buildings?

**Harold Rosen:** Well a lot of them just stayed there, but they changed it so the rents went up. And a lot of them moved until the – it was like an exodus of the Jewish people basically. They went up to Palm Beach and up in Broward County and everything else. And that's why today they are very few, I mean, there's a lot of Jews still here, but not like they were – no majority at all, like they were in the 50s and 60s.

**Kathy:** We were talking earlier, and you mentioned, that was one of the things that attracted you to Miami and coming here to live.

**Harold Rosen:** Miami Beach.

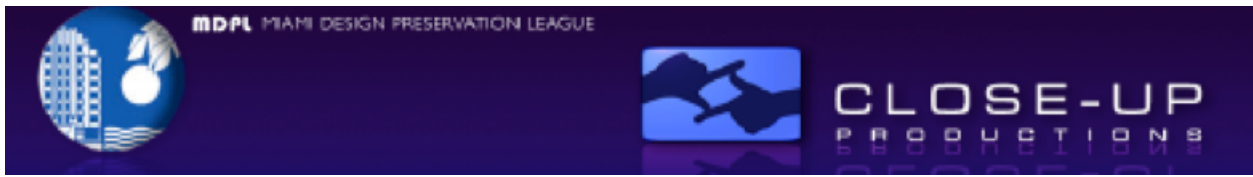
**Kathy:** Miami Beach. Right.

**Harold Rosen:** Right, with the Jewishness. I love Jewish culture, and when I was born and raised there was hardly any Jews there. But I learned Jewish through Jewish records, Jewish comedians and singers and everything else. And I wanted that I wanted to live that. My mother kept this kosher home up in the country. But when I got down here they had all the cafeterias and restaurants and everything else that were –served the Jewish dishes which I loved, which ultimately led to the hardening of the arteries of myself that I had to get them juiced out. You know all of the fat and all that stuff that you eat and all that.

And I was walking on the street one day and my chin tightened up on me. I went to the dentist. The dentist said you don't need me, you need a cardiac man, because that's a manifestation of your arteries that are hardening and also you don't – fill basically. So I went to a cardiac man and within a day I was laying on a table with my chest split open like a chicken, and they gave me new arteries.

**Kathy:** Do you remember the first time you came to Miami Beach?

**Harold Rosen:** I remember it very well.



**Kathy:** Describe that day to us.

**Harold Rosen:** I drove down Collins Avenue, and I just couldn't believe the hotels and everything else. And I stopped at a hotel around 16th and Ocean Drive. I'm trying to think –I can't think of the name of it right now. And I stopped; I was going to stay there for a week before I went out to the university. I came down to Miami Beach to go to the University of Miami. So, but I came here a few days before it opened so I wanted to spend some time on the beach and that was the first and I just fell in love with it that day. I knew I was to live and die here.

**Kathy:** What year was that?

**Harold Rosen:** 1948.

**Kathy:** So what was it like then, compared to what it is now?

**Harold Rosen:** Well, when I first got down here, there were a lot of elderly people living in these hotels, and they were out. See, I used to go on Ocean drive, and they would be there with their wheelchairs and walkers, or crutches and everything else and just sitting on the porches waiting to die. And I used to laugh, going by them. Now, today 50 and 60 years later, a bunch of us, eat dinner on Thursday nights on the beach and we stop in front of Ghiradelli, just look at all the girls and everything else now, 60 years later.

But it was a lot different then. I mean the younger people today are just fantastic. If you go out on the beach in the evening here, all restaurants are filled. We're having the best years of any city in the country in 2009, '10 and '11.

**Kathy:** But going back to that older time, that was prior to the big hotels going up?

**Harold Rosen:** Well they were – yeah there was just a couple. I think the Fontainebleau was built in the '50s basically; '56 or '57, but it was the big hotels at that time, if you wanted to go into the big hotels at that time you used to have to wear a jacket. Women wore furs. There was a lot of fur stores on Lincoln Road at that time and that sold furs and the women they were dressed up to the T's going into the hotels in the evening. And it was nice. It was really great.

**Kathy:** So what was a nice night out on the town for you?

**Harold Rosen:** For me? I used to go to the dog track. There was a dog track in South Beach and just walking around and looking at people. People watching is just a fantastic -- I still do it. I enjoy it.

**Kathy:** You mentioned that your mother kept a kosher house.

**Harold Rosen:** Yes.

**Kathy:** But you weren't in the Jewish culture per se.

**Harold Rosen:** Not at all.

**Kathy:** Other than that.

**Harold Rosen:** That's correct.

**Kathy:** Describe what that has meant to you here on the beach, coming down here and being in a Jewish culture.

**Harold Rosen:** I just loved every bit of it, the food, the people and talking and everything else. I just felt like I was a part of a group. Being a Jew in upstate New York at that time and then in that neighborhood, you knew there was something there that was, you know, you just didn't fit in all the way, although there really wasn't that much anti-Semitism at all. Every now and then you would get someone like, someone was drunk or something they would say something about a Jew or this or that. So you grew up that way. This way, down here, at that time it never happened.

**Kathy:** Did you become involved religiously?

**Harold Rosen:** Not religiously, but I became involved, especially when I graduated law school. I didn't know one soul down here so I joined all the organizations, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Elks Lodge, the Moose Lodge. I joined every organization and got to know people and you know, you get up on the -- during the meeting I used to say I visited so-and-so in the hospital and so people get to know you.

**Kathy:** And you knew you wanted to be a lawyer?

**Harold Rosen:** No I didn't.

**Kathy:** But you went to law school.

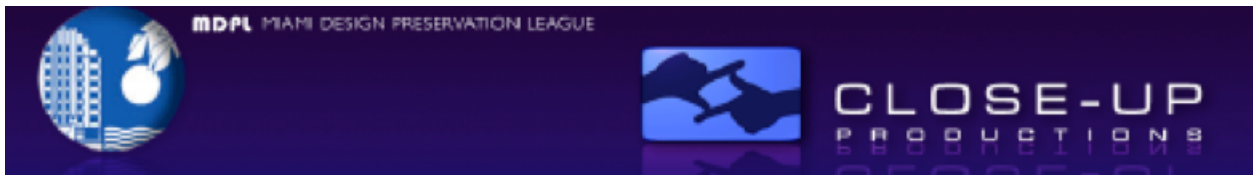
**Harold Rosen:** Well because I had nothing else to do. I had nothing else to do. When the G.I. Bill, when I got out of the service I went on the G.I. Bill, I figured I'd go to college, and that was it. And I had never been in a lawyer's office or in a courtroom before I became a lawyer. I'd never been in one. Some kids or some people wanted to be lawyers ever since they were five, six years old, that wasn't with me.

**Kathy:** So why did you become a lawyer?

**Harold Rosen:** Because that was the only graduate school open to me, at that time, and so I went.

**Kathy:** And after you graduated, then, did you go immediately into working for a judge...

**Harold Rosen:** Yes.



**Kathy:** Or a firm...

**Harold Rosen:** I went to –I had been practicing law now for almost 60 years, in 19 – in February of 2012, I'll be practicing 60 years. So I went to work for some people on Lincoln Road at that time for \$20 a week. It's about all I was worth. And my valet tips at the racetrack were more than that.

**Kathy:** So, did you live on your own? What were your living arrangements?

**Harold Rosen:** I lived on my own. Then I got married to a lady after -- I think I got married, graduated law school, got out of the Navy all within two weeks in 1952. And I've been living a good life, knock on wood. You know I make it because everything to me, you know your attitude determines your altitude. And my attitude has always been good. In the service I got called back to service my last year of law school I was mad but I went back two years and I got out in '50. I went back in 1950 to Korea and got back out of there in '52.

**Kathy:** And you got married when?

**Harold Rosen:** 1952, when I graduated law school. It all happened within probably two weeks.

**Kathy:** And getting married too was in there?

**Harold Rosen:** Yeah, getting married, graduating and getting out of the Navy.

**Carl:** Kathy, I would like to follow up more of the gambling.

**Kathy:** Yes.

**Carl:** [off mic] [12:32]

**Kathy:** Okay. So there was a real culture, I understand, of gambling here on the beach too. There was a lot of bookies and that sort of thing.

**Harold Rosen:** Yes, there was a lot and it was open. Then Kefauver came down. He was brought down by one of our mayors to close down everything in 1950, but you could out – I roomed with a guy by the name of [phonetic][12:56] Jack Gross, whose brother was a big-time bookie in New York. I had never been inside a bookie place in my life. I've never gambled in my life but because of him, they used to have a limousine pick us up, take us out to Greenacres and places like that. Those are the gambling places. And people were always dressed up and they didn't use chips. They used cash at that time, but everybody made a dollar when you had gambling. The taxicab drivers used to run out and open the doors for you, the doorman, and everybody was nice. And everybody made a dollar.

The girls that worked at Wolfies, there were two Wolfies, there was one on Lincoln Road and Collins and there was one on 22nd Street. The girls

that worked at the counter used to pay for their jobs during the gambling era because they were making so much money. It was really – I tell you something, no one -- there was no mobs or anything else that I knew of in any manner whatsoever. Everybody took care of themselves and everybody made a buck.

**Kathy:** What about Al Capone?

**Harold Rosen:** I don't know. I mean I knew he was down here, but I never met him or anything like that. They always used to...

**Kathy:** Did you ever go to the Latin Quarter?

**Harold Rosen:** No.

**Kathy:** Did you do any of the nightclub things?

**Harold Rosen:** I was not a nightclub person to tell you the truth. Although today I represent a lot of clubs for liquor licenses and variances and things like that but that's part of my job. But I was not a night person. I learned too much in the farm getting to sleep about 8 o'clock, 8:30, getting up at five. So I was never one, except if I was gambling. If I was gambling I could stay up all night long, but.

**Kathy:** So where did you gamble? You mentioned one place, Greenacres.

**Harold Rosen:** Well Greenacres...

**Kathy:** Was that on the beach, or?

**Harold Rosen:** No. It was Hallandale. And there were was about four or five different luxurious gambling places where they had dice and cards and chemin de fer, all the gambling things and the wheel, the roulette wheel.

**Kathy:** And for someone who likes gambling you're not in favor of the casinos coming to town?

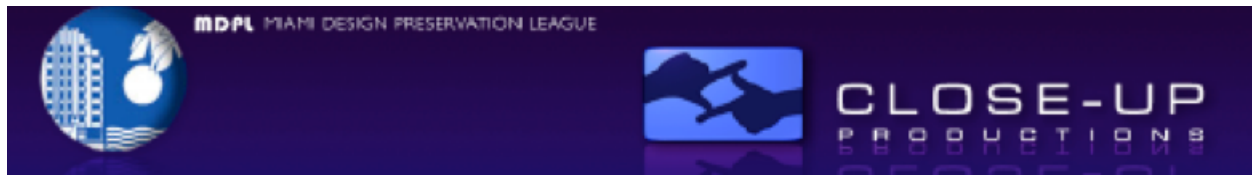
**Harold Rosen:** I'm not in favor on the beach. I don't think the beach can handle it to tell you the truth. We're too small. Our infrastructure, our roads and things, traveling, I don't think we could handle it. If they're going to have gambling, let them have it in Miami. We'll have the spillover here anyway, I believe.

**Kathy:** What about the preservation movement on the beach? We're you involved with that at all?

**Harold Rosen:** I was.

**Kathy:** Tell us about your involvement there.

**Harold Rosen:** Well, I was dead against it. I represented developers at that time. And the preservationist, Barbara Capitman, came down here. She was a lovely woman. She was really a travel writer, and I got to know her, in



fact, I gave her the first \$10,000 from the city to help her with that preservation. But they wanted to preserve 800 hotels. There wasn't, to me there was about 10 or 15 hotels that deserved preservation and I was against it. In fact, I'd knock down the Senator hotel on the beach and a couple of other of hotels that I shouldn't have knocked down in retrospect I should have let them stay. They were on Ocean Drive. But Barbara Capitman, I'll never forget, locked herself to the doorknob of one of the hotels. I think it was the Senator at that time. She locked herself up, and I came with a hammer and things I knocked out the things and she – they look her away with the door trailing her and everything else. They had a picture of me on the front page of the Miami paper, at the time, the Miami Beach paper showed King Kong tramping down the buildings, it was big legs and my head on King Kong.

**Kathy:** So, you are the bogeyman then?

**Harold Rosen:** At that time, yeah. [phonetic][16:46] Nancy Lieberman, I don't know if you're going to interview her. She can tell you that. She and I are good friends.

**Kathy:** So, do I detect a shift in your attitude?

**Harold Rosen:** Oh, definitely. I think that I was wrong and I admitted it. I told them I was dead wrong. I mean, not for all the buildings, but sometimes the preservations I just really – they get too involved where they want to change this and change that or they won't let you do this or do that or anything else and it holds up a lot of building and designs and everything else, but it's sort of lessening. I think they're being more practical now.

**Kathy:** The demolition...

**Harold Rosen:** But the preservation movement really helped Miami Beach to no end.

**Kathy:** So you see today as an asset?

**Harold Rosen:** Oh definitely. Definitely.

**Kathy:** Back to the Senator, that building and the demolition of that, that seemed to be a real milestone in the preservation history here.

**Harold Rosen:** Right. Then there was another big hotel on, I'm trying -- I can't think of the north part, on Bay Road. It was a hotel, a huge hotel. It was there for years and it just became empty and vacant and everything else and all the bums were sleeping. They were coming over from Miami to sleep in the hotels. They'd charge them \$3 a night or something like that and I knocked that hotel down. Those are the two big milestones of the things I knocked down and the Senator was the primary one.

**Kathy:** So what did you build up?

**Harold Rosen:** Well, they built a -- we had a whole plan where the Senator Hotel is and the plan just fell through. So, what people did is they built other hotels

there now and some parking lots, which we need, down around in that area, and it was quickly replaced believe me by other things. Developers saw -- the people that lived here didn't see what the developers, like Tony Goldman, guys like that, they saw what we didn't see and they did a big job and a fantastic job. Now they're going, of course, over to Wynwood and places like that in Miami, but they were real developers and they knew exactly what to do. And I admire them for that.

**Kathy:** I'd like to talk a bit about race relations on the beach, because you're coming right after World War II.

**Harold Rosen:** Right.

**Kathy:** Where there was a shift in the general population, in terms of race relations. What did you see, or did you see any shift in the beach?

**Harold Rosen:** Yes.

**Kathy:** In what way?

**Harold Rosen:** In what way was this. When I first came to the beach there were signs in front of the hotels, Jews, blacks and everything else, just were not wanted or invited.

**Kathy:** You saw the signs?

**Harold Rosen:** I saw those signs up in the north part of the beach, Arthur Godfrey's hotel and all those places there. They were unbelievable. And also the water fountain, everything else, and it really shocked me because I wasn't used to it. You know, the white only, black only and all this with the hotels and you used to see little black kids waiting to get some water. They couldn't do it. They really used to knock the devil out of me because I wasn't used to that. But, we never really had that many black people on the beach, I mean I remember there were maids and they had to be off the beach by six or seven o'clock in the evening after they finished work.

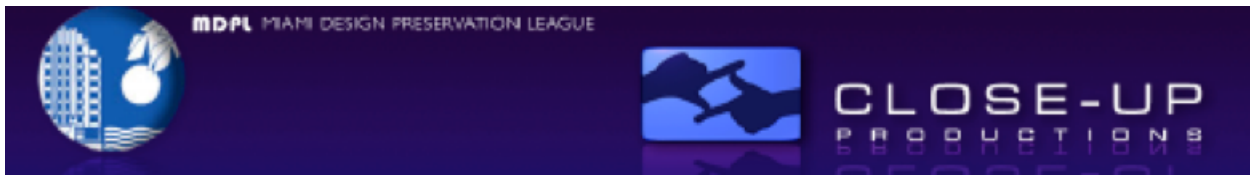
And then we had some entertainers, they couldn't stay on the beach. They were entertaining at the Fontainebeau and different hotels. They had to stay in Miami for the nights and all that, which I thought was dead wrong and it changed. It just evolved over the years, like it's doing right now where you have a good mix.

**Kathy:** Were you involved in any groups that were to end discrimination, or?

**Harold Rosen:** The Jaycee's I was involved in and Junior Chamber of Commerce we did a lot of good things. In fact, I started midnight basketball over in the black section of Miami, where we had all of the black kids that we used to play basketball 11 and 12 at night you know to keep them off the streets. We started things like that, which was great.

**Kathy:** What other kind of accomplishments are you proud of that you are involved in?





**Harold Rosen:** Well I really didn't accomplish that much. I got rid of rent control. That was my one accomplishment. And during the conventions I was vice Mayor at the '72 convention. We had a Republican and Democrats. And I took a strong position on these people coming down that they all should be in hotel rooms, they shouldn't be sleeping all over the place, on the grass, and here and everything else. So we allotted a certain section of the park for them. If they wanted to smoke pot, fine, let them smoke but let them smoke in the park not on the streets.

**Kathy:** Are you talking about Lummus Park?

**Harold Rosen:** Yeah, and, no, the other park, I'm trying to think of the name of it but Loomis Park is part of it. And so, but they started a parade. Chuck Hall, our mayor at that time, he was parading with them and I resented it, because they were parading on Washington. We had 3000 National Guard troops of the school. They were billeted there just in case.

**Kathy:** Where were they billeted?

**Harold Rosen:** At the Miami Beach High. They were billeted there. But they were marching on the streets. They got marching, but they would have the Black Flag of Anarchy above the American flag. And being a veteran of two wars I resented it to no end and I was very outspoken about it. And then I told Chuck Hall, who was a very liberal guy, nice guy, but I didn't want to be too liberal with these guys. And I wanted everything enforced except if they wanted to smoke pot, let them smoke in the restricted area down there, which they did. But when they were marching and all that with the black flags I resented it to no end.

And then the ACLU, of course, got involved in it and said, listen, you got to do it. You got to let them do this and that and everything else, you know? They did, but on the floor of our -- when we had our meetings, I was dead against it, what they were doing and I expressed myself that way. That's how I got into the famous scuffle with one of the hippies at that time. And I decked him. Rocky Pomarance, our police chief at that time, he was a big hulky - really nice guy. He drew me off him because I was so fed up that I just I guess I took it out on this guy here, and Rocky just drew me off, you know? It was on TV unfortunately, but I got over 1000 letters from people saying at least the politicians fights back. Beautiful letters.

**Kathy:** Do you still have them?

**Harold Rosen:** No, but I have the news reports on them and everything else. And I think WTVJ has the film or whatever it is. I don't know.

**Kathy:** So, Rocky Pomerance was on camera with you also?

**Harold Rosen:** Yeah.

**Kathy:** Pulling you off?

**Harold Rosen:** Right.

**Kathy:** Okay.

**Harold Rosen:** But as I – and I wanted to mention too, the boy that did it, he sent me the beautiful letter a month, about two months afterwards expressing his responsibility, and his regrets about being caught up in all that.

**Kathy:** Do you remember his name?

**Harold Rosen:** No.

**Kathy:** So any other times you got into trouble that you can talk about on camera?

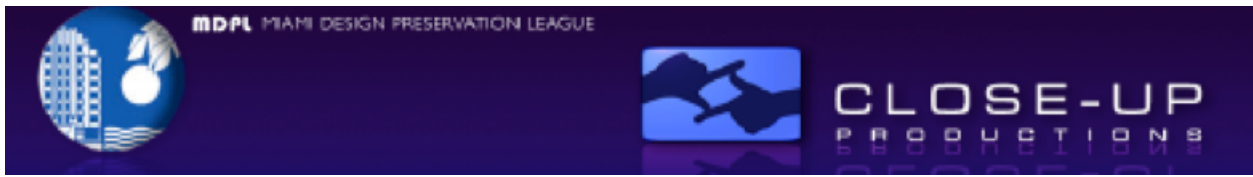
**Harold Rosen:** No. No. No. No. Other than the fact that I just love the city and the people today are doing a fantastic job. We've got one of the most progressive cities in the United States and a lot of it is due really to the, I think we sold the city around to every – like to our visitor and convention authority. We do a big job. We've got a tremendous group of people there and they're doing a great job.

**Kathy:** So what's involved in the promotion of Miami Beach?

**Harold Rosen:** Well it's people like yourself, it's going to be in promoting it. I mean people are going to know what Miami Beach is. Also we've hired some Hill & Company, they're an organization, a PR organization, and we have things going on all over the country. Advertisements, and what's going on in Miami Beach and then we have many, many things going on Miami Beach like sleepless nights, you know, is part of our program. We have the Wine and Food Festival, and [phonetic][25:44] Basel who's going on now. Miami Beach is really a center for activity, and I'm very proud of it, because I was – had something to do with it during the course of my span of 60 years on the beach. And I'm proud of it.

**Kathy:** Someone who came to the beach early on before the big hotels described the light and the smells from the flowers. There were flowers everywhere, this person said. You could smell them in the air mingling with the salt. Do you have any memories of that, of the difference, the sort of an urban tropical oasis kind of idea?

**Harold Rosen:** I do and I'll tell you how. My mayor's office was over and 17th Street. It was not in City Hall. I was part of building the new City Hall we have, but my offices I never wanted to be or I didn't want our commissioners to be in City Hall with all of our workers because the workers would be afraid that they would interfere with everything, you know, and I wanted them separate parts. But I kept my mayor's office up in a part. I had a secretary by the name of McKay. I was trying to think of her first name. Anyway, she had purple hair and wore white gloves all the time and she was in charge of my three secretaries. And she used to have fresh flowers for me every day, and we used to have a big flower thing and gardens and everything else over where the convention hall is now. In fact it's still



there. And she used to have them cut every day, the orchids and other flowers and I had in my office, every day.

And Kathy, oh what the heck, not Kathy McKay, whatever it was, but the last name was McKay. She was just a wonderful -- she had been -- she used to call me her curly-haired mayor. She was probably the secretary of about 10 and 12 mayors before me. At that time I had black hair with curls. She used to -- and then she always knew that I love chocolate, and she used to have on the afternoon, we had some beautiful -- we had beautiful tableware and everything else. If I wanted to entertain some people you know from other cities, and she would always make a big fuss and do a big job. And I -- God, I can't think of her first name. She was really great but she always had fresh flowers every day.

**Kathy:** What if you could sum up in say 30 seconds, what makes Miami Beach stand apart from other cities of its size in the United States?

**Harold Rosen:** Well, I think we have unique people. I think we have people who are thinkers and people who know what they want to do. People who are proud of their city and they want to see the progress of the city. And they actually work at it and that's, I think, one of the things that we have a strong government as far as Miami Beach is concerned. We have strong people like city manager and our mayor is, things like that. They're very strong, and they represent the people they do a good job as far -- when I go on trips, and I go on a trip every year, I always take keys to the city to go to different cities. I always present them a key to the city and people love it. People love it.

I was in Dubai, because I met some people that were playing pool in our beach in Dubai, you some of these Arabs they have their ponies and everything else. And I happen to be going there and I gave a key to the city to the people in Dubai and they think it was the greatest thing that ever happened. A little key in the richest countries and everything else but people like it. I was in the Amazon River for 19 days and I went in to see the Brazilian culture Minister and gave him keys to the city. In a little town, there was a little -- a city called [phonetic][29:52] Manaus is right in the middle of the river area you know? But going into it, further south they get the jungle, and it was really -- and I found him and gave him keys to the city and people in Norway, Sweden, I give them keys to the city. I'm bragging, I'm probably one of the best ambassadors we've ever had.

**Kathy:** I'd like to talk about any sort of famous people on the beach, who in the past have been influential. I just would like to know from you who you think those people are.

**Harold Rosen:** Well Arthur Godfrey, he was influential, basically. The people really were influential was like Joe -- a guy Jesse Weiss and Joe's Stone Crabs. He used to have a lot of people. And if you want to go off the camera I can tell you. I'll just recite one story. They used to have a family table down there that's...

**Kathy:** This is off the record?

**Harold Rosen:** No. You can put it on the record.

**Kathy:** Okay.

**Harold Rosen:** But it was really a funny antidote because I put it on at the Colonial Theater there one day. We're talking about Jesse Weiss. His father and mother founded Joe's and it's one of the outstanding restaurant. Anyway, he is have people Walter Winchell, and the guy from FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, and I used to hang around with Jesse because I was just a young lawyer, I used to hang with him.

And we were sitting at table one day, and there was a guy by the name of [phonetic][31:25] Lefty Horn, or something, the reason we called him Lefty, one of his arms was bad. And J. Edgar was sitting at the table, Walter Winchell, myself and Jesse Weiss. He came up to the table, does anybody need a watch? J. Edgar Hoover says yes, I could use a watch. So he shows him the watch. And he says, so like, the guy said to J. Edgar, what would you give me for it? J. Edgar says, what do you want for it? He said, what will give me? So J. Edgar says I'll give you \$100 for it. He says \$100? He says the reward is more than that. I mean these are just funny stories but guys like that used to come down here.

Shaq O'Neal, you know later things, you know, I brought them into Joe's many times. People used to stand up and applaud, when I walked by they sneered at me but I mean they would applaud him. It was cute. We have a lot of the celebrities that come down here, especially the clubs that night. I don't know go out so I don't see them, but Shaq, I got to represent so we – he gave me a beautiful ring when they won the championship in 2006. I still it. Great, beautiful.

**Kathy:** Any other famous people you represent or can you say?

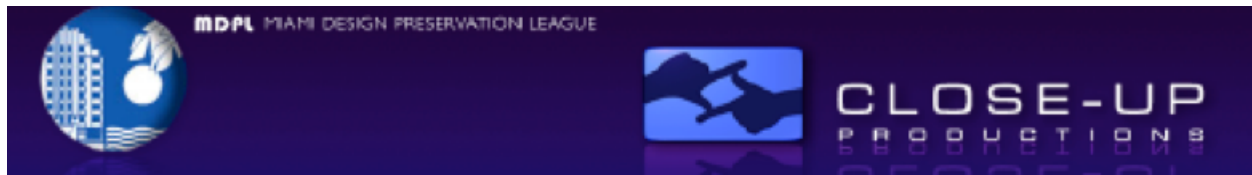
**Harold Rosen:** I can't really. The people I represent usually are in trouble. You know what it is. There is an old Jewish expression. You know lawyers, they buy, they get the solace of a person that needs them. You know, somebody will have – I'm sure you know what the word solace means, with sorrow, the hurt and everything else, and so they'll give it to a lawyer to take care of it. So they don't have that solace anymore. So you don't have to put that on the record that's just between us. But that's what a lawyer does, they take the solace of another person to, you know?

**Kathy:** Sometimes we feel since we come from the news background that our livelihood depends on other people's misery quite often.

**Harold Rosen:** True.

**Kathy:** That's why we're so happy about this project because it's all positive.

**Harold Rosen:** It's all positive. It's all good. I'll tell you this, your undertaking the project I give you a lot of credit. It's a tough project, because you meet a lot of



different people. You know, you will and you're going to have to cut it down like guys like me we can talk all day long, especially me.

**Kathy:** We want to explore a little more of the gambling aspect since that was back in the day, a big piece of the action going on here.

**Harold Rosen:** Right after '46, '47, '48, '49, '50. Right.

**Kathy:** So if you could kind of be descriptive of some of the places you would go and people you would see there and...

**Harold Rosen:** Well, like Hialeah racetrack, that was the premier racetrack of the whole country. And you had to – to go into the club house at Hialeah you had to be well dressed. You had to have a tie, a jacket. The women were always well dressed with the hats. It was beautiful. So Hialeah was, when it was open, it was only open a couple months a year, you know? Then the other tracks like we had a track way down the Southwest called Tropical Park. And that was just a cheap track, but they use to start out with that. Then we had Gulfstream and Calder came later. So we had the horse tracks and then we had the dog tracks.

The dog track here on Miami Beach attracted a lot of people. It used to be filled up. There were probably 10, 15,000 people there at the dog track, and everybody from Miami used to come down there. They would eat in our restaurants. They didn't want to stay at the hotels except some people were addicts they would come down for the season, you know, for the dog tracks. So we had the dog tracks, but the actual play with the casinos were in the different spots. It was about four or five really great casinos, and they're the ones that really drew the hoi palloi of the gambling industry. And I think it was legit. I think it was legit. I think it, but I don't think that anybody, you know, was cheating anybody in any manner whatsoever. Of course it was illegal, but these government officials sort of winked at it until [phonetic][35:30] Keith Fawver came down.

**Kathy:** And you remember that very well, the [phonetic][35:34] Keith Fawver.

**Harold Rosen:** Very well.

**Kathy:** And was there a panic on Miami Beach?

**Harold Rosen:** No, there was no panic at all. People just, you know, a lot of people don't like gambling and the people that were a minority the people that really gambled. But now all of the hotels and the cabanas they always had the big card games were people would play gin rummy for a dollar a point, which is very very expensive, you know, and all that. And they could bet on the horses. There was a Blackstone Hotel down here that's now a refuge for the older people you know? They used to have in the cellar they had a huge huge room where you could make your bets on horses all over the country. They had big blackboards down there and people used to erase it and put the odds up and then you can make all your bets at Blackstone. It was really nice.

**Kathy:** So, just like in the movie The Sting?

**Harold Rosen:** Exactly. It was exactly the same thing, exactly the same thing like The Sting. You'd have – there was a very good friend of mine by the name of Blackie, unfortunately he's dead now. [phonetic][36:34] Blackie Underberger was his name. I changed his name to Blackie Hunter later on, but he used to – he was an accountant. But when he was going to school he used to work down at the Blackstone on the boards. He used to get the odds and everything else at the racetrack in New York or, but it's like at Gulfstream right now, you know, the gambling they have there. You go to Gulfstream and play Texas hold 'em. And is right in the room where you can bet all the horses at every horse track around the country including Canada, and they're even having some tracks now in South America that are now broadcasting in there so you can bet on those if you want to. And Calder has it but Gulfstream probably has the best array of – they don't have it at the Seminal casino they don't have the horse races there.

**Kathy:** Did you ever golf and go to the...?

**Harold Rosen:** Never. I never liked golf. I like -- my big thing was four wall handball. When I became mayor I built four new courts down at the park there. And so I used to go down about three o'clock in the afternoon. And so I'd be in the middle of the game and these people would come screaming the showers don't work. I said, what the hell am I the janitor around here? I built these things for you. Leave me alone. Let me play a game. But people are really funny. The handball players are the worst sportsman in the world. God forbid you got hurt, they'd just drag you off and finish the game.

**Kathy:** Sounds addictive.

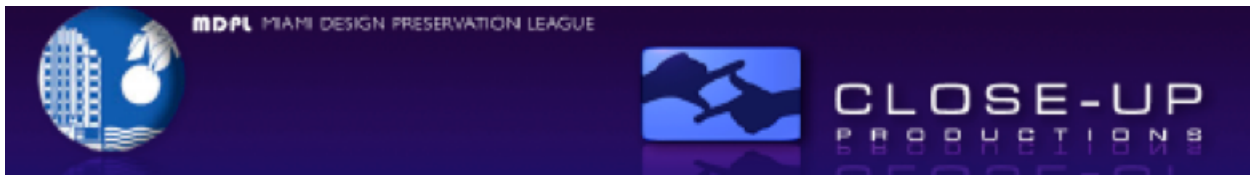
**Harold Rosen:** Yeah. I'll tell you it was amazing.

**Kathy:** So you got to be mayor and then you got to go at three o'clock in the afternoon and play handball.

**Harold Rosen:** I always took time out to exercise. I still do the same thing. I come in early in the morning but I want to – if I don't exercise and do it myself, no one is going to let me do it. Believe me, you have to be a little bit selfish in life because of your selfish and you're happy everybody around you is going to be happy. If you're not happy, nobody is going to happy.

I used to ride my – I rode a motorcycle for sixty years. I just gave it up last year. I rode all over the world with it. I used to have it shipped to Greece, Spain, North Africa, and all those places and ride by myself. I was very selfish.

**Kathy:** Cover your ears, David Hersh. He wants a motorcycle.



**Harold Rosen:** No, no. Unless you know a little bit about them don't get one. Don't smoke. I'll show you some stuff that I have from a Harley. I still represent Harley out of Milwaukee, but always love them.

**Kathy:** So you still come to work every day, and you're very active?

**Harold Rosen:** I think, so, yes.

**Kathy:** What's the secret to that? Just getting up?

**Harold Rosen:** The secret to that is having it in your mind, as I mentioned before your attitude. I love it. I love every – I look forward to it. I look forward to today with you, you know, with you. Those are the things that I enjoy, and I want to continue to enjoy them. My wife doesn't like it. I'm too healthy because I get up in the morning and she'll say, well, how are you feeling today? New. How are you feeling?

**Kathy:** Tell us about your family and family life, raising your children on the beach.

**Harold Rosen:** I didn't raise them on the beach. I lived in North Miami Beach at that time, and they all went to North Miami. My son was a ballplayer. He was a pretty good athlete but he was always a contender, he was not a great athlete. And that really irked him to no end, but he's got four daughters - - my son that lives -- he's a criminal lawyer in Houston, does a big job. He's got a nice ranch out there and a house, the whole bit. And he brought up his four daughters and they're all athletes. Then I had one in Denver. She has three boys and one of the boys went to the University of Hawaii. He got a year and a half ago. And I figured he just wanted to go to Hawaii for to ride the waves, but he took up Arabic, French and Hebrew. Those are the languages. He had a flair for languages, and he graduated with his languages and the FBI picked him up. He's in china now learning Mandarin and done a good job. I've been lucky with I have 12 grandchildren. They're all in college with exception of three that are still in high school.

**Carl:** Did you know your neighbor, Meyer?

**Harold Rosen:** Very well. I used to have breakfast with him every morning.

**Carl:** Really?

**Harold Rosen:** With him, Jack Cooper and a couple other guys, we used to have breakfast at Wolfies every morning. And I was the mayor and they wrote an article in Reader's Digest about me and about him, and it was called The crime – no what the heck was it? Something. I'll think of it in a moment. But they had in there I was the mayor at the time. Meyer was a hell of a guy, a great guy, very bright, very bright and he liked me and I liked him and we just used to talk over time about world events and when these things came out of the newspaper that I was friendly with him and all that, you know, I used to go to court every day and the judges would say oh your good friend, Meyer Lansky. I'd say and don't

ever forget it. Well, the name of the article was From Mob to Supermob. And who was in there, me, as the mayor of our city at the time like I was part of the supermob. I wasn't. I didn't know anything about what they did, 90 years ago.

**Kathy:** So what did the mayor and Meyer talk about over breakfast?

**Harold Rosen:** I think world events, the city, what was going on the city and everything else. And we just used to enjoy each other's company. He used to walk his dog on Collins Avenue every morning. He had a little dog he used to walk him every morning. And I discovered, I mean, he wasn't outstanding but really a very bright guy.

**Kathy:** And what was his personality like?

**Harold Rosen:** The first thing he was a great personality. Samuel Johnson, in the early English days, the great conversationalist, have you heard of him I'm sure? So was he.

**Kathy:** They never did really pin anything on him did they, except tax evasion maybe or?

**Harold Rosen:** I don't think they ever did that. I don't think he ever spent an hour in jail at any one time.

**Kathy:** But just had a quiet life here on the beach.

**Harold Rosen:** I thought he did. He was – I mean I used to, you know he had one time they were going to Israel they wouldn't let them in Israel because of his past performance and past records and all that stuff, you know, so.

**Kathy:** Did he contribute and participate in the civic life?

**Harold Rosen:** No, not at all.

**Kathy:** He kept a low profile?

**Harold Rosen:** Definitely.

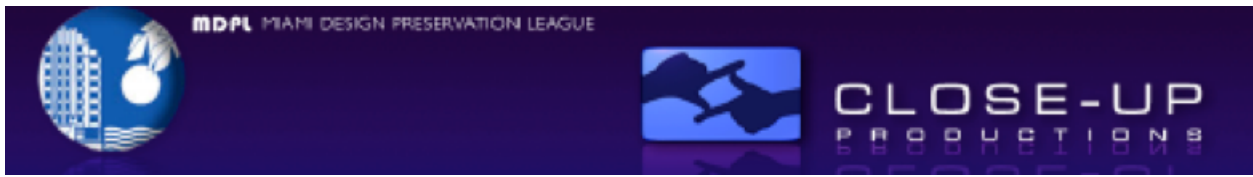
**Kathy:** Except at Wolfies.

**Harold Rosen:** Well, I used to have breakfast there. We had one big women, Afro-American woman used a feed us. Rosie, she knew what everybody wanted every day. I used to look forward to the meanings because we had two or three other people there. People were doing business with the Dominican Republic and Cuba and things like that. Of course Cuba was out after '59.

**Kathy:** What about the exodus from Cuba and the impact on the beach?

**Harold Rosen:** It had tremendous impact on the beach. I'll tell you. What happened is this. Castro just flushes his toilets and everybody came out of there and





they came here. And I blame really our president at the time, who to me was a complete failure as president.

**Kathy:** Jimmy Carter.

**Harold Rosen:** Jimmy Carter. In '59, when they first – the Cuban exodus first out the people came out were a different of character, cultures and everything else. I used to go to Cuba on the weekends to gamble and I tell you it was beautiful. The food, the entertainment, the casinos, the hotels were absolutely par excellence.

**Kathy:** How did you get there?

**Harold Rosen:** I used to fly over. It took about 20 minutes. We had some good friends in government at the time. They used to meet us at the airport, take us to the hotels and everything else.

**Kathy:** So when you say we who would you go with?

**Harold Rosen:** With a group of people. They were well-intentioned people who liked to gamble and liked good times.

**Kathy:** And that was the place to go.

**Harold Rosen:** It was beautiful, really great.

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**Harold Rosen:** No, I think you've done a good -- you've asked me all the questions.

**Kathy:** Good. Good.

**Harold Rosen:** I just -- to sum it up I'll tell you something. I'm just happy that you're interviewing me, number one, seriously speaking. And to me I just love our city, and you know, I live by a couple of things. Live and help live. I'm a big man with cats. And I saved like 2200 cats a few years ago by having a program of spaying and neutering and everything else. Doris Day was a great activist up in – she took my program. They got it in Palm Beach and everything else.

We have a city manager who was a complete moron. He wanted to shoot all the cats and bring their heads and get \$25 bonuses. So I stopped that quick. I had about 100 women came with me and we went there, The Cat Network, and I'll never forget Gelber, Seymour Gelber, was a mayor at that time and I walked in with all these women. What do you want? I said I want 25,000. For what? I said I have a program to neuter and spay the cats. Are you crazy? I said, no, no, no. Edna Buchanan, have you ever heard that name?

**Karen:** Oh yes.

**Harold Rosen:** Edna Buchanan is a cat woman. She got up there and she's pointing at the city mayor and she said it's people like you who started out killing cats become serial killers. I'll tell you, she was the greatest. I mean, I didn't have to say a word. I had women, you know the women are the greatest force in the world if you want something passed or done. I mean it. They work.

**Kathy:** What year was that?

**Harold Rosen:** Oh God it had about four or five years ago, I think.

**Kathy:** Okay.

**Harold Rosen:** They gave me a beautiful picture out here, the women did.

**Kathy:** Okay.

**Harold Rosen:** Of a huge cat. We still have it. I'm still in fact, they called -- the mayor has called me about three months ago, I just got \$85,000 grant that we're going to give to the cat people for spaying more and neutering. Smith Wollensky you know the restaurant down on the end, they got about 100 cats down there that go in the tables, which I like because I feed them. People hate me. Oh yeah. You know they can't help themselves. I have on my desk and I keep it in front of me all the time, a poem by Edgar Guest who was a big animal activists at one time, and he starts out they cannot speak for themselves they have to have people like me. Not only me, I'm talking about a lot of people, but that I have. I like to say a good word about our cat people.

I have women that we trap them, of course, we don't get the money. We used to have the county, we used to trap the cats and I called the county. They had what they call a mac unit. They'd have a vets, the veterinarians around there, the nurses, and I get maybe 10 or 15 cats, and they would come over and spay and neuter them. Then we'd take them, keep them overnight and then take them back to their venues. You know there were not wild cats.

**Kathy:** Feral.

**Harold Rosen:** Feral cats, so that was one of my big things.

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