

Berman Exemplifies Genuine Commitment to Community Service at Ocean Reef

2024 Spirit of Ocean Reef Recipient

By Annie Miles

When ORC Chairman **Charlie Johnston** announced the 2024 Spirit of Ocean Reef winner, he stated that "no recipient has been more deserving" than **Michael Berman**. An Equity Member since 1994, Berman embraced involvement in Reef community immediately and wholeheartedly and has never looked back. Michael, and wife **Angie**, first spent time here as part of an auto "Dealer



Chairman Charlie Johnston awards Mike Berman with the 2024 Spirit of Ocean Reef award.

20" group (think YPO for car dealers) and Berman noted that he found The Reef and its Members motivational and inspirational from the start. "I cannot imagine another place on earth with the mass of intelligence, talent and humble wealth as there is in our membership." He found mentors in **Tom Davidson** and **Alan Goldstein** and witnessed their endless commitment to the Club and its Members. He also came across a book

"What Happy People Know," by psychologist Dan Baker, and adopted its mantra for himself: "You can never be truly happy unless you commit to serving and helping others." He says Davidson and Goldstein showed him how to "connect the dots" of his passion for service with involvement at ORC.

The Spirit of Ocean Reef Award recognizes an "individual member or group that has had significant positive impact on our unique way of life that cannot be measured by financial or governance contributions." Berman received it on behalf of the ORC membership from Chairman Johnston at the April Town Hall meeting for his "unwavering dedication to the philanthropy, health and well-being of this community." In three decades of membership, Berman has proven himself to be a dedicated and a proactive force here at The Reef.

Beginning with working on the committee and eventually chairing the Member-Guest Golf Tournament, Berman also

served on the Membership and Nominating Committees and currently serves on the Marketing Committee. He is the Perpetual Chairman of All Charities, which is the fundraising arm of the Ocean Reef Community Foundation, and he serves as the Community Foundation's Vice-Chairman. He is past Vice-Chairman and immediate past Chairman of the Medical Center Board, and is currently Chairman of the Medical Center Foundation. Additionally, he serves on the Ocean Reef Baptist Hospital Advisory Board, the Homestead Hospital Board and the Baptist Hospital Foundation Executive Board. Among his numerous contributions to these organizations, Berman had the vision to change All Charities from a single day event to a gala weekend, which has raised well over \$60 million for Ocean Reef entities and the upper keys community. At the Medical Center, he innovated patient options with the establishment of MedFit and expanded private medical services, to improve the lives of the ORC membership.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, where he built a family automotive business, Berman has two sons and four granddaughters. His sons now run day-to-day operations at the dealerships so his community service "keeps me out of their hair!" Reflecting on receiving the Spirit of Ocean Reef award, he acknowledged, "I am humbled and honored (and embarrassed) to receive an award for doing something that bring me so much joy." Thanks, Michael, for the "happy" way you have benefitted all of Ocean Reef!



Angie and Mike Berman.