

‘Uniquely empathetic’: Tribute to Bernie Marcus

Once the public learned that Bernard “Bernie” Marcus, billionaire co-founder of The Home Depot, had died at 95 on Nov. 4 in Boca Raton, Florida, the outpouring was swift and consistent: Atlanta had lost a legendary businessman and philanthropist. Atlanta Business Chronicle celebrates Marcus’ life and legacy in pictures and with remembrances from those who called him mentor, trusted partner, sage adviser and friend.



1

BYRON E. SMALL | ABC



4

HOME DEPOT



2

BYRON E. SMALL | ABC



3

BYRON E. SMALL | ABC

JAMES S. GRIEN
Special to the Chronicle

I knew Bernie for over four decades and, no matter how long I live, I will never encounter another soul who combines Bernie’s selfless generosity, empathy, passion for sharing knowledge and great humor.

I watched in awe for nearly 25 years as Bernie envisioned groundbreaking

philanthropic responses to social and medical challenges. To me, the common thread running through his philanthropy was Bernie’s heart. He was a uniquely empathetic man driven to repair the world.

As a teacher, Bernie shared his wisdom liberally, but never dogmatically. Anyone who sought Bernie’s counsel would say that he was both stunningly brilliant and quite persuasive.

More than anything else, I will miss Bernie’s smile. His appreciation for his

own great fortune, family and friends was profound, and Bernie marched through life with an infectious joy that, for me, defined him.

What a life!

James S. Grien knew Bernie Marcus for more than 40 years and was a Marcus Foundation trustee for nearly a quarter century. He is vice chairman and co-head of investment banking at TM Capital, a division of Janney.



“Bernie’s impact extends far beyond the aisles of our stores; his philanthropic efforts touched countless lives and communities.”

Arthur Blank, a co-founder of Home Depot



“He bet on me, invested in me and saw more in me than I saw in myself.”

Joe Handy, former president and COO of the Georgia Aquarium



“Something that is etched into my memory are words of encouragement from Marcus this year: ‘Keep our standards the highest, keep doing better because good is not good enough.’”

Jamie Shepherd, president and CEO, Shepherd Center

1. Bernie Marcus, benefactor of the Georgia Aquarium, at its opening in 2005. 2. Bernie Marcus and then-Coca-Cola CEO Neville Isdell greet then-Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin at the opening of Pemberton Place in Downtown in 2005. 3. Bernie Marcus stands with The Home Depot co-founders Arthur Blank (center) and Ken Langone (right) at Marcus’ 90th birthday celebration in Atlanta in 2019. 4. Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank stand on a ladder in one of their metro Atlanta stores in the late 1980s or early 1990s.