

Alan Gordon

JA: Good morning, Alan. Thank you for meeting with me. How did you come to select Naples as your home, and where do you live in Naples?

AG: After several years of visiting friends in Bonita Springs, my wife Helene and I fell in love with Southwest Florida, especially Naples. We admired its sheer beauty and culture among other things. So when we retired over 11 years ago, we decided to make Naples our home and we settled in Pelican Bay.

JA: Tell me about your childhood and education.

AG: I was born in Philadelphia and lived there for the first 11 years until my family moved to the Philadelphia suburbs. I attended public schools through high school. Following high school I went to Penn State at its main campus where I majored in accounting in its business school. After graduation, I obtained a law degree from Villanova University's School of Law.

JA: Why did you pursue a law degree rather than practicing accounting?

AG: Even though my father was a CPA and I majored in accounting as an undergraduate, I had always wanted to be an attorney, and my father encouraged me to "follow my dream."

JA: What type of law did you practice?

AG: For approximately 20 years I practiced business law at a large center-city Philadelphia law firm. I represented both public and closely-held corporations, partnerships and proprietorships, and I worked on mergers and acquisitions, securities law and all sorts of contracts. About half way through my career, I made a mid-course practice change in which I created in the firm a business bankruptcy department with about 12 attorneys in the practice. The law firm, which had about 60 lawyers when I first joined it as an associate, grew to approximately 200 lawyers, and over time I became a senior partner and, in addition to heading its bankruptcy department, served on its executive committee. Although I was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar shortly after graduating law school and passing the bar exam, I subsequently became admitted to the New York bar because the firm had an office in New York City which was where many of the large business bankruptcies and reorganizations occurred.

JA: Did you eventually retire from that law firm?

AG: No. I left that firm and subsequently accepted a position with an international executive search firm which specialized in the recruitment of lawyers. I was hired to recruit senior partners with large "books of business." I spent about four years at that firm and then retired on my 66th birthday.

JA: While having a busy professional life and raising a family, I understand that you were also involved with Jewish causes.

AG: Yes. All my life I considered myself a dedicated Zionist with a great love of Israel and the Jewish people, so while practicing law I also became involved in a number of Jewish organizations. The first such organization that I became involved with was the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. There I served for many years on its annual fundraising campaigns as well as on several of its allocation committees. After several years, I was added to its Board of Trustees where I served for many years.

I also served for many years on the Board of Trustees of Gratz College located in suburban Philadelphia. Gratz, I believe, is the oldest non-denominational college of Jewish education in the Western Hemisphere. While there I served for three years as Chairman of the Board. Nothing was more gratifying than participating each year in commencement exercises and handing out degrees and diplomas to the graduating students.

Other Jewish organizations that I was involved with included HIAS and Migration Services of Philadelphia, where I served on the board and as President for two years, and the Philadelphia Metropolitan Chapter of the Anti-Defamation League where I served on the board and its executive committee.

Here in Naples I served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples and served for two years as Chairman of its Allocations Committee.

JA: It is unbelievably impressive to hear of all the organizations you served on to help Jewish causes. How in the world did you find the time.

AG: Jewish matters and Israel have always been very close to my heart, and I believe that if you have a love and passion for a cause, you will find the time.

JA: In addition to Jewish organizations, were you involved with any civic organizations.

AG: Yes. For a combined 15 years I was involved in my community of Whitemarsh Township, Montgomery County, PA, first on its Planning Commission and subsequently on its Zoning Hearing Board where I also served a one-year term as its chairman.

JA: Alan, I see you every week on a bike ride. You seem to be in very good shape.

AG: I am 77 years old and have a weekly exercise routine of biking three times a week, walking four miles three times a week, and kayaking once a week.

JA: You certainly don't look your age. Tell me about your family.

AG: I have been married to Helene for 29 years. I am not ashamed to admit that we are still very romantically in love. Holding hands at the movies or while watching TV is still something we do even after all these years. My daughter Jakki is an attorney and my son Andrew is a radiologist. We have six grandchildren. Both Jakki and Andrew and our grandchildren live in South Jersey, close to each other and relatively close to us at our

Long Beach Island house at the Jersey Shore. We have a close-knit family and enjoy getting together with them at the Jersey Shore in the summer.

JA: I hear that you and Helene are the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers of Naples.

AG: Helene and I enjoy dancing, especially to doo wop music from the late 50's and early 60's, and our favorite dance is the Philadelphia-style jitterbug.

JA: Is that the same as the New York Lindy?

AG: No, but it's similar to the jitterbug. I hope you and your wife can join us at next year's MCA Sweetheart Dinner Dance which I will again be chairing. The venue and the band will be the same as this year's dinner dance—Vineyards Country Club with the Dazzling Delrays.

JA: Do you and Helene travel?

AG: We love to travel. In addition to having traveled to Israel eight times (six of which were Philadelphia Federation missions), we have taken 14 Tauck Tours, including South Africa (with four days of safari), the Galapagos Islands, Europe, Central America and South America. This October we are planning to visit Morocco with five other couples from Naples. Through MCA, Helene and I have enjoyed many varied activities, met many nice people and made many wonderful friends.

JA: How do you and Helene spend your leisure time at home?

AG: Helene, who was a reading consultant with the Philadelphia School District, creates and makes beaded jewelry. I am an avid reader and enjoy reading the Wall Street Journal cover-to-cover every day. I am presently reading an absorbing book by William Inboden, titled "The Peacemaker: Ronald Reagan."

JA: Alan, I want to thank you for the dedication and contribution of your time and effort to so many good causes. You have made a great difference in the lives of so many people here and in Israel.