

# Agents of Change

**An Interview with Jessica Goldman Srebnick,  
Chief Executive Officer, Goldman Properties**



Jessica Goldman Srebnick in front of a painting of her father, Tony Goldman, founder of Goldman Properties

received numerous accolades, including an award as a Woman of Style and Substance from the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis in January 2009 and the Florida International University Center for Leadership named Goldman Srebnick one of 50 Prominent Women who lead businesses in Florida.

**COMPANY BRIEF** For more than fifty years, Goldman Properties ([goldmanproperties.com](http://goldmanproperties.com)) has been reconstructing and transforming declining historic districts such as SoHo in New York City, Center City in Philadelphia, South Beach in Miami, and most recently Miami's Wynwood, into thriving global destinations. Goldman Properties' portfolio of assets has been the recipient of multiple awards including the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award, Developer of the Year from American Institute of Architects, the Louise DuPont Crown in Shield Award, the highest honor awarded from the National Trust for historic preservation, Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Lifetime Achievement award, ULI's Global Excellence Awards for Wynwood Walls in 2016 and was named a finalist for ULI Vision Awards for the Wynwood Garage in 2019.

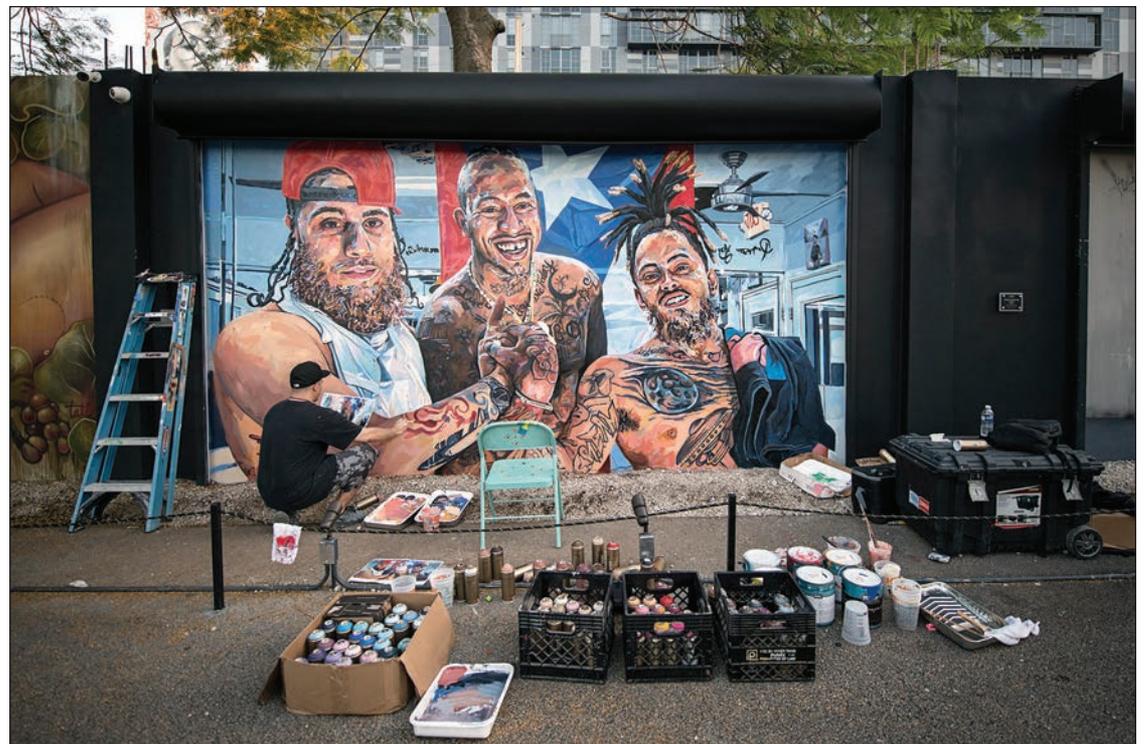
**Will you discuss the history and heritage of Goldman Properties?**

My dad started Goldman Properties in 1968. He had one employee, and he and my mother pooled all the money that they had received as wedding gifts and bought their first property on the Upper East Side of New York City. They then spent the next few decades going into underserved, underdeveloped, underappreciated neighborhoods and started to revitalize and breathe new life into communities that a lot of people would look at as hopeless and crime-ridden and dilapidated.

My father was a visionary because he would see things that others couldn't or wouldn't. He would close his eyes, paint a picture in his mind of what a neighborhood or community would look like, and then he would spend the next 10 to 20 years bringing that painting to life. It's appropriate that we have morphed into a very artistic type of a company, and we've developed a real deep passion for the arts and the infusion of arts into communities as an agent of change.

We like to think of ourselves as agents of change, and we just happen to use real estate and business and big ideas to do that, whether

**EDITORS' NOTE** Jessica Goldman Srebnick served as a managing partner of Goldman Properties and the Chief Operating Officer of its hospitality division before being named CEO of the company in September 2012. She had joined the company, founded by her father, Tony Goldman, in 1997. Earlier, she spent five years as the associate fashion director at Saks Fifth Avenue. Today, she continues to play a key role in perpetuating Tony Goldman's vision for acclaimed street art museum Wynwood Walls and produced a book on the project. She also co-produced the docuseries *Here Comes the Neighborhood* on the transition of the Wynwood Arts District, and executive produced *One Day on Earth* in collaboration with her father. Goldman Srebnick is an active member of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) and co-chaired its Global Leadership Conference in Miami in 2009, for which she received the Key to the City of Miami-Dade County. She participates in the YPO/Harvard Business School President's seminar and has been a guest lecturer at Harvard Business School. Goldman Srebnick has



Michael Vasquez painting at Wynwood Walls

it's hospitality where we had our first restaurant called Greenstreet Café which was in New York City in what was a former garbage truck garage. We had another restaurant called SoHo Kitchen and Bar where we served 110 wines by the glass. That was back in the '80s, when no one had ever heard of doing that. It was coming up with ideas and allowing ourselves to push the envelope as far as service and concepts and an infusion of creativity.

SoHo was really our first big neighborhood back in the 1970s. Then we came to Miami Beach in the 1980s, the Art Deco district of Miami Beach, and my dad fell madly in love when he turned a corner on Fifth and Ocean and saw all the Art Deco architecture concentrated in one neighborhood. He started buying a property a month for 18 months with no bank financing and money borrowed from aunts and uncles and cousins and friends.

Then we went to Philadelphia and bought real estate in Center City Philadelphia, where it was check-cashing stores and porn shops, and now it's one of the most vibrant communities in Philadelphia.

Wynwood was a neighborhood that my brother, Joey Goldman, had found for our family. He recognized the possibilities having been raised

around the world and a lot of people were asking to have us become involved in their projects.

Our first client was Steve Ross. I will forever be grateful to Mr. Ross because he looked at what we were doing in Wynwood and said, "I want this in my new stadium." I started a whole new company with him as my first, fabulous client, and it has morphed into clients such as the NFL. I just curated the face of the Super Bowl ticket and a whole infusion of art into the Super Bowl which is one of the biggest games on the planet.

Public art is really important to my family and to me personally. Artists have this beautiful way of being social agents of change and utilizing their talents to bring beauty and to bring hope, and a lot of



Wynwood Garage

what we learned with Wynwood Walls was that, in many cases, this was a person's first experience getting close up to artwork because galleries and museums can tend to be intimidating. This was art in a very non-intimidating matter, and today we get over 3 million visitors a year into Wynwood Walls.

Other cities are coming to us, wanting to understand how we've done what we've done and how they can

do it in their cities. I speak quite often on utilizing art to change perception and to create conversation and to create hope, and about utilizing real estate as a canvas. We are a very creative company. I think my dad would be incredibly happy and proud at how our company has led

by example.

**Was the new company that you created a natural extension of the real estate business or do you see it is a separate company?**

That's a great question. They are two separate companies, but in one sense, it is the artistic arm of Goldman Properties, although there are also a lot of other things that Goldman Global Arts does.



Wynwood Kitchen & Bar

in a family that was no stranger to trying to find opportunity and looking beneath what was there.

At the time, my dad had just undergone a double lung transplant, and I think he recognized that time was very precious, and he would say that those four years, the last four years of his life, were probably his most productive. We infused everything we had learned over the many, many years of neighborhood revitalization into Wynwood and we believed that this neighborhood would become a center for the creative class. That was the idea and that was the goal.

We opened Wynwood Walls. We opened restaurants. We have a restaurant called Joey's and a restaurant called Wynwood Kitchen and Bar. We started to curate tendencies of other like-minded people that were not afraid of being pioneering since it was a neighborhood that forced you to be pioneering because there was nothing here.

Almost four years ago, I started another company called Goldman Global Arts because as the lead curator for Wynwood Walls, I recognized how impactful and empowering that project is

We did a project with the company Wilson, which makes footballs and basketballs and baseballs. This was an art integration into Wilson footballs and while this may not be changing a neighborhood, it is changing a product. It is looking at something that might be considered ordinary and approaching it in a different way. That's what I love to do, because I believe that any simple form can be turned into something creative. It can be a canvas for creativity.

Goldman Global Arts is a very holistic approach to arts because we have art galleries, so we sell the work of the artists that we work with and represent. We curate and produce work for other clients, utilizing a stable of artists that we have worked with and some that we haven't worked with. I'm on a constant journey to find great artists.

We also have a growing retail component where we collaborate with artists on products, whether they are baseball hats or T-shirts or coloring books or water bottles. Those are things that I never imagined I'd be doing but there's a desire, and people want creativity in their life, whether it's in their work environment, their play environment or their home environment.

We are trying to put as much art into the world as possible. ●



The inside dining area of Joey's restaurant