

Hello America 2020

An Interview with Arnold Fisher, Senior Partner, Fisher Brothers, and Honorary Chairman, Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund

EDITORS' NOTE Arnold Fisher is one of four Senior Partners at Fisher Brothers, a leader in New York City real estate. In helping to drive the success of the family business, he has been responsible for the construction of over 15 million square feet of space, both commercial and residential. He has been personally responsible for the building of such signature commercial properties as 299 Park Avenue, 605 Third Avenue, 1345 Avenue of the Americas, 1185 Avenue of the Americas, One Bankers Trust Plaza, and Park Avenue Plaza. He has also been involved in the construction of residential properties such as Imperial House, 150 East 79th Street, and 50 Sutton Place South. Fisher became Chairman of the Board of the Intrepid Air, Sea and Space Museum Foundation in May 2003 and served through December 2006. Centered around the historic aircraft carrier Intrepid, the Foundation educates 700,000 annual visitors about sea, air and space history and technology. The Foundation provides support to military and veterans' families and serves as a monument for all who have



Arnold Fisher

served in our nation's defense. He currently remains as Honorary Chairman. He also spearheaded the efforts of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund (IFHF), which provided financial support for spouses and children of fallen U.S. service members. When federal legislation substantially increased the benefits to these families, the Fund redirected its efforts and constructed a 65,000 square-foot building called The Center for the Intrepid (CFI), a state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation center at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas,

which opened in January 2007. The Center serves military personnel with severe burn and amputee injuries who have been catastrophically disabled in service, many from Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Fisher also led the construction of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) in Bethesda, Maryland, which opened in June 2010. NICoE is a 72,000 square-foot facility located on the Navy campus, adjacent to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, which provides the most advanced diagnostics, initial treatment plan and family education,

introduction to therapeutic modalities, referral and reintegration support for military personnel suffering from the invisible wounds of war, such as traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress (PTS) and complex psychological health issues. Following the opening of NICoE, the IFHF moved forward to build "Intrepid Spirit Centers" to extend care to the home bases of many wounded heroes suffering from TBI and PTS. Data from these Centers will be transmitted back to NICoE and aid in its ongoing research program, helping to improve detection, diagnosis and treatment. To date, nine Spirit Centers have opened with a success rate of 90 percent of returning service members to active duty or to a normal lifestyle. IFHF plans to build a total of three more Spirit Centers. Fisher has also served as Chairman of the Fisher House Foundation from 1999 until 2003 when he turned the Chairmanship over to his son Kenneth. The Fisher House Foundation constructs comfort homes to house the families of hospitalized military personnel and veterans. He currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Foundation. To date, the Foundation has built 76 Fisher Houses on U.S. military bases around the country. In 2005, Fisher was made an Honorary Knight of the British Empire in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the welfare and well-being of the families of British Armed Forces personnel killed in action and his energetic leadership in support of closer U.K.-U.S. relations. His other philanthropic causes include the Veterans Bedside Network and the development of the Vietnam Memorial in Westchester County. He also served as the Chairman of the Board of the Hall of Honor (Home of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society) and on the Board of the New York Chapter of the USO.

COMPANY BRIEF Fisher Brothers (fisherbrothers.com) was founded in 1915 by Martin Fisher, who was joined by brothers Larry and Zachary Fisher. Over the next several decades, Fisher Brothers built residential properties in Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island, Riverdale, Mount Vernon and then in Manhattan. Fisher Brothers began putting up commercial buildings in the mid-'50s. It rewrote its business plan in the mid-'70s, adopting a new strategy that called for selling off its residential properties while continuing to develop and manage commercial real estate investments, and diversifying its investment portfolio into non-real estate sectors. With the decision to capitalize on the firm's capabilities as a builder



One of the nine Intrepid Spirit Centers the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund has developed to care for wounded soldiers

and manager, the partnership formed Plaza Construction in 1986 which was led by his son, Steven, as well as Sandhurst Associates in 1992 to provide onsite management for other building owners. Fisher Brothers has emerged as a highly diversified financial investment force. Assets currently under management exceed \$6 billion, with a substantial portion strategically invested in a broad spectrum of financial markets and ventures, including opportunistic overnight investments in treasuries and repos, as well as building refinancing and construction loans.

You have lived your life devoted to America and what it stands for and are a true patriot. How concerned are you about the current state of the country and the direction it is heading?

Many, many years ago, 1941 thru 1945, this great country was attacked by the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan) who wanted to control the world. Their greatest fear was America. We the American people took charge and changed the industrial fiber of the country and turned from making automobiles to making tanks, ships and airplanes. A Japanese Admiral after the attack on Pearl Harbor said, "I believe we have awakened a sleeping giant." For the

second time during the 20th century, we saved the world along with the British, French and other Allies. Now, 65 years later, we are looking into an abyss again. This time, however, it is now a global foe we face ensconced in academia and the media.

We defeated the Nazis in 1945, but I feel a resurgence of the same hatred being created in our country today. It's been a long time since I've heard the words "storm troopers" and the fact that it is being said by the speaker of the house of representatives is abhorrent to me and to the memory of the thousands who died during the second World War. I do not feel the strength of Patriotism and love of this great country today.

When President Trump said, help me make this country great again, I disagreed with that statement. I thought this country was great from its inception. Times have changed and not for the better. The world is looking at us and questioning our freedom and our future. Is this the Wild West again?

Now is the time that we need to make this country great again, because there is chaos running amuck in our major cities by anarchists & haters running over peaceful protesters, tearing down our history and smearing our cities with vile and destructive rhetoric.

We face an election in a few weeks that will determine the future of the next generation. Are we bound for a socialist government, the packing of the Supreme Court, the loss of inspiration, a weakening of our military, a change in the country that our forefathers had created? The greatest document in the history of mankind, the Constitution of the United States, is under threat.

If I personally could change some things, the first would be in our classrooms. We do not recognize God in our classroom, and we are forbidden to say the Lord's Prayer or the Pledge of Allegiance. We do not teach the history unique to this country. There's an old saying that if you don't know what happened yesterday, you won't know what will happen tomorrow.

To those who "take a knee" during the National Anthem, I suggest they go to Arlington National Cemetery and to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and take a knee in reverence to the men and women that have given their lives so that we can live free to worship our God and have freedom of speech.

I grew up being taught that all lives matter and that we all have unalienable rights – the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. ●



National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) in Bethesda, Maryland