

LEADERS

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A Comprehensive Development Philosophy

An Interview with Kenneth A. Himmel, President, Related Ross

EDITORS' NOTE Kenneth Himmel is President of Related Ross, and is an expert in creating thriving developments that bring forth the energy and vitality of an urban destination that resonates with existing local lifestyle and culture. Under Himmel's leadership, Related captured the world's attention with iconic, award-winning destinations that include CityPlace in West Palm Beach as well as Time Warner Center and Hudson Yards in New York; the Grand Avenue redevelopment project in downtown Los Angeles; and Related Santa Clara in Santa Clara, California. The developments have had a profound impact on their surrounding environments – neighborhoods that have become vibrant, contemporary urban centers. His past developments reflect his success: Water Tower Place and 730 North Michigan in Chicago; Copley Place in Boston; Reston Town Center in Reston, Virginia; and Pacific Place in Seattle. Himmel is also responsible for the formation of a restaurant collection in Boston that includes the legendary Grill 23 & Bar, The Harvest Restaurant, The Banks Fish House, and Bistro du Midi. Himmel is the creator and the Managing General Partner for the restaurant collection at Columbus Circle, New York City including the legendary Per Se with chef Thomas Keller and Porter House with chef Michael Lomonaco. Himmel is a member of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County and on the Board of the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. He received a BS degree with distinction from Cornell University – School of Hotel Administration (where he fosters ongoing mentorship), and a BS degree from The College of William and Mary.



Kenneth A. Himmel

CityPlace – the most visited neighborhood in the City, fostering culture and enriching the community with lush green spaces, a diverse mix of experiential retail and culinary offerings, the largest concentration of public art installed by a private company in Palm Beach County, and educational programming and modern residences; as well as Hilton West Palm Beach, RH West Palm and the historic Harriet Himmel Theater.

How do you define Related Ross' mission and purpose?

At the core of Related Ross' mission is our commitment to transforming urban life for communities. We focus on delivering the highest quality in design and are uniquely positioned as the leader in each class of real estate – no other company compares in the mixed-use space. My 30 years of experience with Stephen (Ross, CEO and Chairman) in cities like New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and notable projects such as Columbus Circle and Hudson Yards, have been instrumental in

shaping our work here in Florida. This extensive background has enabled us to attract the right tenants and users, helping to create a thriving market in South Florida.

Our projects serve as economic, creative, and cultural catalysts that not only propel cities forward, but also leave a lasting, positive impact. We are dedicated to enriching people's lives, strengthening communities, and enhancing the character of cities. Our approach goes beyond just building structures; we take a long-term perspective on social engagement, integrating quality and sustainability into every design. With responsible governance, ethical business practices, and a focus on wellness for both people and the planet, hospitality remains central to our work. These guiding principles reflect our broader vision to create a lasting legacy through positive social, economic, and environmental change.

What have been the keys to Related Ross' strength and leadership in the industry?

Quality retail, exceptional restaurants, hospitality, and walkable public spaces are the key elements that allow us to seamlessly

FIRM BRIEF Led by visionary developer Stephen Ross, Related Ross (relatedross.com) is a fully integrated real estate firm with unparalleled expertise in mixed-use development. Related has led the transformation of West Palm Beach into one of the fastest growing cities in the nation to live, work, and visit. Related Ross leads the market in Class A office with more than 2.8 million square feet of existing commercial holdings built and under construction. Known for luxury residential buildings, Related Ross is introducing a new class of rentals and condos to the market including The Laurel and South Flagler House. The company also developed and owns the most celebrated destinations in the region including



Rendering of CityPlace in West Palm Beach – 10 and 15 CityPlace, The Laurel, and the Harriet Himmel Hall which will open as Eataly in 2025



Kenneth Himmel and Stephen Ross

integrate all the components of a thriving community. Over my 45 years in the industry, I've had the privilege of working on projects from Back Bay in Boston to Reston Town Center, downtown Seattle, and Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Related Ross' strength and leadership in the industry are rooted in our commitment to holistic development. Our approach goes beyond creating individual buildings; we focus on shaping vibrant, well-rounded communities. This includes world-class residential, shopping, and dining experiences, but also extends to collaborating with cities to improve transportation, enhance education and expand health-care options. Additionally, we host over 500 complimentary community events each year, promoting wellness, arts and culture, and much more. This comprehensive development philosophy is what truly sets us apart and drives our success.

Will you provide an overview of Related Ross' properties and current developments?

Related Ross oversees a portfolio of 6.5 million square feet across residential, hotel, office and retail in West Palm Beach, a culmination of development over the last five years that's catapulted West Palm Beach onto the global stage. Now, the city has attracted Vanderbilt University with a new graduate campus, a new world-class hospital, advanced mobility initiatives, retail brands like Equinox and Eatly, major Fortune 500 companies – and it's really

just the beginning. Related Ross' portfolio continues to grow exponentially as construction on 10 and 15 CityPlace is expected to start in March 2025, with 60 percent of the space already pre-leased at 15 CityPlace, and 10 CityPlace scheduled to come out of the ground a year later – both introducing a combined 1 million square feet of office space.

Over the last 30 years we've worked diligently on introducing many firsts to South Florida and West Palm Beach that offer something for everyone. Our well-rounded housing portfolio encompasses our first rental building, The Laurel, that's leased up faster than any other project in our company's history – 90 percent leased within six months at the highest rents ever achieved for a residential rental in Palm Beach County, and South Flagler House which marks the first luxury residential high-rise in Florida designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects to break ground. We've also brought many firsts to West Palm's burgeoning dining scene that's cultivated a vibrant community at CityPlace, downtown's most visited destination. We welcomed Harry's, Adrienne's, and Maman this year, and in 2025 we will welcome Eatly, Moxie's, and Ela Curry Kitchen to CityPlace. As we reimagine the Flagler Waterfront district, we are excited to welcome Estiatorio Milos this year. Even our retail portfolio has range for the community with Alo, Perigold, Blue Mercury, and more.

Will you discuss Related Ross' focus on not just developing buildings, but on building vibrant neighborhoods and communities?

At Related Ross, our focus goes beyond just developing buildings; we are committed to building vibrant communities and neighborhoods. A prime example of this is our long-standing partnership with the City of West Palm Beach and Mayor Keith James through Related Together. This initiative integrates private development with community needs, creating spaces where underserved neighborhoods can be revitalized and brought to life. Creating vibrant, connected communities is at the heart of what we do. We believe that inclusivity is the cornerstone of a vibrant community, which is why we focus on embracing diverse cultures, enhancing education, investing in the neighborhoods we build in, and giving back to our community partners. This commitment ensures that we are supporting the growth of places where people can grow together and thrive.

How important is it for Related Ross to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of the clients and communities it serves?

At Related Ross, our commitment to building vibrant and inclusive communities starts within our own team. At our West Palm Beach HQ, nearly 50 percent of our workforce is made up of women, many of whom hold some of the most senior positions in the company. We believe that a diverse workforce is essential for ensuring we approach challenges and opportunities from a variety of perspectives, which ultimately makes us a stronger organization. By reflecting the diversity of the clients and communities we serve, we are better equipped to create spaces that are truly inclusive and impactful.

What do you see as Related Ross' responsibility to be engaged in the communities it serves and a force for good in society?

At Related Ross, being engaged in the communities we serve and acting as a force for good is not just a responsibility – it's a standard we believe all developers should uphold. We see it as both our duty and privilege to build not only for today's community, but also for future generations. That's why we work closely with city officials and community leaders across areas like transportation, education, and arts and culture to ensure we're bringing the best possible outcomes to West Palm Beach.

For the past 30 years, I've partnered with Stephen Ross, and together, we've always aligned with his philosophy of building for the long-term – owning and operating, not selling real estate. This mindset reinforces our commitment to creating projects that will serve communities for generations to come. When we think about our responsibility, it's clear: we are here for the long haul, and everything we do is centered on making the community better and more sustainable.



Rendering of The Flagler Waterfront district – One Flagler, Phillips Point and Esperante office towers

How critical is a commitment to sustainability as part of Related Ross’ culture?

Commitment to sustainability is deeply embedded in Related Ross’ culture and values. We understand that sustainability is a priority for our office tenants, and we align our values with theirs to create spaces that support both their workforce and their environmental goals. For example, CityPlace is a LEED Gold neighborhood, and all of our buildings are designed to meet at least LEED Silver

standards. Additionally, One Flagler stands out as the first Wired Score Platinum building in West Palm Beach, further demonstrating our dedication to sustainability and creating forward-thinking, sustainable environments.

Will you discuss your career journey?

I’ve been fortunate to have a 50-year career in real estate, starting in the hospitality world. My journey began as a key developer on the first-ever Hilton franchise hotels in New England. This

opportunity led to a significant relationship with Cabot, Cabot & Forbes, where I was involved in the development of the first Ritz-Carlton hotel in Chicago, which became Water Tower Place. This project marked my introduction to vertical mixed-use development. From there, I worked on projects like Copley Place in Boston’s Back Bay, which included two hotels, Neiman Marcus, and 1 million square feet of office space. This led to the winning designation for Reston Town Center in Northern Virginia, a pioneering model for lifestyle mixed-use development. I also developed the Nordstrom flagship in downtown Seattle, a three-block project that included the brand’s headquarters. Afterward, I returned to Michigan Avenue in Chicago to develop the Peninsula Hotel, with luxury retail at the base. Then, after ten years of friendship, Stephen Ross and I decided to partner up and compete for the rights to develop Columbus Circle, which became the Time Warner Center. That partnership kicked off a 30-year journey, including the projects CityPlace and Hudson Yards.

Today, we’ve expanded from developing projects here in CityPlace to shaping major cities. We’re now focused on applying our experience, expertise and relationships as we continue to grow with mixed-use projects in Palm Beach County and South Florida. One project both Stephen and I are very excited about is Apogee, a resort-style golf club in Martin County with three 18-hole golf courses, a world-renowned restaurant and amenities, and private villas.

A key aspect of my career and part of the magic sauce has been my experience in the hotel and restaurant industry, particularly in Boston and New York, where I had the privilege of working with renowned chefs like Thomas Keller and Michael Lomonaco. Over the years, I’ve built lasting relationships with industry leaders which have contributed to the success of many of our developments. ●



CityPlace, a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood at the center of West Palm Beach’s downtown