

# Miami Beach Hall of Fame

**Nominee's Name:** Stephen H. Muss

**Nomination Submitted By:** Yechiel Ciment

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MIAMI BEACH HALL OF FAME APPLICATION

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>>>Please Type All Information<<<

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Nominee's Name: Stephen H. Muss

Nominee's Occupation, Field of Achievement or Title: Real Estate Developer/Hotelier

For what achievement(s) is the nominee best known? At one point in time being the largest landowner in Miami Beach and saving the Fontainebleau Hotel from bankruptcy

Nomination Submitted by: Yechiel Ciment

Signature of Submitter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Occupation of Submitter: Real Estate

Affiliation/Association to Nominee: Relative  
(example: friend, colleague, student, employee, relative, etc.)

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E-Mail Address: YCiment@gmail.com

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>>>Please Type All Information<<<

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**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Please provide essential information about the nominee. Essential information includes: major accomplishments and/or contributions and honors/awards received. **DO NOT ATTACH ANOTHER BIO, RESUMÉ OR ARTICLE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR USING THIS FORM.** All information in this section should be stated in narrative form. A list of references and citations will not be considered complete biographical information.

Stephen Muss's accomplishments have contributed significantly to the fields of humanities, medicine, environment, peaceful coexistence, Jewish education, and the strengthening of the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.

Stephen Muss was born to a Jewish family in 1928 and raised in Brooklyn. He is one of the 37 grandchildren of Isaac and Annie Muss. Isaac Muss was a carpenter who arrived in the United States in 1898. He built his first house in Brooklyn in 1894. All six of his sons went into the real estate business. Stephen's father, Alexander Muss, built in New York and Florida.

Stephen Muss is best known for leading the resurgence and redevelopment of Miami Beach, Florida. He joined the family business supervised the building of homes and apartment buildings in Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island, New Jersey, and Florida throughout the 50's and 60's. In 1967 he moved to Miami Beach and began developing properties that would eventually lead to his becoming Miami Beach's single largest landlord and taxpayer. In 1978, Stephen bought the Fontainebleau Hotel out of bankruptcy, renovated the property, and brought along Hilton as manager in order to attract large scale conventions and meeting bookings. This would be the beginning of putting Miami Beach back on the map as a hospitality destination. In 1980, Stephen endowed the Alexander Muss High School in Israel (AMHSI) in memory of his father to help support Jewish education for American youth and has been one of its primary supporters since that time. The school has provided a study abroad program in Israel for almost 30,000 students since its inception...most of whom are Americans. It now operates under the JNF umbrella and continues to be one of the most important institutions contributing to the concept of Jewish continuity. Aside for being a past recipient of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation Friend of Israel Humanitarian Award, he has also been honored as a Man of the year by the City of Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce along with various other philanthropic and civic recognition.

**Questions 1 -3:** Do not repeat the information given previously. Please put the nominee's accomplishments in context; show how they are relevant and valuable to Miami Beach.

- 1. Describe the ways in which the nominee's contributions have been of the greatest value for the development of the City of Miami Beach.** While there are many notable and respected figures in Miami Beach, I am confident that very few will have contributed to the development of Miami Beach as significantly as Stephen Muss. Stephen was responsible for the building of many notable buildings in Miami Beach such as The Alexander Hotel, Seacoast Towers, Tower House, Fontainebleau II and III and is most well-known for the saving of the Fontainebleau Hotel. Miami Beach is currently an investment hotspot and travel destination. When Stephen Muss bought the Fontainebleau out of bankruptcy, he did so more as a civic gesture to the city he adopted as his own, than any sort of business maneuver. His investment in the city during that precarious time in the city's history was a stamp of approval that the city was still open for business with plans to thrive
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as a destination. Stephen Muss also donated one of the most well-known and widely used parks in our city, "Muss Park". Additionally and most importantly, Stephen was the one responsible for instituting a "hotel bed tax" in Miami Beach against most business owners wishes in order to pay for most of the city's current infrastructure (including the Miami Beach Convention Center). Additionally, as Chair of the South Beach Redevelopment Agency, we was instrumental in securing South Pointe as we know it today, from the Army, which was using it as a training base before deeding it over to the city.

- 2. Describe the significant impact of the nominee's achievements. Quantify the answer where possible.** The nominee's achievements set the foundation for Miami Beach to grow and flourish as the destination we have come to love and appreciate today. The hotel bed tax instituted by Stephen Muss has contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to the city and has paid for much of the infrastructure we love and enjoy using. When Stephen decided to dedicate Muss Park in honor of his father, he did so because at that point in time the city was thinking of scrapping plans for the park in favor of allocating funds towards a different cause. Stephen has consistently put his money where his mouth is for the betterment of our city and very often, at his own expense, and the expense of his various business ventures. When he saved the Fontainebleau Hotel, no one believed in Miami Beach as a city, but Stephen believed (correctly) that the city would go as the Fontainebleau went. Thus, he bought the hotel and continued to own it for close to 30 years.
- 3. Present evidence that the nominee's achievements have (or will have) enduring value to the City of Miami Beach. Where applicable, focus your comments on change that has been or will be created and how that change is expected to last over time.** Who can imagine a Miami Beach without the Fontainebleau Hotel? Muss Park? South Pointe? The Convention Center? These are all city institutions that have been preserved, secured, and bettered through the business, civic, and philanthropic largesse of Stephen Muss. He has significantly contributed to Miami Beach's quality of life and will remain one of Miami Beach's most important figures for eternity.

**Sources of Information:** Be sure to include complete citations of sources of information used to write the nomination (reference books, periodicals, etc.).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen\\_Muss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Muss) among others.

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