

LAS OLAS

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A Compassionate Heart

Scott Rothstein



Kimberly Wendell & Scott Rothstein

A *Passionate* Philanthropist

by Candice Russell

If the complex life of Scott W. Rothstein could be summed up in a single word, it would be “passion.” It permeates his every activity, from his thriving law practice in Fort Lauderdale to his time with his family and friends. It lives in his numerous philanthropic efforts in the community, born of a childhood promise. It drives his involvement in politics on a state and national level.



Scott Rothstein

Rothstein, who is Chairman, CEO and Managing Shareholder of Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler, P.A., uses the word “passion” frequently in describing everything from his involvement in the local branch of the American Heart Association to his fiancée Kimberly Wendell, a fitness enthusiast who pushes him to eat “heart” healthy. Among his myriad of activities, Rothstein is the chairperson of the American Heart Association’s 2008 Broward County Heart Ball, to be held next spring at the St. Regis Resort.

His involvement with the American Heart Association is personal for Rothstein, a Las Olas resident who moved here with his parents from the Bronx, New York in 1978. “My grandfather died of a heart attack when I was twelve, just months before my Bar Mitzvah. He was very young. His passing left a huge void in my life which I carry with me as a reminder of how precious life is.”

Rothstein says, “He was in many ways, my life mentor. A very compassionate and caring person and very hardworking. He was not wealthy, nor were my parents, but we always had riches beyond compare when it came to life and love. When we weren’t talking about family, the conversation nearly always turned to education. My parents and grandparents stressed education, which is one of the main reasons I ended up in law school. And, because of the passion I inherited, I see my career as an attorney not as an end, but as a means to an end, the thing that allows me to do the things I love, to care for the people I love, and to help the causes I love,” says Rothstein.

Becoming involved with the American Heart Association marked a departure for Rothstein, who exclusively focused on charities benefiting

children and Judaism, until he was approached by the committee handling the Heart Ball. “My law firm donated \$30,000 to the cause last year. I was drawn to it because of my grandfather and because I’ve had far too many friends who had heart attacks, which could have been prevented. I was amazed at the commitment of the people at the association and I wanted to do what I could to help,” remarked Rothstein.

In selecting the American Heart Association, Rothstein did what he does of all charities before he gets involved, his homework. He looks to insure that the maximum amount of each dollar raised goes to the research, to making lives better or to saving lives.

Prevention is key to avoiding heart disease, he believes. “Regular checkups are key,” says Rothstein. “I started seeing a cardiologist years ago. You have an obligation to yourself and more importantly to those you love to exercise, to eat right, and to see your doctor regularly. To do anything less is selfish. While life is uncertain and some things just can not ever be predicted or prevented, I think you must be passionate about living. I think you must refuse to die before your time. I want to be here to see my children have children.”

Involved early on with the Dan Marino Foundation and dedicated to helping children, Rothstein is the father of a daughter named Rachael. He is also the uncle to his sister’s four children. He refers to his daughter and to his four nieces and nephews as the loves of his life. And his passion for charities which help children could not be stronger. “Where will we end up as a society if we abandon its most precious resource? There is not enough emphasis on insuring the future of our children, the healthy and those less fortunate. To refuse to give of yourself in whatever

capacity you are able, to insure all children are healthy, educated and grow up in a society free from hatred and violence is selfish, plain and simple," says Rothstein.

Rothstein gave a very large endowment to the Marino Foundation. "Dan and Claire Marino are amazing people," he says. "Here is a man who can have anything he wants, do anything he wants, yet he gives so much of his time, energy and resources to this organization. To making a real difference. The work the Marino Foundation does is amazing. And, Dan's love for what he does is infectious. And I am honored and proud to help him anyway I can," says Rothstein.

Another "amazing organization" in Rothstein's view is the Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County. Rothstein sits on its corporate board. "It's important not only to give money, if you can, but quality time and effort. There is always something you can do. Giving back is an essential part of life. Giving back to the community is like a life furnace. The more you stoke the furnace with coal, with your efforts, the stronger your drive, your compassion and commitment to life and all it holds and promises."

Strong ties to the Jewish community underscore his faith. After learning downtown Fort Lauderdale did not have a synagogue, he teamed up with the founders of the Downtown Jewish Center-Chabad, Rabbi Schneur Kaplan and his wife Devorah. "Through the efforts of the Jewish community in downtown, we started a building campaign for a synagogue and purchased a building on Broward Boulevard. It is a true privilege to be a part of something so amazing and I am honored the building will be named for my family."

He's also involved with an organization called "Here's Help," providing care and rehabilitation to adolescents with drug and alcohol problems. It was started by radio personality Footy. Rothstein's firm is the presenting sponsor of "Bubbles & Bones" benefiting the organization. He enthusiastically lends his support. "Here's another organization that is just off the charts in terms of its efforts to make a real difference in peoples lives. Footy and his crew have a deep passion for their mission and I share it," remarked Rothstein.

Generosity developed out of Rothstein's awareness about life's uncertainty. There was no guarantee he would become so successful. He sincerely finds his place in life a gift and he has a childlike appreciation for his accomplishments. It is a journey he refuses to waste. "I grew up in a family rich in love, commitment and pride, but lower middle-class from a financial standpoint," Rothstein says. "I truly believe, for some reason unknown to me, I was given this amazing blessing. And I refuse to squander it."

Asked about his personality and energy, Rothstein says, "I'm very eclectic, a typical Gemini. I find myself going in twenty different directions, all at the same, all at a very intense level. Get into the game or get out of the way."

Politics is another in Rothstein's never ending streams of passions. And, he focuses much of his attention on assisting those who help children in need. Rothstein believes every child should have the opportunity to live a better quality of life, regardless of their environment and elected officials need to create this opportunity.

"Governor Charlie Crist, is the perfect example. I started supporting him when he was running for Attorney General. I studied his principles. I met with him for hours, and decided this guy is the key to true change. He won the election and truly made a difference. He called upon me again when he decided to run for Governor and I supported him with every ounce of my being. This is a person of pure unadulterated passion and integrity. His approval rating is through the roof because he does what he believes in his heart is right and doesn't play games along party lines or with peoples lives. He is the peoples Governor, plain and simple. And, some day I am certain he will be the people's President."

As Chairman of one of South Florida's fastest growing law firms, Rothstein has seen it grow from seven lawyers to thirty-eight lawyers. "It's One Source for Total Legal Solutions," says Rothstein. He cites the key to his firm's success as their ability to solve client's real life, every day problems without interfering with the client's ability to continue to focus on their business. Your lawyer must take the weight from your shoulders and allow the client to do what the client does best. His passion for his law practice is clear and he demands the same passion from those he works with daily. He says, "If you stop caring, you need to stop practicing and find something else to do."

While relaxation may seem out of the question for someone so busy, Rothstein makes time for all the aspects of life including a wide variety of hobbies and pastimes. "I started playing guitar at age twelve," he says of his love for music. "Then, I started collecting guitars. I taught myself to play the piano. My first piece of furniture in my house was a baby grand piano. Before law, my first choice of career was to be a musician."

Standing firmly in Rothstein's corner is his fiancée. "He's so passionate about everything he does," says Kimberly Wendell, who will marry Scott in January, 2008 and enjoy a honeymoon in Saint Barts. "Scott is so giving. He's an incredible man. He has the energy of fifty people and is the most amazing man I've ever met. I'm very proud and lucky to be with him. I hit the jackpot." **LOL**

Governor Crist, Scott & Senator Mel Martinez



Kimberly & Scott



Dan Marino & Scott

