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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: May 12, 2009

SUBJECT: Roger Bass Resignation

This Letter to Commission is to inform you that Mr. Roger Bass, son of the Bass Museum's founder John Bass, has resigned from the museum's Board of Trustees. A copy of his resignation letter is attached. His resignation will be accepted at the next Trustees meeting, at which time another Bass family member will be appointed to take his place, as stipulated in the contract that currently defines the museum's governance structure.

We are grateful to Roger Bass for his 33 years of service to the museum, and encouraged by his endorsement of the museum's new leadership and growth plans.

The negative press to which he refers in his letter is a recent article in Ocean Drive Magazine (www.oceandrive.com/hybrid/archives/2009_04/index.html.)

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

C: Hilda Fernandez, Assistant City Manager
Max Sklar, Tourism and Cultural Development Director
Gary Farmer, Cultural Affairs Program Manager
Silvia Cubina, Bass Museum Executive Director

To The Board of Trustees of the Bass Museum of Art, The Director and present Parties to the Original Contract between John and Johanna Bass and the City of Miami Beach.

Dear colleagues,

I believe this is my thirty-third year of my affiliation with the Bass Museum after the death of my father, John Bass.

It has been both a rewarding and a troubled experience. I have been evaluating plans for myself for the future, and this letter is partly to discuss that, and, in addition as an afterthought to matters attendant to the recent meeting.

PRESENT ACTIVITY

The meeting's review of the endeavors by the new staff and future planning appear to be positive, enthusiastic and well directed. Reports of Museum activities of benefit to the community and its attendees is of benefit to me as well and I am grateful for the conscientious and enthusiastic participation by the staff and the Board of Trustees.

HOWEVER

I was disheartened and annoyed by excerpts from the press clippings that were included with the material I received. More later.

SOME PAST HISTORY

In 1976 I was asked by the Morgan Guaranty Trust, my father's executors, to see what I could do about the mired status of the museum. At that time, the Museum, housed in a former library facility, was shuttered and locked, there were matters in litigation and arbitration and its future was uncertain. My father left no personal funds other than those arranged for in the contract, to deal with any contingencies.

The first time I flew to Miami Beach with my attorney John Bost, we were picked up at the airport by my long time friend Judy Drucker and driven directly to an emergency type meeting at the home of the mayor. We were given little encouragement. Plans were already under way to change the name, appearance and direction for the Museum. We arranged to delay any changes for a period of time to attempt to rescue the Museum from that fate.

The original collection was subjected to a long and careful evaluation and re-accreditation under the supervision of Carl Weinhardt and/or a body of distinguished of distinguished art experts. For your satisfaction, a precise history of that collective effort can surely be obtained from Diane Camber. Of course there will always be those anxious to dishonor and discredit our Museum for whatever personal satisfaction they may derive.

Through years of negotiations, diligence, the contributions and dedication of many distinguished citizens including my late brother, Robert Bass, Mel Richard, Carl Weinhardt, Joyce Kaiser, a series of City governments and the fortunate appointment of Diane Camber as director along with the restructuring and contribution of the Friends of the Bass among others, the museum slowly evolved, expanded, became accredited and earned its present well deserved reputation as a small museum. Many of its initial detractors lost their discontent. The present expanded structure and facility is now a tribute to that effort.

I take pride in my own participation, notwithstanding the time, effort and personal expense involved.

DE-PRESS

You might then imagine my chagrin when I read of the tribute to the museum's previous "hodge podge exhibits." I found that slap degrading, ungrateful, petty and disparaging..

In another reference, the incessant reference to "fakes" after the cautious re-authentication of the collection described above I found not only odious, but ill-timed and ugly in its implication. Apparently mean-spiritedness has not left some individuals and members of the media in Southern Florida.

BASS FAMILY "INTERESTS"

On another level, my nephew John's fervent endeavor at the meeting to prevent changes in governance from doing damage to the Bass Family "interests" (however defined) is reminiscent of the years when my brother Bob and I, acting like a couple of young firebrands, rode out in pursuit of achieving that same elusive goal.. However, should John decide to pursue that objective, either through personal persuasion, litigation or otherwise, I am not on board.

The reasons that I am resigning from that vague nirvana, besides physical exhaustion, are threefold: (1) I am not convinced that those presently in control have any underhanded intentions in that regard (2) There is a possibility that as the museum grows in size and content there may be a need for a more efficient control structure and (3) I had been living under an illusion. I thought I had inherited some authority and trust..

I am not an attorney, but I am now convinced that the future course of the Museum is solely in the hands of the two parties representing the original signatories of the contract that created the museum. The City of Miami Beach is one party and Dennis Richard, as inheritor of the rights (through the bequest of my parents and Mel Richard) is the other. My understanding is that the Board of Trustees is a product of the contract and not the other way around, and that changes to the contract do not require approval of the Board other than as a polite gesture. If I am wrong, that can easily be authenticated.

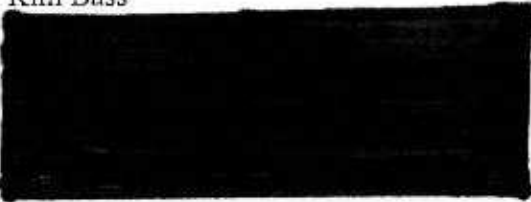
FINALLY

I have made the decision to resign my seat on the Board of Trustees and I request that a motion in that regard be made an item on the agenda at the next meeting.

It is my understanding that it was my parents' wish that a successor in my family be offered to replace me on the Board. My daughter Kim has shown an interest in accepting that. Unfortunately many of the factors that have made my travel to Miami Beach untenable also pertain to her situation. I would therefore request that she be granted the same convenience of attendance at meetings by telephone that I have enjoyed for a number of years.

For your records, the following is her present contact information:

Kim Bass



Sincerely,

Roger Bass