

Chappaqua's Biederman Recalls Grand Central Renovation

by Michael Nocella

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CHAPPAQUA, N.Y. – Grand Central Terminal celebrates its 100th anniversary Feb. 1, but Chappaqua resident Dan Biederman, president of the 34th Street Partnership, remembers when the terminal had little to celebrate in the mid-1980s.

“It was surrounded by graffiti, terrible lighting and bad neighborhoods,” said Biederman, who also is the owner of Biederman Redevelopment Ventures Corporation and president of both the Bryant Park Corporation and Chelsea Improvement Company.

In the mid-1980s, Biederman was recruited by then-Mayor Ed Koch to fix all of its issues. Koch knew of Biederman from his groundbreaking work on Bryant Park, where he transformed the park from a 1970s meeting spot for drug dealers into a destination citizens wanted to visit again through the Bryant Park Corporation, which he co-founded in 1980.

Biederman used a similar path to fix the Grand Central Terminal when he formed the Grand Central Partnership, considered one of the largest business improvement districts in the world. Biederman cleaned up problems ranging from East 35th Street to East 54th Street. Soon enough, 70 blocks of issues began to fade away.

“From 1989 to 1992, we fixed all of those problems,” he said.

Once the Grand Central Partnership took care of the exterior issues, the terminal followed suit by renovating its interior.

“The station itself followed our efforts by making substantial upgrades of its own,” he said. “As you can see today, the inside is beautiful.”

It was after those improvements that the terminal began to more closely resemble the city icon it has become today. Biederman himself, who moved to Chappaqua in 1991 and commutes to New York City frequently, is one of its many fans.

“It’s the kind of station people are now excited to commute from,” he said. “It is a seamless path for all Westchester commuters.”

Now 100 years old, Grand Central Terminal is something Biederman looks back on with pride.

"It's a very symbolic project for my career," he said. "It is something to be proud of."