



Conserving
Land
for People

November 13, 2003

Mr. Bill Eshenbaugh, ALC, CCIM
The Eshenbaugh Company
Tampa, Florida

Dear Bill,

Surprise and congratulations on receiving the most respected and prestigious award bestowed upon a real estate professional in this nation. I know how humble you are, but I wanted to share with those present at the celebration today my experience working with you and land conservation in the state of Florida.

Years ago, after the fall of the savings and loans, you worked with the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) facilitating the sale of non productive real assets in order to assist the government with the largest bank bail out in history. Your job was to produce the highest price for these assets and close with cash in the shortest time frame possible. At the time the Trust for Public Land (TPL) was working with the Key West Arts and Historical Society trying to preserve the Key West Custom House, a majestic Federal building which had housed the Federal Court in Key West, the Customs Service, the Lighthouse service and the Post Office from 1888 through the 1950's. A developer had plans to gut the building, destroy its history, open a private yacht club, keep the facade for looks and close it to public access.

After the developer defaulted with his savings & loan, the property ended up with the RTC and it was your responsibility to move it. Many parties were interested. TPL and the Arts Society had good intentions and a lofty preservation plan. You and Al Esther saw the merits of working with a conservation group that would ultimately protect this buildings historic integrity and give back to the public something beneficial from an otherwise bleak situation. Your cooperation allowed us to structure a deal that eventually ended with TPL buying the Custom House, conveying it to the State of Florida and the Arts Society eventually raising \$8.5 million to restore and rehabilitate the building to its previous grandeur. It is now open to the public as a first class art museum and it couldn't have happened without you.

In addition to the Key West Custom House and a little closer to home is the downtown Tampa waterfront park. Recently you helped TPL acquire the park property from one of the most difficult sellers we've encountered in our twenty-nine years of doing business in Florida. Your calm manner in working with the seller and your keen financial sense, persistence and integrity is what it took to succeed in this project. TPL was ready and willing to walk away from the transaction many times but it was you who held the deal together, and the people of Tampa owe you a great deal of gratitude. A beautiful waterfront park would not exist in downtown Tampa if it were not for you, Bill, and we thank you for your effort.

I hope you and Lynda enjoy the ceremony today and we at TPL salute you on this momentous occasion.

Congratulations,

Greg Chelius
Florida State Director

Southeast Region
306 N. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301-7622

(850)222-7911
Fax (850) 224-3755
Legal Dept. Fax (850) 222-8909