



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

featuring Art Menor

LISTENING TO LEARN:

How Art Menor built consensus one member at a time.

When asked about being a leader, Art Menor said: "The key to leading a group is respect. Respect is earned, not demanded. In a group like the Economic Council, which is comprised of highly accomplished leaders, it is built over time and starts by handling small tasks well." That is precisely what Menor has done in his 19 years as a Council member, including his last two as Chair of the organization.

Never one to act in his own interests, he is even-handed, fair, and transparent. When talking about his leadership style, Menor said, "I have tried to listen first and seek to understand the group's sentiment on important issues. In listening, I have tried to discern consensus and then build it."

According to Michele Jacobs, the President and CEO of the Council, Menor's chairmanship has been highlighted by sincerity, candor, and civility. "I consider him to be a mentor. He is not afraid to challenge me and raise issues of concern. He has helped make me better and our group better so we avoid making the same mistake twice. He is very constructive with his advice."

Menor is the Managing Partner of the West Palm Beach office of Shutts & Bowen LLP. and a member of the firm's Executive Committee and Chairman of the Real Estate Leasing Practice Group. He has a very busy national commercial real estate practice focused heavily on the office building sector. Despite these demands, he has always found the time to do the meaningful work of the Council, a group he was eager to be a part of. "Before I became a member, I had a perception of the Council as being composed of the leaders of the business community, the movers and shakers in the County. I wanted to be a member of such a group." It was not for personal gratification but rather for the betterment of our business climate. During his 19 years on the Council, Menor has been a strong contributor to the organization's mission with a keen focus on success, especially as he was getting ready to lead the group. According to Jacobs, "As he was ramping up to become Chair and throughout his chairmanship, we have spoken every other week for the last two and a half years. The calls are extremely beneficial to me because we discuss our challenges, our vision and be proactive in our priorities."

Which they have done. Based on his feedback Jacobs says they were able to improve their processes and accounting principles and update their bylaws for both the members and their Pac. However, Menor says more work needs to be done, especially since the great migration during the pandemic. "It has caused significant challenges. It has created enormous stress on the county's infrastructure, with one of the most salient issues being its effect on housing affordability and others being transportation, workforce availability and skills, and education-related issues involving providing schools of the caliber desired by the new arrivals. These infrastructure issues are the most pressing issues to be faced."

A challenge he and his colleagues are ready for and have already begun tackling, with their initiative to go after the housing bond approved by voters in November which allows for the county to issue \$200 million in bonds used to help finance additional supply of housing. Jacobs says that a key meeting occurred during the Council led Leadership trip to Nashville this April between government and community leaders where compromises were made and the agreement was reached to support the initiative. Menor played an important role. "He believes we should be preventing fires, not putting them out," Jacobs says. "His goal is to help business prosper; his decisions are not clouded as to what's good for a client. His decisions are based on our mission and what's good for the business climate."

Doing what's best for all without personal gain. You could say it's a lesson he learned early on as a history major at the University of Florida, reading about the sacrifices of George Washington, the leader he admires most. "Washington had a great grasp on the overall strategy for success in the war and did not let setbacks, even severe ones, take his eye off the prize. He was able to manage and lead disparate strong personalities and build cohesion." It's something Jacobs says his peers noticed right away when they chose him as their Chair "I think they selected him because of his great professionalism and insight. His character is extremely high, as is his moral compass."

Menor also has a passion for helping others, having served as Chair of the United Way and earning the Tocqueville Society Award, its highest honor for exemplary leadership in community volunteerism and philanthropy, and giving of his time for many worthwhile causes that make a difference in people's lives. "When he believes in something, he gives it 100%," Jacobs says, and she should know. After all, she's had the privilege of seeing it up close and personal.

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