

Barbara Friedman



- Documentary Film Producer
Currently working on “The Mickey Leland Story”
- Active volunteer with numerous arts organizations
- Grandmother of four

Where do you live and what you like best about it?

I’m in the Hermann Building [Hermann Lofts]. I was the first person to buy a loft in the new wave of development in the early ‘90s. (My mother comes in and still wants to know when they are going to put the walls and ceilings in.) Because I was the first to buy, they told me I could customize. I had friends and family paint 287 tiles for my bathroom and I extended my balcony. I have Meyer lemons growing on it and three frangipani trees. I thought I would live downtown with a lot of artists but the guy who lives on the 8th is the CEO of an offshore drilling services company.

What made you decide to live downtown?

When I was a little girl, my father used to bring cotton into the city to the Cotton Exchange building. Going with him into town was the most exciting thing for me. The building I live in now was built for the spillover business from the Cotton Exchange. The dealers would come into my building to show the cotton when it was too full next door. I love being in an historic building — there are precious few.

Where did you live before and how is your lifestyle different now?

I moved out of a big house on North Boulevard. Before I spent so much time and energy getting in my car. Now it’s totally different I go to the doctor’s office on the train, the museum on the train, I go to eat downtown.

Favorite thing about living downtown?

I love everything but I will tell you what I really enjoy doing; I do a progressive dinner with friends. We start

out at my house and go to Bank and have appetizers or drinks and then we’ll have soup or shrimp at St. Pete’s Dancing Marlin. We’ll go down to the Rice Hotel and have dinner at Azuma and then get dessert at Julia’s. I will have a wonderful evening and I will have not gotten in my car. It is an adventure all the time I’m living down here.

Favorite downtown moment?

My favorite moments are sitting in my white chair watching the sundown go down, every sunset is different. I don’t think I ever watched the sun set from my house on North Boulevard.

Whose art would you love to own?

I love art and three of my four grandchildren are artists (the three month old has yet to pick up a crayon) that’s whose art I love to own.

What book should everyone read?

I think without a doubt One Hundred Years of Solitude, I love those books about magical realism. I think when we are living our lives right that’s what our lives are about. I’m also currently reading Einstein by Walter Isaacson.

What music are you into now?

All kinds of things, I am listening to the Beatles now, a 40’s station on XM and I listen to opera because it makes everything feel good.

Television show you can’t bear to miss?

I never watched that much television but now I am absolutely hooked on The Daily Show and CBS Sunday Morning. I think Jon Stewart is hilarious.