

GOP unveils list of big-bucks donors

[CITY Edition]

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.

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Date: Jan 25, 1989

Start Page: 3.B

Section: TAMPA BAY AND STATE

Text Word Count: 579

Document Text

Some of the biggest names in Florida business are also some of the most generous donors to the Republican National Committee.

Among the Florida benefactors who gave the GOP \$100,000 or more are a prominent corporate raider now under indictment, a major shopping center developer, and the head of the biggest TV-shopping service in the country.

The list also contains some non-Floridians who have gained attention recently through their business deals, including several who bought failed savings and loan associations with the help of massive federal tax breaks.

The names were part of a list of 249 donors disclosed by the Republican party Monday, a day before Texas businessman Robert Mosbacher was to begin his confirmation hearing before a committee of the U.S. Senate. Mosbacher was finance chairman of George Bush's presidential campaign last fall.

One of those who made the list was Paul A. Bilzerian, a Tampa businessman who was indicted in December on charges of tax and securities fraud, conspiracy and making false statements to the federal government. Last year, in a deal unrelated to the charges, Bilzerian bought Singer for \$1.06-billion and sold off its parts for a profit of about \$100-million.

Also on the GOP list was Roy M. Speer, chairman of St. Petersburg-based Home Shopping Network and a longtime developer in Pasco County. On Christmas Eve Bush appeared in a pre-recorded video on a Home Shopping-sponsored fund-raising telethon for Straight, the drug rehabilitation program.

Mel Sembler, a St. Petersburg-based shopping center developer and chairman of Straight, also made the list, as did his sometime business partner Joseph Zappala. Sembler was co-chairman of the finance committee of Bush's Florida campaign.

Some other prominent Florida business figures who appear on the list are Fred Bullard, a Clearwater investor and developer of Feather Sound; Kenneth M. Good, owner of a Tampa-based real estate conglomerate that includes Tampa Palms; and Ted Arison, chairman of Miami-based Carnival Cruise Inc.

Others on the list who have been in the news lately for their part in S&L bailouts include Robert M. Bass, Ronald Perelman and Saul Steinberg.

Bass, a billionaire from Fort Worth, Texas, late last year paid about \$350-million for California-based American Savings and Loan Association, a failed S&L with assets of \$38-billion. Bass recently bought a minority interest in the Times Publishing Co., which publishes the St. Petersburg Times.

Perelman, chairman of Revlon Inc., was given control of five failed Texas S&Ls with assets of \$12.2-billion. The deal cost the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp. (FSLIC) about \$5.1-billion. Saul Steinberg, who once tried to raid Walt Disney Co., is suing the FSLIC, challenging its decision to go with Perelman.

In both cases Bass and Perelman will be able to use losses from their investments in the S&Ls to offset income from their other businesses.

FLORIDA'S \$100,000 CLUB These Floridians gave \$100,000 or more to the Republican National Committee:

George Abbott, Palm Beach

Ted Arison, Miami
Paul A. Bilzerian, Tampa
Fred Bullard, Clearwater
Edward W. Cook, Palm Beach
Maldwin Drummond, Hobe Sound
E. Lwyd Ecclestone Jr., West Palm Beach
Jose ``Pepe`` Fanjul, Palm Beach
Albert Ginsberg, Boca Raton
Kenneth M. Good, Tampa
Murray H. Goodman, West Palm Beach
Wayne Huizenga, Fort Lauderdale
Jay Kislak, Miami Lakes
Leonard Miller, Miami
Mel Sembler, St. Petersburg
Donald L. Smith Jr., Deerfield Beach
Roy M. Speer, St. Petersburg
Lynn Wolfsen, Miami
Joseph Zappala, St. Petersburg

[Illustration]

BLACK AND WHITE CHART; Caption: chart lists Floridians who donated \$100,000 or more to the Republican National Committee

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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