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Greenberg Traurig Co-Founder Larry Hoffman Dies at 95

By Vivienne Serret

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Larry J. Hoffman, a founding attorney of Greenberg Traurig who became its CEO from 1991 to 1997, died on Thursday, according to the law firm. He passed at his Coconut Grove home, just weeks after his 95th birthday, said the firm, which didn't specify a cause of death.

Hoffman led the firm's expansion throughout Florida and into key markets, such as New York, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Orlando, Tallahassee and Boca Raton. Under his leadership, Greenberg Traurig has been recognized among the fastest-growing large law firms. The firm is now No. 16 in the Am Law 100 ranking.

"Without Larry Hoffman, Greenberg Traurig, and myself personally, would not have experienced the extraordinary growth and success we have seen over many years," said Richard A. Rosenbaum, executive chairman of Greenberg Traurig, in a statement. "He was my second father and without his vision, sacrifice, unselfishness, wisdom and business savvy, his deep, though quiet, understanding of so many things relevant to a growing professional service organization, and his instincts about people, we would simply not be who we are today."

Over 50 years ago, while at lunch in a South Florida deli, attorneys Hoffman, Mel Greenberg



Courtesy photo

**Larry J. Hoffman, co-founder of
Greenberg Traurig**

and Robert Traurig discussed their desire to create a new type of law firm for the city. The three would go on to found the law firm, Greenberg Traurig Hoffman in 1967.

Decades later, Hoffman, while serving as CEO for the firm in the 1990s, chose to remove his name from the firm's nameplate simply because it was who he was: Nonegotistical with the firm's best interest at heart, according to senior chairman Cesar L. Alvarez, one of Hoffman's mentees.

"He trained me to be a lawyer. He trained me to be a business person, how to manage your firm. He taught me everything," Alvarez added.

In a previous interview with Law.com, Hoffman said he was personally proud to know that the

culture he was able to infuse at Greenberg Traurig, and the values he set out to establish, took root.

"If your law practice is not currently satisfying to you, my advice would be to remember what law first meant to you and specifically recall what motivated you to become a lawyer. Ensure you are living that mission every day," Hoffman said at the time. "The practice of law can be very gratifying when you remember that you are doing a service to help people and their businesses and are making a difference in their lives—both personally and professionally."

Running a Firm Like a Business

Greenberg Traurig said Hoffman played a key role in charting the firm's course from its Miami inception in 1967 to its growth as a global law firm with more than 2,850 lawyers worldwide and 49 locations on four continents.

The firm said he pioneered the concept of running a law firm like a business. Specifically, he was one of the first law firm leaders to hire experienced professionals to manage the business side of the firm so lawyers could focus on practicing law, the firm said, adding he created staff positions in the roles of marketing, professional development and IT long before they were commonplace in law firms.

The firm also said he was the "architect of the blueprint for growth" that saw it expand beyond its South Florida roots, first to New York and Tallahassee. It then went national during the 1990s and continued globally.

"It was Larry who taught us the importance of expanding our practice geographically for so many reasons," said Matthew Gorson, another senior chairman of Greenberg Traurig. "Larry, along with Mel and Bob, are truly not just the founders of the

firm but 'fathers' to many of us who were lucky enough to be here in those early years."

Hoffman was the last living founder of his firm. Traurig died in 2018 and Greenberg in 1994.

Hoffman was admitted to the bar in 1954 and was a graduate of the University of Miami School of Law. As a Miami Law alum, Hoffman was known to contribute generously.

"Larry was a visionary—well ahead of his time in transforming law firm management and the business of law. But more than that, he was an extraordinary human being: generous, wise, and genuinely committed to people and progress. Being named the Larry Hoffman Greenberg Traurig Business of Law Professor was a true honor," said Michele DeStefano, a professor at Miami Law.

DeStefano said that Hoffman's support gave her the confidence to push further "with my research, writing, and the continued evolution of LawWithoutWalls—a program that, like Larry, is dedicated to developing inclusive legal leaders, fostering enduring client relationships, and addressing the real business-of-law challenges faced by firms and in-house teams alike."

Hoffman received the Lifetime Achievement award in May of 2021 from ALM.

"Larry was an incredible businessman and an even better partner and friend," said Brian Duffy, CEO of Greenberg Traurig. "When Larry believed in you, it gave you the confidence to believe in yourself. He did so many things the right way and always for the right reasons. His passing is a reminder to the entire GT Family of what we owe to the man and his legacy."

The firm said Hoffman is survived by his wife, Debi Hoffman; their four children; ten grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Lisa Willis contributed to this report.