

## Pro Bono Attorneys Negotiate 50-Year Lease for YMCA of South Florida

by **Carla Vianna**

The YMCA is returning to downtown Fort Lauderdale with the help of two Shutts & Bowen attorneys.

They helped negotiate a 50-year lease between the city and the YMCA of South Florida for construction of a state-of-the-art facility on North Federal Highway in front of the Parker Playhouse west of Holiday Park.

Fort Lauderdale partner Brendan Barry said he can spot the vacant land where the recreational facility will rise from the northeast corner of Shutts & Bowen's 21st-floor office. Barry and associate Jereme Geller represented the YMCA on a pro bono basis for 13 months until a final lease agreement was signed.

Barry said the center will add to the downtown revitalization, evidenced by the numerous cranes he sees outside his office.

"It's a very vibrant place, and to put the YMCA right in the center of that in downtown Fort Lauderdale is very exciting," he said.

The City Commission approved a 50-year lease for the 2.5-acre lot Oct. 18. The YMCA will pay rent of \$1 per year and must meet groundbreaking, funding and completion deadlines set by the city. The project will be privately funded by the charity and turned over to the municipality when the lease ends.



YMCA secretary Kurt Zimmerman of Zimmerman & Associates, Shutts & Bowen partner and incoming YMCA chair Jacqueline Howe, Shutts partner Brendan Barry, Shutts associate Jereme Geller, YMCA of South Florida CEO Sheryl Woods and architect Manny Synalovski of Synalovski Romanik Saye at the future home of the YMCA in Fort Lauderdale.

The planned three-story, 45,000-square-foot project will offer a gym, wellness center, teen and youth center, community rooms and fitness studio. After-school programs will include basketball clinics and leagues, adult and youth volleyball, yoga, and health and fitness programs catering to the elderly. The YMCA also plans to partner with the theater for activities.

"Shutts has a long tradition of offering pro bono services to community groups and associations," Barry said. "We have a 100-year history with the Y, and we are happy to help out again."

The first YMCA of Miami board meeting was held at the firm's Miami

law library in 1916. Shutts & Bowen founder Frank Shutts served on the organization's first fundraising committee in 1918 and went on to serve as its treasurer for several years.

The new facility will be the downtown area's first YMCA in nearly 20 years.

"Our pro bono representation of the YMCA for the lease agreement negotiations started more than a year ago and took many twists and turns," said Jacqueline Howe, incoming YMCA chair and a partner at Shutts. "We are very pleased with the outcome. The YMCA will provide tremendous benefits to the local community."

**Contact Carla Vianna at [cvianna@alm.com](mailto:cvianna@alm.com). On Twitter: @CarlaOVianna**