

HARN PARTNER

Q&A
with...



BUTLER ENTERPRISES

PRESIDENT DEBORAH BUTLER

What does supporting the Harn Museum of Art mean to a local business like Butler Enterprises?

Art is a personal passion of mine so, I love being able to be a part of the Harn, along with other arts organizations, personally, but I also feel it's important for the business community to support the arts. Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses, strengthen the U.S. economy to the tune of over \$700 billion annually and transcend cultural boundaries to unify a community. Plus, as a business that has operated for 80 years, we need to think about the next generation of our team members—we want to hire well-rounded, high performing individuals—and students exposed to the arts are proven to have higher GPAs and test scores, be more creative thinkers—that's all incredibly important.

In what ways is art woven into the projects/work of Butler Enterprises?

You learn so much about a community by the art reflected within it. With Butler Town Center, we worked with experts on our environmental graphics package, and we added these elements into surprising,

fun places such as tiled benches, propeller patterned pavers—even finials atop our stop signs in the shape of horses and the Pitts Special biplane, which was developed here in Gainesville. Another example is the mosaic tile fountain designed by local artist Linda Zidonik, which is accessible for all to enjoy outside of the Whole Foods patio. We really think about what people will enjoy and where.

How might your business philosophy/mission/vision align with the Harn?

The Harn's mission aligns directly with Shop at Butler's—"to inspire, educate and enrich people's lives..." The Harn does this in a way that makes art accessible to any member of the community. Whether I'm wearing my business hat or I'm visiting with my elderly mother or my goddaughters—I can enjoy the experience on many different levels and that's what we want to provide our customers at Butler Shopping Centers.

What's something not enough people know about Butler Enterprises?

I think with our transient population, many people only see the 300 acres of thriving center and don't realize that we are still a family-owned and -operated local business going back 80 years in this community. My family has deep roots in the community and on this very property. My father, like so many others, learned to fly here when it was Stengel Air Field—I used to ride my horse here when it was just trails and woods. As a developer who was born and raised in this community, and grew up on this property, I'm very passionate and purposeful about how I'm using it to touch the lives of the people living here and in surrounding counties who depend on us as their hub of shopping and dining, working or visiting.

What do you hope for the future of the Harn Museum of Art (Gainesville)?

More than anything, I hope that future generations that come to Gainesville can know and experience the Harn and all it has to offer. It's important to connect to art, and allow it to influence and inspire you, but without knowing all that our museums have to offer we may miss out. I hope that the Harn will continue to reach people through their communications, events and partnerships to help keep us informed of all the amazing opportunities that await. Furthermore, as someone who has travelled with the Harn to other parts of the art world, the bond I formed both with the museum and with my fellow art lovers is a lasting one, which I hope many others will have the opportunity to share.