



Martin Taplin, Early Art Basel Miami Supporter, Is Dead at 77

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by Andrew Botsford

Hotelier Martin “Marty” Taplin, one of the initial supporters of Art Basel Miami Beach who was credited by many with helping the annual fair gain traction and stature, died on Tuesday, March 8, in Surfside, Florida. A real estate developer and attorney—and with his wife, Christine “Cricket” Taplin, an art collector and philanthropist—he was 77.

After buying the Sagamore Hotel in Miami Beach in the late 1990s, the couple decided to put many of the works in their 600-piece collection on view there when the hotel opened in 2001.



Martin “Marty” Taplin and his wife Cricket

According to an [obituary](#) and a [subsequent article](#) published in the Miami Herald last week, the Taplins’ decision, earning the Sagamore its nickname as “The Art Hotel,” started “a global trend” in art-oriented boutique hotels. “Other hotels soon followed,” according to the Herald, “including the Gallery Hotel Art in Florence, Italy, the Windsor Hotel in Nice, France, and The Savoy in London.”

From the earliest days of Art Basel Miami, which was launched in Florida in 2002, the Sagamore became known for—among other art-oriented events—the Taplins’ signature invitation-only Saturday morning Basel brunches, which were attended by top artists and museum and gallery representatives.

Quoted in the Herald obituary, a spokeswoman for Art Basel Miami, Stefanie Block Reed, had high praise for the couple. “Cricket and Marty Taplin have been supporters of Art Basel since its inception,” Block Reed said. “They have been instrumental in supporting the arts and culture in the community.”

Elisa Turner, former longtime Miami Herald art critic and a regular South Florida contributor to [Hamptons Art Hub](#), wrote this week in an email that Taplin was “a warm and generous man,” noting that “Marty clearly adored his wife Cricket and was very proud of the energy and creativity she brought to their art collecting.”

“I recall how excited he was to hang a major photograph they had purchased in the Sagamore’s lobby,” Turner wrote. “As art collectors they transformed the Sagamore in the early days of Art Basel Miami Beach. He was so sure the hotel could offer a unique experience to the art world.”

On a personal note, Turner recalled that “when the authors of the book ‘Miami Contemporary

Artists,' Paul Clemence and Julie Davidow, and I wanted to have a launch party for the book at the Sagamore, Marty was immediately on board. He could not have been more helpful in creating a smashing party."

Taplin is survived by his wife, Christine; daughter, Jennifer Sazant; sons Kristopher and Andrew Taplin and Joshua Fuller; five grandchildren and a brother, Jack Taplin.

Services were held on Friday, March 11, at Blasberg-Rubin-Zilbert Memorial Chapel in Miami Beach. Donations in Taplin's name can be made to the [Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences](#) at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine.

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