

Manekin, 95, remembered for his respect

One Charles Center deal started real estate titan's rise

By **ROBBIE WHELAN**

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Bernard Manekin, who turned **Manekin LLC**, a business he founded with his brother at the end of World War II, into one of the largest and most respected real estate companies in the region, died Saturday at his home in Baltimore. He was 95.

Even in death, Manekin was intimately involved in both real estate and community service: he was laid to rest Monday in Arlington Cemetery, the Jewish burial ground that he helped found and administer as a committee member for his family's synagogue, Baltimore's **Chizuk Amuno Congregation**. With his brother and business partner Harold, Manekin used to spend Sunday afternoons at the cemetery, helping congregants find plots for their family members.

See **MANEKIN 6A**

Born October 4, 1913, to a working-class family living on Ruxton Avenue in West Baltimore, Manekin graduated from the **University of Maryland School of Law** in 1936. Ten years later, after serving in the Army for the entirety of World War II and eventually attaining the rank of captain, he founded **Manekin & Co.** with his brother Harold.

In the early 1950s, **Manekin & Co.** was initially a small firm specializing in brokering the city's 2 million square feet of vacant industrial space left over from the declining clothing industry. In 1960 it got its big break, when the **Greater Baltimore Committee** chose **Manekin Corp.** to lease and manage **One Charles Center**, the flagship project of Baltimore's downtown development renaissance.

Since then, the company has aggressively expanded, with more than 10 million square feet of space under management, and has developed such

projects as **The Rotunda**, a historic building in Northwest Baltimore that was rehabbed as a retail and office property. The company has also focused on building acres of office space in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. **The Parkway**, a commercial office park near **Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport**, was one of the first of its kind.

"They realized that the two cities would eventually grow together and there would be an advantage to being located between," said Richard Alter, who married into the Manekin family and was later groomed to succeed Bernard. He is now president and CEO of **Manekin LLC**. "It was really a classic example of what would become a sea change in real estate. The office parks you see around today are really just the evolution of that."

As far as management style, Alter and others said that Bernard Manekin, or "Bernie" to friends, colleagues and family, was tough but fair, and always made sure that parties on either side of a real estate deal came out of it happy.

"It's not always the location, it's not always the price, it's the character of the people you do business with," Alter said, describing what he had learned from his mentor.

Manekin's son Robert, in a statement titled "**Mark Twain Would Have Been Impressed By My Dad**," wondered how his father managed to distinguish himself among a generation of World War II veterans who became successful businessmen.

"Dad did it by blending an incredible — some would say burning — desire to succeed with large doses of focus, discipline, hard work, uncompromised integrity, and ... the patient and skillful building of relationships," he wrote.

Indeed, Manekin was heavily involved in civic organizations, where he is said to have made many business connections. He chaired many organizations, including the board of the **Walters Art Museum**, the **Greater Baltimore Committee**, the **Maryland State Economic Development Commission**, and the **Governor's Commission on Sports and the Economy**. He also was president of the **Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore** and co-founded the **Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies**, an interfaith educational nonprofit.



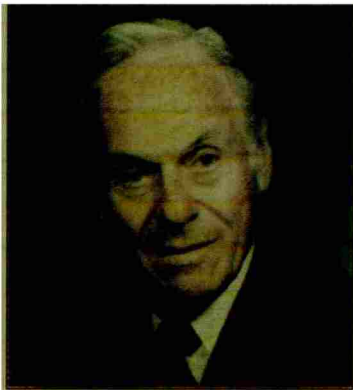
"If I learned something from my father, I learned to be a good listener," said real estate developer Donald Manekin, son of Harold Manekin, and Bernie's nephew. "But being in Bernie's presence was about watching and listening. Watching him interact with the guy that parked the cars in the garage and watching him interact with Furlong Baldwin of Mercantile Bank — you couldn't tell who he respected more."

Manekin's business associates also held him in high regard.

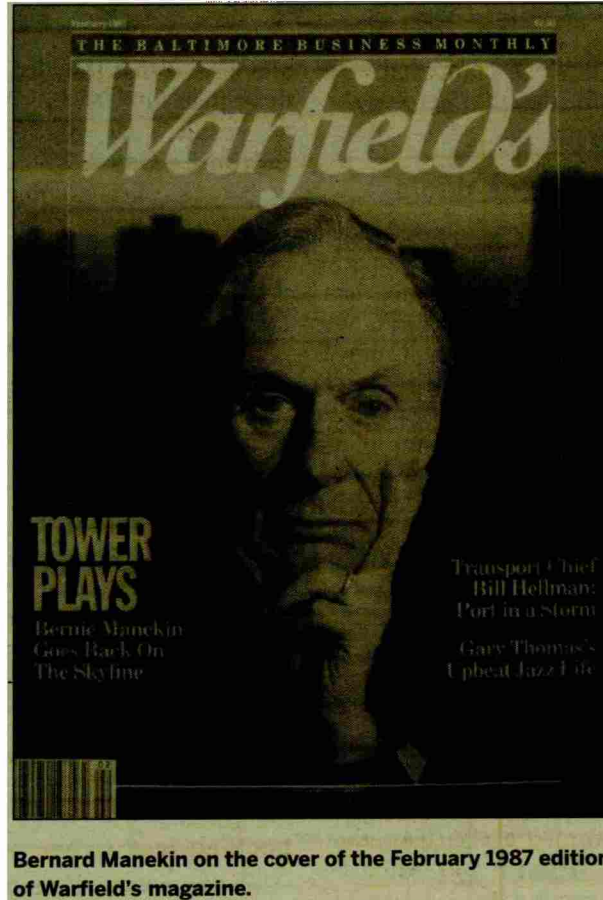
"Having known Bernie for the last 60 years in the Baltimore real estate industry, he has left an indelible imprint on the city that can be both seen and felt by his contributions," said Philip E. Klein, founder and CEO of Klein Enterprises, the company that produced Baltimore mall developer **Metropolitan Management**.

Erwin L. Greenberg, chairman of the board at **Greenberg Gibbons Commercial**, a retail developer based in Owings Mills, said he had worked extensively with Manekin, but wasn't an "intimate" friend.

"He was a man of tremendous stature, an amazing enviable leader in the Jewish community and also the Baltimore community," he said. "Everything he did was first class."



Bernard Manekin chaired many organizations.



Bernard Manekin on the cover of the February 1987 edition of Warfield's magazine.