

20 Power

Define power. In our book, it's the people who influence Greater Baltimore in many ways — whether they use their money, pull or talent to make the region a better place to live and work. Meet these power players and find out why they're shaping our destiny.

“I guess I was taught by my family and by my early religious education it's just part of that Judeo-Christian training that you help out people. I feel that everyone should give to what makes them feel comfortable.”



ED ST. JOHN

President, St. John Properties

Age: 70

Power is ... *"I would define it as a person who is successful in his financial endeavors and is recognized by others as being successful and uses that success to help others."*

Ed St. John and his wife didn't give out any gifts this year—to neither friends nor family. Sure, the economy has been tough on commercial real estate, and the president of St. John Properties isn't immune from it. But that's not the reason.

The St. Johns' decision was philanthropically motivated. Instead of buying trinkets and gadgets for their loved ones,

the St. Johns estimated the value of the gifts they would have given and donated that money to Southwest Emergency Services, a volunteer organization helping the homeless and working poor.

It's a spirit of giving that the Baltimore developer traces back to his upbringing, and one that drives St. John Properties to donate 7.5 percent of its income to needy educational programs across the region. The company made between \$10 million and \$15 million last year.

"I guess I was taught by my family and by my early religious education—I went to Catholic schools—it's just part of that Judeo-Christian training that you help out people," St. John said. "I feel that everyone should give to what makes them feel comfortable."

St. John and his Edward A. St. John Foundation have donated more than \$41 million to educational organizations and nonprofits including the Baltimore County Public School System, Beth Tfiloh Community School, Bowie State Univer-

sity and Notre Dame Preparatory School.

The aim of St. John's foundation is to donate to education programs supporting children from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. The need is more pressing due to the economy, St. John said, and he and his foundation are both being asked to give more.

St. John's contributions include:

- a \$10 million donation to the McDonogh School in Owings Mills, where his children attended. The donation will go toward the construction of a new student center; and,
- a \$2.3 million gift to the Maryland Science Center, which went toward the Edward St. John Hall at the Inner Harbor attraction.

In 2007, St. John also donated 15 percent of St. John Properties' income—or twice what it normally gives—to worthy causes. The result, St. John quipped: He is no longer a member of the foundation's board.

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