

Mr. Mel Sembler

Chairman of The Sembler Company

Mel Sembler is the Chairman Emeritus of The Sembler Company, served as United States Ambassador to Italy from 2001 to 2005 and as U.S. Ambassador to Australia and Nauru from 1989 to 1993.

As the President's personal representative, he actively promoted United States' interests abroad during his two terms of service. At the recommendation of the Governor-General of Australia and with the approval of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Sembler was named an Honorary Officer in the Order of Australia at an investiture ceremony in October 2000. The Order of Australia is an Australian society of honor for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and is rarely given to foreigners.

As a developer, Sembler is responsible for building The Sembler Company into one of the nation's most highly recognized shopping center developers. The Sembler Company is identified as an innovative leader in the industry and Sembler-built centers are known for their creative design and environmental integrity. In 1986-1987, Sembler served as the international leader and spokesman for the shopping center industry as President of the 40,000-member International Council of Shopping Centers, a position that capped 25 years of active service to this worldwide trade association.

Although best known as a leading shopping center developer, Sembler is also renowned for his activism in the anti-drug movement. In 1976, Sembler and his wife Betty founded STRAIGHT, an adolescent drug treatment program. During its 17 years of existence, STRAIGHT successfully graduated more than 12,000 young people nationwide from its remarkable program. He is nationally recognized as an activist in the anti-drug campaign and as a staunch, long-time supporter of the Republican Party and its candidates.

Sembler's work as a civic and political activist is equally noteworthy. A supporter of George H.W. Bush since 1979, Sembler played a leadership role in raising funds for the Bush for President campaign. He was Finance Co-Chairman of The American Bicentennial Presidential Inaugural, raising the dollars needed for the nation's 41st inauguration of the President of the United States.

Sembler served as Finance Chairman for the Republican National Committee from 1997 to 2000. He also served as Florida's National Committeeman to the Republican National Committee after his election in 1994 until 2000. He is presently on the boards of the International Council of Shopping Centers, American Momentum Bank, American Enterprise Institute, American-Australian Education Leadership Foundation, George Bush Presidential Library Foundation, Republican Jewish Coalition, Freedom's Watch, Moffitt Cancer Center, and the International Council of the Tampa Bay Region. Sembler is a resident member of the Florida Council of 100, a business advisory council to the Governor of Florida..

Born in 1930 in St. Joseph, Missouri, Sembler is a 1952 graduate of Northwestern University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. He and his wife Betty have three sons, Steve, Brent, and Greg, and are the proud grandparents of eleven grandchildren.