

Kevin Daniels throws 'Party of the Century' to open Sanctuary at the Mark



Seattle real estate developer Kevin Daniels gave a short speech Saturday at his Party of the Century to celebrate the preservation of the former sanctuary of First United Methodist Church.

ANTHONY BOLANTE | PSBJ

Seattle real estate developer Kevin Daniels threw what he called the Party of the Century to mark Saturday's reopening of the 107-year-old building below F5 Tower that used to be the First Seattle United Methodist Church.

The black-tie affair was attended by more than 400 civic and business leaders, including Mary Thompson, trustee emeritus for the National Trust, which was involved in saving the building now known as the Sanctuary at the Mark.

"We in the historic preservation world worked long and hard for this," Thompson said as she sat under the dome of the former church.

Eleven years ago the building was slated for demolition. Church members didn't want the building to be razed, but faced a dilemma because the land was worth more than the building.

Congregants sold to buy a new property and continue their mission of serving downtown's homeless and hungry.

"It was nip and tuck and Kevin came to the rescue," said Johnson.

The Sanctuary at The Mark in Seattle

Go behind the scenes with developer Kevin Daniels on this exclusive tour of the under-reconstruction The Sanctuary at The Mark in downtown Seattle, Sep. 29, 2017. [photos by Anthony Bolante | PSBJ]



Crews from JTM Construction this fall completed the \$37.5 million top-to-bottom renovation of the old church, which is now a meeting and events space.

"In my wildest dreams I didn't think it could happen," Daniels told the crowd.

King County Executive Dow Constantine told the crowd how former Mayor Greg Nickels and former King County Executive Ron Sims convinced the congregation at the 11th hour to sell to Daniels, who had a plan to save the building and build the now completed 5F Tower next door.

"I think (church members) were just impressed with (Daniels') sincerity," Thompson said.

Nickels and Sims attended Saturday along with other key players in the preservation effort, including the city's former planning director, Diane Sugimura, and members of Historic Seattle and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Sanctuary building is more than a century old and has been seismically retrofitted to last 100 years or longer.

"Let us not allow ourselves to be boxed into a false choice between preservation and progress," Constantine said. "If we're smart and determined as hell, we can have both. We did it here," he said.

One thing that was not discussed Saturday is the hotel at the base of F5 Tower. SLS Hotels was hiring staff to open around now. Daniels and his financial partner, Stockbridge Capital instead decided to sell the hotel.