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Weed Control

He's a southern boy who made good—and is making Boca Raton better along the way

Written by **MARIE SPEED**

Frank Weed says he's a "redneck from South Carolina," but it's clear he comes with a whole different pedigree once you start checking off the career stops. First of all, Weed graduated from the prestigious University of North Carolina at

the early Arvida takeaways were "know your purchaser, design for their needs, be nimble, change quickly, have integrity with everyone."

Next, Weed took a job with Zarembo, then National Homebuilder in Atlanta. And that is where he met former

in 2016, and now he's knee-deep in one of Boca's most transformational projects, the Mandarin Hotel and the Residences at the Mandarin (only the eighth in the world), where he takes care of the development approval and other processes.

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—Frank Weed

Chapel Hill and got his MBA at Emory—and after that, has embarked on a real estate development career that has taken him from Boca to Boston, Australia to Colombia and back a few times. He's worked with Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman, and any number of impressive companies, but closer to home he cut his teeth with some of Arvida's brightest lights back in the day—John Temple, Chuck Cobb, Scott Morrison—men who helped shape Boca Raton into the kind of resort community it is today. These days, Weed is vice president of development and construction at Penn-Florida, overseeing Via Mizner and Mandarin Hotel and its residences, slated to open at the end of 2021 or early 2022.

Weed landed in Boca in 1980, working with Arvida as director of builder programs, responsible for communities like Millpond and Timbercreek, Paseo and others, later doing the Addison and Boca East projects. He says

Boca Raton Resort & Club GM Scott Morrison, with whom he developed one of the first extended-stay concepts, called the Welcome Inn America.

"Scott and I did three Welcome Inn Americas between 1990 and 1993—they were very successful—and then we sold [the group] to Wayne Huizenga. We took stock and Wayne went on to make it Extended Stay America. I was the worker bee and Scott was the hotel bee, so I built them and he managed them," Weed says.

After that successful deal Weed moved to Princeton, New Jersey to head a conglomerate real estate group but returned to Florida and took over the ultra-exclusive Fisher Island in Miami, which he describes simply as "Fairylend."

Weed's career continued to take to him to other opportunities, including real estate partnerships with golfers Norman and Nicklaus, but he met Penn-Florida President and CEO Marc Gensheimer

He likes to say he left Boca in 1985 "when I thought it was too crowded," but today he says it's actually much better.

"It has changed dramatically, but I think it's actually a much nicer place to live from the standpoint of schools that are top, businesses that are top, U.S. Customs at the airport—and the many people who want to live downtown now."

Weed says the Mandarin is selling well (prices range from \$2 million to \$20 million), and Penn-Florida also has another project in the wings, the upscale University Village north of FAU, which he hopes to take on. He'd like to end up in Boca with his wife and six children, going back and forth to their second home in Cape Cod.

We asked him if he had any idea why he was so good at what he did, and he said simply, "I try to listen before I offer an opinion."

Pretty astute for a redneck from South Carolina.

