

Schlesingers Restore Name of Historic Selling Building



The Schlesinger Companies have restored the Oregon National Building to its original name, the Selling Building, in honor of Ben Selling a former state legislator who served briefly as Governor and who was named Portland's first "First Citizen."

The name restoration represents a unique relationship between the Selling family – who played a major role in Portland's progress at the beginning of the 20th century, including the building of the Neighborhood House, which was intended to help Jewish immigrants arriving in Portland – and the Schlesinger family, who have been local real estate investment, management and development company in Portland for the last three generations.

The Schlesinger family has a longstanding commitment to the Jewish community. Various family members have been active members of Temple Beth Israel and Congregation Neveh Shalom. The Schlesingers have been active in Oregon Area Jewish Committee and in the Jewish Educational Service of North America.

The Schlesinger Companies, a full-service real estate investment, management and development company in Portland, restored the original name of their headquarters location to the Selling Building.

Changed to the Oregon National Building in 1967 to reflect the name of a major tenant, the property at 610 SW Alder in Portland was originally known as the Selling Building. It was added to the National Historic Register in 1991.

"We were approached by John Selling, the 92-year-old grandson of Ben Selling, and asked if we would consider bringing the name back in honor of his family," said Josh Schlesinger, vice president and asset manager for the Portland-based Schlesinger Companies. "Oregon National Insurance has not been a tenant for quite some time, and we liked the idea of restoring and preserving the building as a Landmark. It just seemed like the right thing to do."

The original brass lettering has been refurbished and now adorns the front granite façade of the building over the entrance. A plaque from the U.S. Department of Interior, indicating the Selling Building's designation on the national Historic Register, was added next to the doors.

Ben Selling as a former legislator and served briefly as the governor of Oregon while the then governor was ill. In 1928 Ben was named Portland's "First Citizen" in the inaugural year of the award, which is given out annually by the Portland Association of Realtors.

"To have his name on this Portland landmark is a reminder of all Ben Selling stood for. The extraordinary effort of Schlesinger Companies, especially in getting this building designated a historic landmark, means a great deal to the Selling Family," said Joel Selling, Ben's grandson.

Built in 1910 and designed by noted architect A. E. Doyle, the building has glazed terra cotta façade with a roof cornice, Venetian windows, pilasters and column-and-spandrel facings. The Selling Building was originally developed as a medical office building and was renovated multiple times over the years to accommodate office tenants. The Schlesinger Companies acquired the Selling Building in 1966 and have remained as on-site management.

The approximately 90,000-square-foot office building has street-level retail, including Moonstruck Chocolate's flagship store and an office tenant mix that includes Kittelson & Associates and Leland Consulting Group. The office tower is centrally located directly across from the recently renovated Macy's and Nines Hotel and a block from Pioneer Courthouse Square.

