

Robert LaZebnik



Class of 1945

- Born in Jackson, Michigan to Edith and Sam LaZebnik, immigrants from Russia.
- He attended Jackson Public Schools, Jackson College in 1945, and several other colleges. He completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art and Theatre from Mexico City College in 1950.
- He began working at his father's junkyard, Sam's Iron & Metal, as a truck driver at age 13.
- In 1959, he incorporated LaZebnik Investment Co. and built three office buildings. Calling himself a "serial entrepreneur," he has had numerous ventures over the years, including incorporating The Commercial Exchange in 1968, where he continues to serve as president. Just a few of his many ventures include purchase of the Airmaster Fan Co. out of bankruptcy in 1975 and purchase of the former Clark Equipment Plant in Michigan Center in 1987. In 1989, he incorporated RHL Investment Corporation.
- With a love of sports cars and racing, he incorporated CE Racing in 1970. He drove racecars for a number of years starting in 1968.
- A longtime patron of the arts, he's produced and directed stage plays at Jackson College's Potter Center and numerous other locales over the years, including the Detroit Opera House, the Ann Arbor Civic Theater, Jet Theater in West Bloomfield, and the American Jewish Theater in New York City.
- In 2008, he produced "Family of the Arts" weekend at Jackson College with workshops on film production, creative writing, composing, acting, screen and stage playwriting and more. Proceeds benefitted the Sam & Edith LaZebnik Scholarship for the Arts at Jackson College.
- In 2013, he was recognized with the Reynolds Field Outstanding Service Award for bringing his appreciation of art and history to the aviation field. He donated a bronze status of a World War II bomber pilot and an original and unique representation of a World War I era Fokker aircraft.
- LaZebnik continues to support the arts, and in 2018 commissioned an 8-foot concrete sculpture of a ladies' boot donated to Ella Sharp Museum in honor of Miller Shoe Parlor's 100th
- He has traveled the U.S., Mexico, Asia, Europe and South America.
- He is married to wife, Laurie, and they have four children, five grandchildren and two Old English sheepdogs

"Use the gifts you were born with: be original, follow your instincts, and question everything."