

# dkc NEWS from

DAN KLORES COMMUNICATIONS 386 Park Avenue South, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, New York 10016 tel: 212.685.4300 fax: 212.685.9024

SERVING NEW ROCHELLE SINCE 1894

25 cents

# Standard Star

The week of Friday, August 24, 2001

YOUR WEEKLY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER

standardstarnews@hotmail.com

## Legends are a common sight at Steiner Sports

By Tim Gray

Inspirational quotes line the walls of the Steiner Sports Marketing & Memorabilia headquarters in New Rochelle. Brandon Steiner, the founder and chairman of the corporation enjoys his sports clichés. They can be found all over these offices and his admitted favorite, "playing games is serious business," serves him well.

Playing games is serious business, especially when sales at the sports-based company are expected to exceed \$25 million this year.

Founded in 1987, Steiner Sports is one of the fastest growing producers of hand signed collectibles. Last Sunday the Steiner headquarters, in New Roc City, was host to some Hall of Fame athletes who were lending their signatures to balls, helmets and jerseys. Former Yankee, Dave Winfield, and members of the 1969 World Champion New York Jets were on hand.

The idea for a sports marketing and memorabilia company first bloomed for Steiner in the mid-1980's while he was an assistant manager at the Hard Rock Cafe in Manhattan. Growing tired of the restaurant business, Steiner decided to take advantage of the contacts he had made while running the famous eatery. He began making appearances for athletes Keith Hernandez and Lawrence Taylor.

But getting world class athletes wasn't always easy for Steiner. They weren't knocking down his doors in the beginning. "It was perpetual travelling for eight years," said Steiner. "I went to every appearance. I acquired information on every athlete: Where they came from? What high school did they go to? What diseases they have?"

The years on the road have paid off for Steiner. Today he books over 3,000 appearances a year using more than 1,700 coaches and athletes for motivational speaking, signings, and corporate speaking engagements.

The athletes who participate in Steiner's programs are household names. Derek Jeter, Joe Frazier, Mark Messier, and Whitey Ford are among those with whom Steiner has worked. Steiner Sports has exclusive deals to create sports collectibles with the United States Tennis Association, USA Soccer, Major League Baseball, and the National Hockey League.

Not long ago Steiner saw the collectible side of his business expanding while the marketing end was going flat. That's about the time he received an offer from Omnicom Group, a holding company that specializes in marketing and advertising. Three of the top 10 global advertising agency networks in the world are part of Omnicom Group.

Steiner still runs the company to-



Andrew McKay/Standard Star  
Matt Snell (rear), a retired New York Jet, signs helmets at New Roc City.

day but now has the advantage that comes with being part of a multinational conglomerate. "Omnicom helped us expand and grow," said the 41-year-old Steiner. "Now it's much easier getting into these agencies."

When Steiner moved their offices to New Rochelle last year, they had 40 or 50 employees. Today they have close to 65 and expect to have 100 by the end of the year. "We've created local jobs," said Steiner, about opening headquarters in New Rochelle. "That's why we took 25,000 sq. ft. in this building. We're excited to be here."

"When we moved here we lost a few employees," said Cliff Savage, executive vice president, referring to the relocation from Manhattan. "But we have a good commitment, there is a lot of latitude here and that keeps people interested."

The office atmosphere also keeps employees interested. On any given day they might come into work and bump into Derek Jeter signing autographs. Or it could be Smokin' Joe Frazier telling stories by the water cooler. And if they need a break, there are always the seven televisions that are tuned to ESPN.

Steiner plans to continue expanding his sports business in new directions. Besides authentic memorabilia the company has begun making their own replicas. They also have four full-time picture framers that complete orders in the back warehouse. And he has just completed his first book, "It's not the game, it's the game plan."

As Steiner darts through the office setting up meetings and going over marketing plans, he hurries by a piece of paper taped to the wall. The quote on it reads: "It's not the big that eat the small ... it's the fast that eat the slow."