

Tempe Square revitalized a corner of the city

In 1994 when I first became mayor, the southwestern corner of Guadalupe Road and McClintock Drive in Tempe had seen better days.

It was a drab, distressed piece of real estate that had a detrimental impact on surrounding neighborhoods. Put simply, it was an eyesore that didn't exactly live up to the motto: "There's more to explore in



NEIL GIULIANO

Tempe."

Then something happened, triggering a transformation of commerce and positive change: Tempe Square.

The iconic Changing Hands Bookstore opened a second location on the site (now its only locale), nestled next to a new Wildflower Bread Co. Trader

Joe's opened its doors, and Walgreens was moved to the corner of the project. Steinmart opened for business. Suddenly, there was life and energy, jobs and enthusiasm. A new destination for Tempeans and visitors.

And none of it happened by accident.

As Tempe Square celebrates its 15th anniversary this year, I write to acknowledge and thank Jim Pederson. For nearly three decades, Jim and the Pederson Group have been building quality shopping centers designed

with integrity and an attention to detail.

The Santa Fe architecture still stands true, bestowed with a City of Tempe creative-design award.

Tempe Square is a nice combination of homegrown shops with a local feel and name-brand retail stores.

It has benefited the surrounding neighborhoods. It benefited Tempe by bringing nearly 200 jobs and brought desperately needed revenue to our city coffers.

If you talk to someone who works at Tempe Square, you also hear something that's not on a blueprint or a spreadsheet. You hear a person's pride in having a job, whether it's a bookseller at Changing Hands or a young rock aficionado at Hoodlums Music and Movies.

My decade as mayor has been

over for six years now, but I still enjoy going to Tempe Square. I love flipping through the latest best-seller or biography at Changing Hands and then heading into Wildflower for a drink or bite to eat.

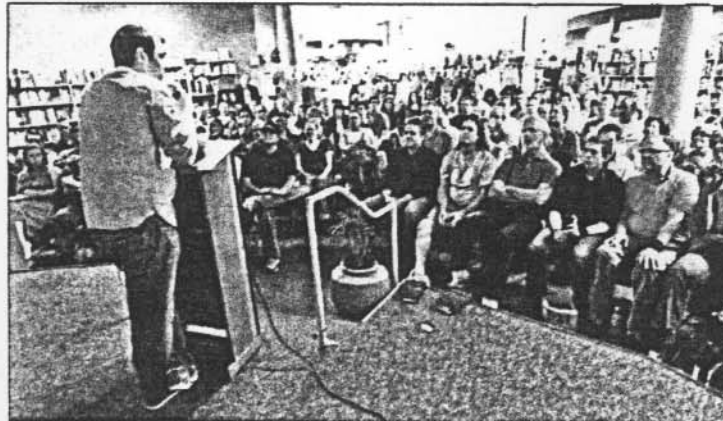
The next time you're picking up groceries, shopping for clothes or picking up a prescription at Tempe Square, take a look around, remember its past and welcome its future.

Happy anniversary, Tempe Square. I'll see you real soon.

Neil Giuliano served as mayor from 1994 to 2004. He is a 36-year Tempe resident.

What's your favorite place?

What location in Tempe is most vibrant to you? E-mail your thoughts to se.letters@arizonarepublic.com.



MICHAEL CHOW/THE REPUBLIC

Author Gary Vaynerchuk addresses fans at Changing Hands Bookstore, one of the key components of Tempe Square.

