

Carey Kleiman

Fort Lauderdale, Florida



[CK Entertainment, Inc.](#)

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Carey Kleiman:

Born in Brooklyn, Carey Kleiman, founder of CK Entertainment, Inc., moved with his parents to Miami. A year later, at the age of eleven, his journey into the world of musical instruments began when he was first introduced to the clarinet. He went on to play the saxophone, flute and piccolo in high school and attended The University of Miami's School of Music, where he earned an undergraduate, masters and doctoral degree.

From performing in small jazz club recording sessions to working with award winning and internationally recognized musicians such as Tony Bennett and Gloria Estefan, Kleiman's story demonstrates the importance of hard work, dedication and following your passion.

"In the early 70s, Miami was a much different place," Kleiman said. "By doing shows around town, I was making 10 times the amount I'm

making now. However, things started to slow down in the mid-70s. That's when I got a job at the University of Hawaii as the Director of Bands. While living in Hawaii, I met half of the Tonight Show's jazz band. We became friends and did shows together."

Kleiman continued, "One of the guys was conducting Don Ho's Show at the Hawaii Hilton. I ended up taking his gig at the Hawaiian Hilton Village. Two weeks later, Don Ho got a syndicated national TV show opposite Mike Douglas. After three years in Hawaii, I decided to forgo my tenure at the university and follow that path as the Musical Director. When the show ended, I moved back to Florida. When I returned, I got a job as the Band Director for a performing arts high school in Fort Lauderdale. After four years, my partner and I started Wildlife Music – a business similar to CK Entertainment."

Wildlife Music grew at a quick clip and established accounts with most of the major hotels in Miami. From 1980 to 1995, Kleiman focused on growing the business, but also became the Musical Director for the Diplomat Hotel, worked as a Freelance Arranger for Columbia Pictures Publications, served as Musical Director for an A&E TV Show called Connie Francis: A Legend in Concert, conducted orchestras and Broadway Road Shows and performed with several symphony orchestras. When a legal issue ended Wildlife Music in 1995, Kleiman founded CK Entertainment, an entertainment production company and celebrity booking agency.

"When I founded CK Entertainment, business was steady from the beginning," he said. "We got a lot of bookings by corporations and provided entertainment at hotels and conventions throughout South

Florida. Things peaked right before 2008 when we were working with musicians like Ray Charles, Gloria Estefan and Blood, Sweat & Tears.

When the recession happened, the business definitely took a hit.

That's when I hired a marketing agency to redesign my website and improve my SEO. I also started doing weddings. They're different than corporate and hotel bookings, but they're somewhat recession proof."

Kleiman's newest challenge is COVID-19. The pandemic has brought the hotel and entertainment industry to its knees and CK Entertainment has felt the pinch.

"My last job was March 14th," Kleiman said. "Hotels have closed and corporate conventions are non-existent. I had to postpone about \$30K of work from mid-March through May. Fortunately I did get a PPP loan, but I've also had to funnel some money from personal sources."

Looking ahead, Kleiman is, however, confident that things will get better. He's teaching courses at several colleges to generate some income and composes music for jingles and movies, but his long-term goal is to build the business back up to a level where he's able to sell it and eventually retire.

What advice does Kleiman have for aspiring entrepreneurs looking to break into the music business? "I teach intro to music business at Broward College," he said. "I have students that want to be famous rappers, producers and artists. I'm real with them. I tell them that less than .1% of 1% of the musicians or producers out there will make it. I show them that the musicians of today usually have more than one source of income – they're in a band, they teach at a college or high school, they have their own musical production/entertainment business,

they teach private music lessons, play shows and all kinds of gigs and/or work in a large music store. You need those sources of income to make it. Lastly, take an objective look at yourself. If you can't take rejection after rejection, this is not the business for you."

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