By Mary Thurwachter
Special To The Palm Beach Post

By day, I. Jeffrey Pheterson is a legal eagle — equity partner and labor and employment attorney at Ward Damon in West Palm Beach. But in his spare time, you may just find him squinting behind a pair of binoculars looking for eagles and other feathered creatures.

"We’re birders," he said of himself and wife, Melissa. "You might find us at the Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge, and then on the way home we make a stop at Bedner’s Market for fresh fruit and vegetables."

Pheterson’s other hobbies include working out, traveling and collecting Haitian art. He recently bought several paintings from another Haitian art collector, Jonathan Demme, who directed "Silence of the Lambs."

A Boynton Beach resident and father of two granddaughters, Pheterson, 62, went to Forest Hill High School and received his law degree at the University of Florida.

Community service is important to him. He helped found Palm Beach Angels, an investment fund focused on new start-ups in Palm Beach County.

He was also one of the founders of Awesome Palm Beach, part of a global community of everyday people looking to make a positive change within communities in small and easy ways. The nonprofit meets monthly and members pass around a red Solo cup, each stuffing a $100 bill inside. The grants support projects in sciences, arts, civic engagement, media, entertainment and just about anything else as long as it contributes to making the country more awesome.

The first recipient, for example, was Erin Udell, an operating room nurse whose My Own Home project helps kids aging out of the foster care system by providing them essentials for independent living — sheets, towels, a microwave, kitchen supplies, to start their new life, in their first new home.

**Favorite place for breakfast**

The Dune Deck, even if you have to wait. I try to eat healthy, so I order an egg white omelet with veggies.

Dune Deck Café, 100 N Ocean Blvd., Lantana, 561-582-0472, www.dunedockcafe.com

**Favorite place for lunch**

Georgio’s at 45th and Congress in West Palm Beach. It’s near work and it keeps you fueled for the day. They have good salads and sandwiches that trend toward Italian. I like the Mediterranean salad plate with lots of excellent grilled vegetables. Georgio’s Café & Deli, 2800 45th St. Unit B-17, West Palm Beach, 561-370-3625

**Favorite place to take out-of-town visitors**

We’re birders, so we take them, binoculars and all, to where the birds are — Green Cay, Wadahatchee and the Loxahatchee Refuge. Green Cay Wetlands and Nature Center, 12800 Haggen Ranch Road, Boynton Beach, 561-966-0700

**Favorite place for dinner**

Ristorante Saporiti in the old Pink Plaza (Goyal Palm Place). The first thing I do when I get there is go back to Chef Marco and tell him to surprise me. Excellent seafood perfectly cooked and served hot. It’s unbelievable!

Ristorante Saporiti, 301 Via de Palmas, Boca Raton, 561-367-9779

**Favorite cultural outlets**

We love the Palm Beach Opera and the Kravis Center.

Palm Beach Opera, 415 S Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, 561-833-7888, www.pbopera.org

Kravis Center for Performing Arts, 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach, 561-820-4566, www.kravis.org

**Favorite place to buy Haitian art**

The Haitian Art Company in Key West. They represent working artists in Haiti and have a great collection. I’ve been going there for years.

Haitian Art Company, 1001 Truman Ave., Key West, 305-294-8822