

EDUCATION APRIL 25, 2016 10:23 PM

23 former MDC students will be inducted into college's Hall of Fame

HIGHLIGHTS

The ceremony will be held Tuesday at the Hilton Miami Downtown

The event raises money for scholarships

Past honorees include actor Andy Garcia and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz



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One has been a teacher and school administrator for 27 years and was recently selected as the principal of the year for Miami-Dade County's central region. Another promotes Miami globally as the executive vice president and chief marketing officer for the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau. A third rose through the ranks at Miami-Dade police department and was recently named the director.

The common denominator: All of them graduated from Miami Dade College and will be recognized at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Hilton Miami Downtown as part of the college's Alumni Hall of Fame.

The recognition ceremony, which benefits the Alumni Scholarship fund, will celebrate the college's 23 new inductees.

“It is a very special event for the college community because it honors the college's outstanding alumni in various professions while raising scholarship dollars for current students,” said Juan Mendieta, a spokesman for the college. “If you look at the alumni honored at this event throughout the years, you'll see people at the top of their professions at the local and national levels.”

Past inductees include actor Andy Garcia, music industry mogul Emilio Estefan, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, former Miami Dolphins receiver Nat Moore, Carnival Chairman and CEO Micky Arison and U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Here is a look at the 2016 Hall of Fame honorees:

- **Accounting: Nestor Caballero**, the son of Cuban immigrants, is a managing partner at Alberní, Caballero & Fierman, LLP. Caballero also serves as the chairperson of the Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Miami-Dade Chapter, and is former president of the Cuban American CPAs Association.
- **Architecture: Ricardo J. Fernandez**, the president and founder of Indigo Service Corp., has more than 40 years of experience in the field. The firm specializes in U.S. and international projects for cruise port developments and other maritime operations, as well as the hospitality industry.
- **Banking: Roberto R. Muñoz** is the president for the South Florida Market of BBVA Compass, a bank and savings and loan holding company. Muñoz's previous jobs include: president and CEO of Marquis Bank; executive vice president and chief lending officer of Professional Bank; chief representative of Mizuho Bank Tokyo; and chief lending officer for Florida at Israel Discount Bank.
- **Business: Evelyn Macia** is the chief operating officer of several companies, including Archive America Group, which operates records centers across the country and the Seaboard Group, a third-party logistics service provider. She is also a secretary/treasurer of the Blank Family Foundation.
- **Dentistry: Reinaldo Sanchez** is a dentist who owns the Miami Center for Dentistry and Dentist at Market Square. He earned a doctorate of dental medicine from Temple University School of Dentistry.
- **Education: William Aristide**, the principal at Booker T. Washington Senior High School, has been a teacher and school administrator for 27 years. Before being named principal, Aristide was vice principal at Miami Edison and Miami Carol City high schools. He earned a master's in special education from the

University of Miami and a specialist degree in educational leadership from Florida Atlantic University. He was recently selected as the Principal of the Year for the Central Region for 2015-2016.

- **Engineering: Jesus A. Martinez** is a principal engineer at Southwest Research Institute, where he focuses on keeping transportation running smoothly. After earning his associate's degree from MDC, the son of Cuban immigrants earned a bachelor's degree in electrical and computer engineering from the University of Miami and holds an MBA from Florida International University.
- **Funeral Science: Donald Van Orsdel**, a third-generation funeral director, is the president of Van Orsdel Family Funeral Chapels and Crematory. Van Orsdel completed MDC's Funeral Services program, and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Miami.
- **Healthcare: Paul A. Rothman**, the founding president of Prestige Health Choice, is an advocate for minority populations. Rothman graduated from MDC and went on to the University of Florida, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics and pursued graduate studies. Rothman was also a leader in the U.S. Department of Defense Military Health Services Systems (MHSS) 2020 project.
- **Hospitality & Tourism: Rolando Aedo** is the executive vice president and chief marketing officer of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau and is in charge of promoting Miami globally. After receiving his associate degree from MDC, Aedo earned a bachelor's degree from Florida International University and an MBA in international business from the University of Miami. He was the catalyst for the "It's So Miami" advertising campaign and the "Miami Begins with Me" customer service program.
- **Interior Design: Beatrice Pila-Gonzalez**, a wife, mother and entrepreneur, founded B. Pila Design Studio about 20 years ago. Pila Gonzalez received an associate's degree in interior design from MDC and is certified by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification. She was named to Design Times "10 Designers to Watch" list.
- **Journalism – broadcast: Lori Montenegro** is a national correspondent for Telemundo Network. She began at Noticiero Telemundo in 1996 and has been a Washington correspondent for 25 years. She has covered the White House, Capitol Hill, the State Department, the Pentagon and the Justice Department. Among her awards: the Latina Leader Award from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and the Ruben Salazar Award for Communications from the National Council of La Raza.
- **Journalism – print: Steve Rothaus** is the LGBT issues reporter for the Miami Herald. Rothaus, who found his passion for journalism when he became involved with the MDC student newspaper, has been a reporter with the paper for 30 years. Rothaus worked on two Miami Herald teams that shared the Pulitzer Prize: the first, for Public Service in 1993, for coverage of Hurricane Andrew, and the second, in 2001 for Breaking News, for coverage of the Elian Gonzalez story.
- **Law: Rosa M. de la Camara**, who was inspired to become a lawyer after taking her first criminal law class at MDC, is a shareholder and attorney with Becker & Poliakoff P.A. She has worked for 29 years at Becker & Poliakoff, the Fort Lauderdale-based law firm where she is now a shareholder.

- **Medicine: Dr. Orlando A. Puente**, a vascular surgeon at Baptist Health South Florida, has been a practicing physician for 36 years. Puente, who has a private practice, is on the senior medical staff of Baptist Hospital of Miami and other regional hospitals.
- **Nonprofit: Rev. Ronald Brummitt**, who is the president of Miami Rescue Mission, battled addiction for 18 years before entering the Miami Rescue Mission in 1990. He faced his addiction problem and is now the president of the Miami Rescue Mission/Broward Outreach Centers, where he works for the homeless and destitute of South Florida.
- **Nursing: Jorge A. Valdes** is an assistant professor of anesthesiology at Barry University. Valdes is a presenter at professional conferences and a guest lecturer. He also participates in mission trips to Haiti with Baptist Hospital and to Guyana with Barry University.
- **Pharmacy: Lorneka Joseph**, a doctor of pharmacy, life coach, author and public speaker, is a pharmacist at Walgreens. Joseph, who was born and raised in the Bahamas, pursued a career in pharmacy after losing her mother to multiple sclerosis when she was 17.
- **Public Safety- fire: Edward Pidermann** is a retired City of Miami deputy fire chief. Pidermann served the city of Miami for 30 years. Among his credentials: Degrees in fire science and emergency medical services from MDC, a bachelor's degree in accounting, and a master's in public administration.
- **Public Safety- police: Juan J. Perez**, who rose through the ranks of the Miami-Dade Police Department over his 25- year career, is now the agency's police director. Perez, who is also an alumnus of the FBI National Academy, has received over 100 official commendations for his service.
- **Public Service: Amos Rojas Jr.**, who worked for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for 24 years, is now with the U.S. Marshals Service. In 2014, Rojas was nominated by President Barack Obama and sworn in as the U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Florida. Before becoming a U.S. Marshal, Rojas worked for the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, and served as the deputy director of the South Florida Money Laundering Strike Force.
- **Technology: Dennis E. McGuire**, an inventor and environmentalist, is the founder and CEO of Ecosphere Technologies Inc. McGuire, who holds more than 35 U.S. and international patents and patents pending, was responsible for the Ecos PowerCube, which won the 2014 Best of What's New award in the Green category from Popular Science. The solar-powered unit can be deployed virtually anywhere in the world to provide water, electricity and internet connectivity.
- **Visual Arts: José Parlá** is an artist who owns José Parlá Studio. His work has been exhibited nationally and worldwide. He recently completed a commission for the lobby of the new One World Trade Center in New York City. *ONE: Union of the Senses* is a 90- by 14-foot piece that took Parlá almost an entire year.

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