

LOCAL OBITUARIES

‘An intellectual giant’: Michael A. Finney, CEO of Miami-Dade Beacon Council, dies at 65

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Michael A. Finney, president and CEO of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, died Sunday, April 3, 2022.



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Michael A. Finney, a dedicated and energetic champion of economic prosperity during his five-year tenure as CEO of Miami-Dade County's [Beacon Council](#), died Sunday after suffering a heart attack.

Finney, 65, was stricken on Sunday morning at his Coconut Grove home, Beacon Council Chief Marketing Officer Maria Budet said. He was taken to Mercy Hospital, where he died.

The news of Finney's sudden death shocked those who knew him as an active and healthy man. He often rode a scooter to work and walked 18 holes as he golfed at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables every weekend. Just last Friday, Finney had flown back to Miami from Israel, where he joined Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and others to promote the county as a global economic hub.

"Miami-Dade County lost a brilliant mind and many of us lost a dear friend," Levine Cava said in a statement Sunday night. "He spent his career helping communities grow, strengthening their economies, and creating pathways to prosperity for residents believing at his core that everyone deserved the chance to succeed.

"I will especially cherish the memory of our week together in Israel, and the legacy of unwavering dedication he leaves behind," she said.

George Bermudez, chair of the council's board of directors, said he was "shocked and profoundly saddened" by Finney's sudden passing.

"Mike was an inspiring, brilliant, and humble leader whose commitment to this community was unmatched," he said in a statement. "The entire Beacon Council family — our board of directors, investors, and team — appreciate how lucky we were to have Mike at the helm and are devastated by his loss."

Though perhaps not well known by the general public, Finney was an important behind-the-scenes player as head of the county's economic development agency, described on its website as "a public-private partnership" focused on promoting local business growth and expansion.

Since arriving in Miami from his native Michigan, where he served in a variety of economic development roles, Finney was credited with re-energizing the council and bolstering efforts to improve economic equity and inclusivity across Miami-Dade. His tenure coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which initially hit the county's tourism- and service-oriented economy hard, as well as a subsequent influx of high-profile financial and tech companies.

On its website, the agency says it "helped secure" business expansions in industries such as tech financing, cryptocurrency, financial services, healthcare innovation, aviation, and trade and logistics. From 2020 to 2021, the council claims credit for 32 projects that resulted in nearly 5,000 new jobs at an average salary of \$120,000. That was a record for the organization, the council said in a news release announcing Finney's death.

Under Finney's watch, companies including SoftBank, tech group Kaseya and consulting firm Slalom announced Miami-Dade office expansions, translating to hundreds of high-paying jobs.

"The key metric is wages," Finney said in a 2019 Miami Herald story. "By bringing in higher wage jobs, we can have a positive impact on the entire economy."



Michael A. Finney was president and CEO of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council.

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