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Career & Workplace

Meet the 2026 Power Leaders 250 – Part 1: Banking & Finance, Technology and Economic Development



SFBJ PHOTO ILLUSTRATION



By [Jeff Zbar](#) – Correspondent, South Florida Business Journal
Jan 23, 2026

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In the years that have passed, the list's always been a mix of iconic, long-time leaders alongside those “newcomers” bringing about significant change to their industries and the local market alike.

This year is no different. This year's 10 South Florida business icons, as well as scores of Ultimate CEO honorees, are joined by nearly 75 leaders new to the list. Together, they epitomize what's unique to South Florida's economy.

“Newcomer,” however, isn't really a fair description. Many of the “new” CEO and employer names reflect companies well known in the community. But there are plenty of fresh faces. We're seeing companies in innovative sectors gaining prominence, second-generation progeny ascending into leadership roles, and even longtime business professionals chairing civic and nonprofit organizations.

The honorees reflect sectors vital to the local economy. A shortlist would include law and accounting, banking and finance, construction and development, health care, real estate, technology, education, economic development – and the region's most enduring industries, tourism and hospitality, and agriculture.

While their companies and sectors are dramatically different, as you will read in their responses to the Q&A, each brings a commitment to the community they call home.

Of all the packages we produce, Power Leaders is among the most insightful. It reveals the breadth and scope of the businesses and sectors critical to our region, while also offering a snapshot of these executives' personalities. It reveals something we've known all along: The people leading South Florida's economy

are our neighbors
that's what t

-Melanie Dic
Business Jou

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Editor's Note: We begin our online Power Leaders 250 coverage with the Banking & Finance and Technology sectors. Check back in the coming business days for leaders in additional industries.

BANKING & FINANCE

George Acevedo

South divisional director, consumer banking, Chase Bank

Miami



Image: Courtesy of JPMorganChase

COURTESY OF

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Acevedo began his career in 1998. Over the years, he has worked in various roles in Texas and Florida.

Over the years, he has worked in various roles in Texas and Florida.

Birthplace: Dominican Republic

Education: A.A., computer science, LaGuardia NY College

Lesson from my mentor: Nothing is more important than having the right people on your team.

Most important daily habit: Having a cup of coffee.

My hero growing up: Ghandi

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Collecting thousands of baseball cards.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Travel to places I have never visited.

Contact: www.chase.com, george.acevedo@chase.com

Cressman Bronson

President, Southeast Florida, PNC Bank

Palm Beach Gardens

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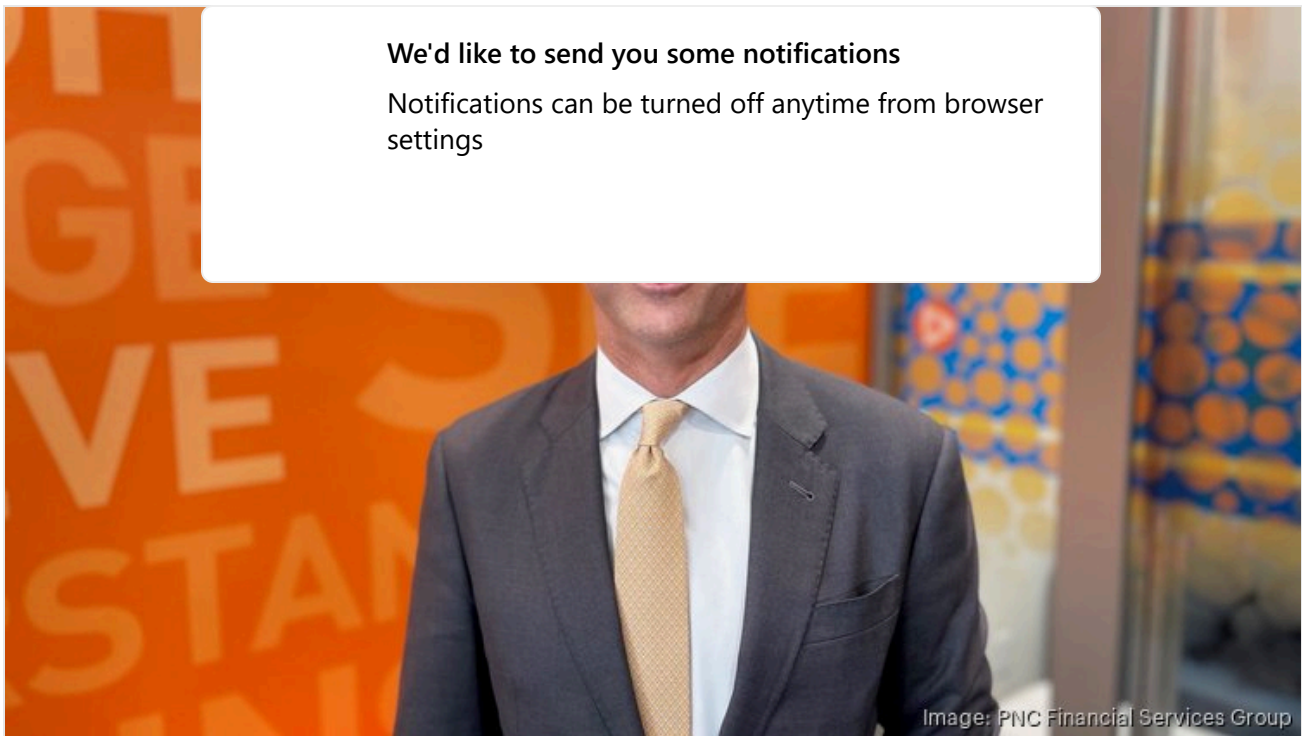


Image: PNC Financial Services Group

PNC FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP

Bronson leads PNC's asset management, corporate banking and retail banking business growth strategy from Brevard through Miami-Dade counties. He joined PNC in 1999 and was named regional president for Southeast Florida in 2014.

Birthplace: Anaheim, California

Education: B.S., marketing and A.A., accounting, University of Toledo

Advice to my successor in my business: Listen to clients.

What I miss about old-school work styles: No virtual calls.

Most important daily habit: An early start to the workday and sending out handwritten "thank you" cards.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Another pair of Ferragamo shoes.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Golf.

Contact: ww

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Fabiola Brun

President, Palm Beach County, and senior public policy lead, Bank of America

Boca Raton



COURTESY OF BANK OF AMERICA

Brumley connects clients, teammates and communities to the bank's business lines. She leads community efforts, including through the Bank of America Institute.

Birthplace: Aleppo, Syria

Education: B

Lesson from

What the ne:

great confidence blows me away.

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work at it.

work with

Place I recommend everyone visit: The country from whence their ancestors emigrated to appreciate this one.

I define “balance” in my life as: Working to love and loving the work.

Contact: www.bankofamerica.com/palmbeachcounty, 561-838-2376

Keith Costello

CEO and co-founder, Locality Bank

Fort Lauderdale



Image: Courtesy of Locality Bank

COURTESY OF LOCALITY BANK

Costello four
in 2009, and
Army captain

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community bank
ity U.S.
in 1987.

Birthplace: Albany, New York

Education: B.S., University of Tampa; MBA, University of Miami

Advice to my successor in my business: Love the people.

My hero growing up: Muhammad Ali

I unwind at day's end by: Smoking a cigar.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Key West

Splurge I've made that few would understand: I don't even understand it: luggage.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Be dead.

Contact: www.localitybank.com, keith@localitybank.com, 954 336-7588

Mark A. Crisp

President and CEO, Helm Bank USA

Miami

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HELM BANK USA

Crisp arrived at Helm Bank in 2018 after being employed in the petroleum, financial and insurance sectors. In December, Credicorp Ltd., which owns Banco de Crédito del Perú, announced plans to buy Helm Bank USA through its BCP subsidiary for \$180 million.

Birthplace: Tyler, Texas

Education: Bachelor's degree, history, and master's degree, management and finance, Texas A&M University

Contact: www.helmbankusa.com, 305-379-4356

Jose Cueto

CEO, Grove Bank

Miami

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COURTESY OF GROVE BANK & TRUST

Cueto has spent nearly 40 years in banking. He's earned multiple industry awards, led several institutions, and serves on several boards, including the Miami Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He is past chairman of the Florida Bankers Association.

Birthplace: Coral Gables

Education: B.B.A., Florida International University

Lesson from my mentor: Live in truth and absent fear.

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preserving

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arge.

I unwind at day’s end by: Walking my dogs.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Luis de la Aguilera

Chairman, president and CEO, U.S. Century Bank

Miami



Image: Courtesy of USCB

COURTESY OF USCB

De la Aguilera
stewardship,
is listed on N
Florida bank

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his
2.8 billion,
mong

Birthplace: Havana

Education: B.A., University of Miami

What the next generation has taught me: How to effectively multitask, and that technology can accelerate progress without sacrificing values.

What I miss about old-school work styles: In-person conversations, handwritten notes and a slow fax machine.

Place I recommend everyone visit: The Holy Land, for its profound history, faith and shared humanity.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: A 1985 Jeep to restore to perfection, purely for the challenge and joy of doing it.

Contact: www.uscentury.com, 305-715-5200

Jason Edelmann

President, Fort Lauderdale, Bank of America

Fort Lauderdale

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HORATIO FRANCO/CREWS CONTROL / B

Edelmann leads Bank of America's over 900 Fort Lauderdale employees and its efforts to provide top service to clients and strengthen communities. He also serves as the Merrill Florida Tropics market executive across five South Florida offices.

Birthplace: San Juan, Puerto Rico

Education: B.S. University of Colorado; J.D. University of Florida

Advice to my successor in my business: Don't stop looking for ways to continuously improve.

Lesson from my mentor: Be worthy of the role you've been given.

Most important daily habit: Exercising in the morning.

Place I recommend everyone visit: I'm a U.S. Marine – Arlington National Cemetery.

If I retire Fri

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Contact: abo
jason_edelm

Carlos R. Fernandez-Guzman

President and CEO, Pacific National Bank

Miami



Image: Courtesy of Pacific National Bank

Carlos R. Fernandez Guzman

COURTESY OF PACIFIC NATIONAL BANK

Fernandez-Guzman leads the bank the American Bankers Association ranked among the Best Banks to Work For in 2024 and 2025. He has chaired the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Chapman Partnership, Miami Dade College Foundation and United Home Care Services.

Birthplace: Havana

Education: B
State Univers

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What the ne

o success.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The elements of passion for what you do, and dedication to helping others succeed.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Expensive watches – because time can be well kept, but never bought back.

Contact: www.pnb.com, cfernandez-guzman@pnb.com, 305-539-7524

Mario Matsumoto Fujii

President and CEO, BB Americas Bank

Miami



Image: Courtesy of BB Americas Bank

COURTESY OF

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Fujii was named President of Banesco bank in 1998 in retail banking in Latin America, and head of Banco do Brasil in New York and Miami, and head of North America, since 2022.

Birthplace: Santos, São Paulo, Brazil

Education: Degree, economics, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo; MBA, finance, Fundação Getulio Vargas; executive development, The Wharton School

Lesson from my mentor: True leadership means focusing on what truly matters.

Most important habit of my day: Physical exercise to maintain clarity and discipline.

If I withdraw Friday, Monday I will: Return focused, energized, and ready to lead.

Contact: www.bbamericas.com/en, csc@bbamericas.com, 855-377-2555

Calixto Garcia-Velez

President and CEO, Banesco USA

Miami

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Image: Courtesy of Banesco USA

COURTESY OF BANESCO USA

Garcia-Velez leads the community bank with \$5.4 billion assets, and operations in Florida and Puerto Rico. In late 2025, the bank acquired the SBA lending business and approximately \$95 million in loan balances from St. Petersburg-based BayFirst Financial Corp.

Birthplace: Miami

Education: B.B.A. and MBA, University of Miami

Advice to my successor: The foundation of success is hiring the best talent.

Lesson from my mentor: Lead from the front.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The comradery and personal relationships built in the workplace.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Depart on a trip with no itinerary and no return date.

Contact: ww

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Jorge Gonzal

Vice chairman and CEO, City National Bank of Florida

Miami



CITY NATIONAL BANK

Under Gonzalez's leadership, CNB has grown from a \$2 billion bank to a \$28 billion bank – making it one of the 75 largest institutions in the U.S. CNB is undergoing an expansion strategy that has seen its workforce grow 20 percent in 18 months.

Birthplace: M

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Education: B

Leadership

Training, Ken

at

Chapel Hill

What the next generation has taught me: It's easy to waste a lot of time on your phone.

What I miss about old-school work styles: I don't miss them because I still approach work the same way.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Africa

Splurge I've made that few would understand: A boat that I don't use often enough.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Probably regret it.

Contact: www.citynational.com

Ken Griffin

Founder, CEO and co-chief investment officer, Citadel; founder, Citadel Securities

Miami

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Image: Courtesy of Citadel

COURTESY OF CITADEL

Since relocating Citadel and Citadel Securities to Miami in 2022, Griffin has developed extensive business and philanthropic efforts across South Florida. At the end of 2025, he received approval for his 54-story headquarters building on Brickell Bay Drive. Griffin has made more than \$400 million in philanthropic contributions to health care, education and cultural initiatives in the tri-county region.

Birthplace: Daytona Beach, raised in Boca Raton

Education: B.A., economics, Harvard College

Contact: www.citadel.com

Liza Hall

Gold Coast regional executive, Wells Fargo

West Palm B

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COURTESY OF WELLS FARGO

Hall has been with the bank for almost 30 years. Today, she leads its branch network from the Palm Beaches north to the Treasure Coast and Brevard County, plus Orange, Osceola, Polk and Highlands counties.

Birthplace: Atlanta

Education: B.B.A., Southern New Hampshire University

What the next generation has taught me: Flexibility.

My hero growing up: She-Ra

Place I recon

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Splurge I've

flying reinde

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Clean out my closet and donate the suits.

Contact: www.wellsfargo.com, elizabeth.m.hall@wellsfargo.com

Aly Heimovics

Middle market leader, South Florida, Truist

Fort Lauderdale



Image: Courtesy of Valley National Bank

COURTESY OF VALLEY NATIONAL BANK

Heimovics w
client covera
Performing A
Birthplace: M

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and its
ward

Education: B.B.A., University of Georgia; MBA, University of Miami

Advice to my successor: Lead with purpose and results will follow.

What I miss about old-school work styles: Being fully present without phone distractions.

My hero growing up: My mom – a finance leader and the kindest person I ever met.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Great concert tickets that created cherished memories with my kids.

Contact: www.truist.com, aly.heimovics@truist.com, 954-854-3700

Carlos Iafigliola

Director and interim CEO, Amerant Bank

Coral Gables

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Image: Courtesy of Amerant Bank

COURTESY OF AMERANT BANK

Iafigliola has over 25 years of experience in banking and joined Amerant in 2004. He was appointed as COO in 2023, and director and interim CEO in November 2025.

Birthplace: Caracas, Venezuela

Education: Degree, economics, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello; master's degree, finance, Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (IESA)

What the next generation has taught me: Leverage digital technology as much as you can.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The camaraderie of every department in one location.

Most important

Place I recon

If I retire Fri

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Contact: www.amerantbank.com

Abel Iglesias

President and CEO, International Finance Bank

Miami



COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCE BANK

Named to his current post in May 2024, Iglesias previously worked at Southeast Bank, Eastern National Bank, Colonial Bank, Bank United, JGB Bank and Professional Bank. In 2025, IFB was named among the Best Places to Work and the region's Fastest-Growing Companies.

Birthplace: M

Education: B

Advice to my
creep in.

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Lesson from my mentor: Remember that you're performing in the spotlight every day.

What the next generation has taught me: Change is unavoidable and worth embracing.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Investing in a professional-grade bike that fuels my passion.

Contact: www.ifbbank.com, info@ifbbank.com, 305-648-8800

Henrique Lima

President and CEO, Bradesco Bank

Miami

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COURTESY OF BRADESCO BAC FLORIDA BANK

Lima has served in his post since 2020. He previously managed the bank's investment banking division, and was involved in Bradesco's acquisition of BAC Florida Bank. Lima has over 25 years of experience in corporate and investment banking in both Brazil and the U.S. He began in banking in 1996 with Bank of America.

Birthplace: São Paulo, Brazil

Education: Business administration, Fundacao Armando Alvares Penteado

Contact: www.bradescobank.com

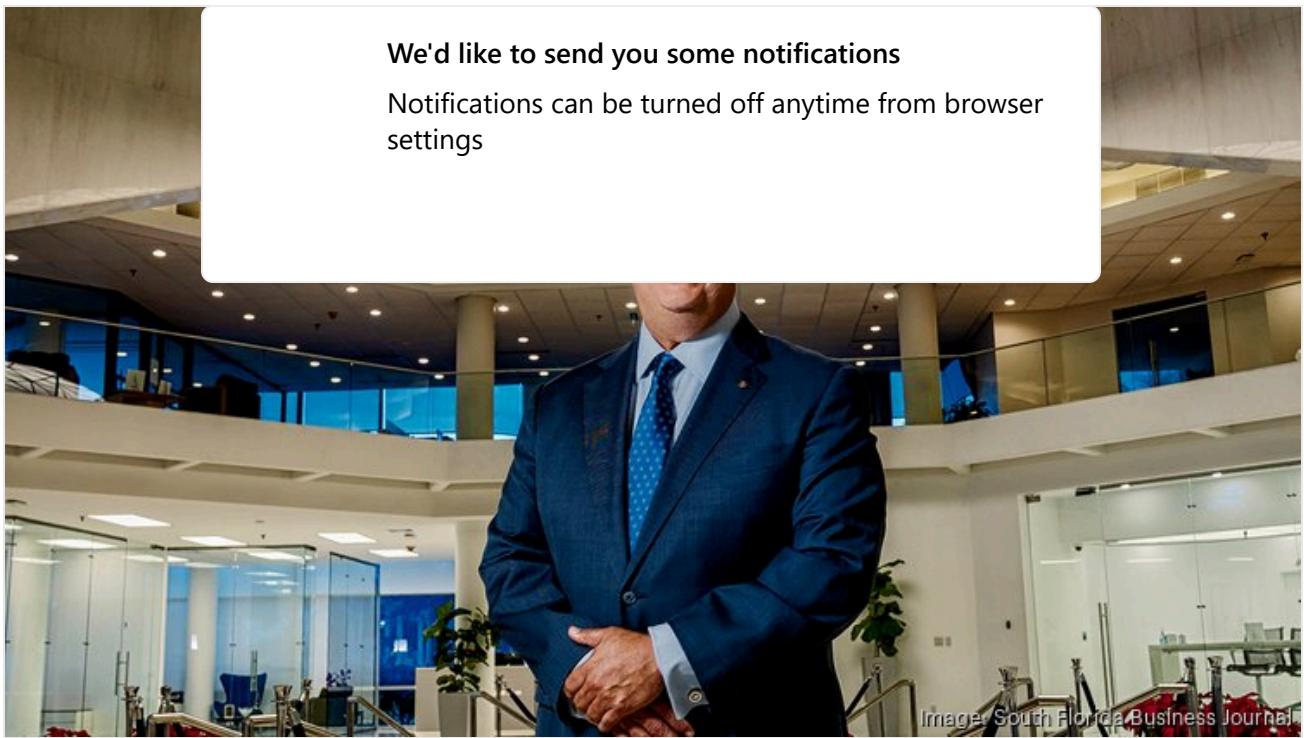
A. Alfonso Macedo

President, Chairman and CEO, Ocean Bank

Miami

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JOCK FISTICK / SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

Macedo has spearheaded modernization and upgrades to the bank's headquarters and throughout its 24-branch network, and he introduced the latest digital banking technologies and convenience services for clients.

Birthplace: Caracas, Venezuela

Education: B.S.B.A., Universidad Metropolitana, Caracas

What the next generation has taught me: Embrace change and it will work for you.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The personal touch sometimes gets lost.

Most important daily habit: Keeping a positive outlook.

I unwind at day's end by: Spending time with my wife and daughters.

If I retire from
my best.

Contact: www

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Nick Miceli

Regional president, Florida Metro, TD Bank

Fort Lauderdale



Image: Courtesy of TD Bank

COURTESY OF TD BANK

Miceli oversees operations from Florida to North Carolina. He leads strategic growth across consumer, small business and commercial banking, supporting more than 2,300 colleagues and a network of over 230 stores.

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Birthplace: N

Education: B rsity

Advice to my successor in my business: Be active on nonprofit boards.

Lesson from my mentor: Focus only on the things that are within your control or influence.

I define “balance” in my life as: Happy wife, happy life.

Splurge I’ve made that few would understand: A portable pizza oven.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Be fishing.

Contact: td.com, nick.miceli@td.com, 954-377-7829

Howard Milstein

Chairman and CEO, Emigrant Bank

Miami

Founded in 1850 to serve the financial needs of a growing America and a dynamic immigrant population, Emigrant today is the largest privately held, family-owned and -operated bank in America. It offers fully integrated banking, custom lending, insurance services and trust administration services through its subsidiaries Emigrant Capital, New York Private Trust, Emigrant Fine Art Finance, Personal Risk Management, Summitas, Galatioto Sports Partners and New York Private Bank & Trust.

Education: B.A., economics, Cornell University; J.D., MBA, Harvard University

Contact: ww

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Mario Oliva

CEO, Intercredit Bank, N.A.

Miami

Oliva has over three decades of banking executive and director experience across diverse business areas in the U.S. and Latin America, including commercial and corporate banking, insurance and means of payment. He was previously with Banesco USA, Santander Bank and Banco de Venezuela.

Education: Engineering degree, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello; MBA, finance, IESA

Contact: www.intercreditbank.com

Joshua A. Orlinsky

Chairman and CEO, Equiturn Holdings

Fort Lauderdale

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Image: Courtesy of Equiturn Holdings

COURTESY OF EQUITURN HOLDINGS

Orlinsky leads the Florida-based investment banking platform that spans mergers and acquisitions and capital markets. In 2025, he expanded national offices and launched Mega Alpha Fund I, EQ+R and MT3.

Birthplace: Atlanta

Education: B.S., finance, Florida State University

Lesson from my mentor: Act like you've been there before, always.

What the next generation has taught me: Speed matters, authenticity wins and attention is the new leverage.

Most important daily habit: Prioritize the hardest decision before noon, every day.

My hero growing up: Warren Buffett

Place I recommend everyone visit: Swiss Alps

Contact: www.equiturn.com, jorlinsky@equiturn.com, 754-332-2494

Ed Patterson

Central South

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Miami



COURTESY OF CITI

Patterson leads personal banking, business banking and branch-based mortgage sales across 150 Citi branch locations throughout the South Florida, Chicago and greater Washington, D.C., markets. Citi recently opened four new local branches.

Birthplace: St. Louis

Education: B.B.A., North Carolina Central University

Advice to my
and never lo

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Lesson from
results last.

w long the

What the next generation has taught me: Challenge assumptions, move faster and
value purpose alongside performance.

I define “balance” in my life as: Winning at work without losing at home.

Contact: www.citi.com, edward.h.patterson@citi.com, 954-489-3797

Hector Ponte

South Florida regional executive, Wells Fargo

Miami

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Image: Courtesy of Wells Fargo

COURTESY OF WELLS FARGO

Ponte is a 38-year financial services veteran who currently leads Wells Fargo's branch network in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. He also serves as chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

Birthplace: Miami Beach

Education: A.A., Miami Dade College

Advice to my successor in my business: Have confidence in your team.

Lesson from my mentor: Value people and lift them up.

What the next generation has taught me: Focus on what truly matters.

I define “bal

Place I recon

Contact: ww

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Fernando Ruiz

Field director, Affluent Segment, JPMorganChase

Miami



JPMORGAN CHASE

Ruiz brings 37 years of banking experience to JPMorgan Chase. He was previously regional director for South Florida, where he oversaw and led growth across more

than 200 bra

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Birthplace: F

Education: Attended Miami Dade College

What I miss about old-school work styles: Nothing, because we all have to evolve over time.

I define “balance” in my life as: Spending time with my daughter.

I unwind at day’s end: With a glass of wine or scotch.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Anywhere in Spain

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Enjoy a cafecito at Versailles without being in a rush.

Contact: www.jpmorgan.com, fernando.ruiz@jpmorgan.com

Gene Schaefer

President, Miami, and global commercial banking executive, Bank of America

Miami

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BANK OF AMERICA

Schaefer joined Bank of America in 1989, and today leads its Miami-Dade County operations, as well as its efforts to address social and economic concerns countywide. He is a past chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and United Way Miami.

Birthplace: New York

Education: B.S., finance, University of Miami

Place I recommend everyone visit: Dubrovnik, Croatia. I just visited this past fall for the first time. Beautiful, fascinating, historic and, if you are a “Game of Thrones” fan, King’s Landing is a must-visit.

Contact: www.bankofamerica.com/southfl, 305-347-2950

Anthony Sie

Chairman ar

Miami

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COURTESY OF BMI FINANCIAL GROUP

Sierra brings more than 40 years of experience in the insurance industry – including positions with several of the world’s leading reinsurance companies and a reinsurance brokerage in Germany – serving the Latin American market.

Birthplace: Laurel, Mississippi

Education: Bachelor’s degree, international finance and marketing, University of Miami

Lesson from my mentor: Do your best to be fair and transparent.

Most important daily habit: Telling my family I love them.

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My hero grows

I unwind at c

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Regret it.

Contact: www.bmicos.com, 305-443-2898

Rajinder Singh

Chairman, president and CEO, BankUnited

Miami Lakes



Singh co-founder of BankUnited, expansion of Morristown, banking operations

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any of the bank's focus in the continued focus on

Birthplace: India

Education: B.S., chemical engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi; MBA, Carnegie Mellon University

Contact: www.bankunited.com; 305-231- 6400

Barry Sloane

Chairman, president and CEO, NewtekOne

Boca Raton

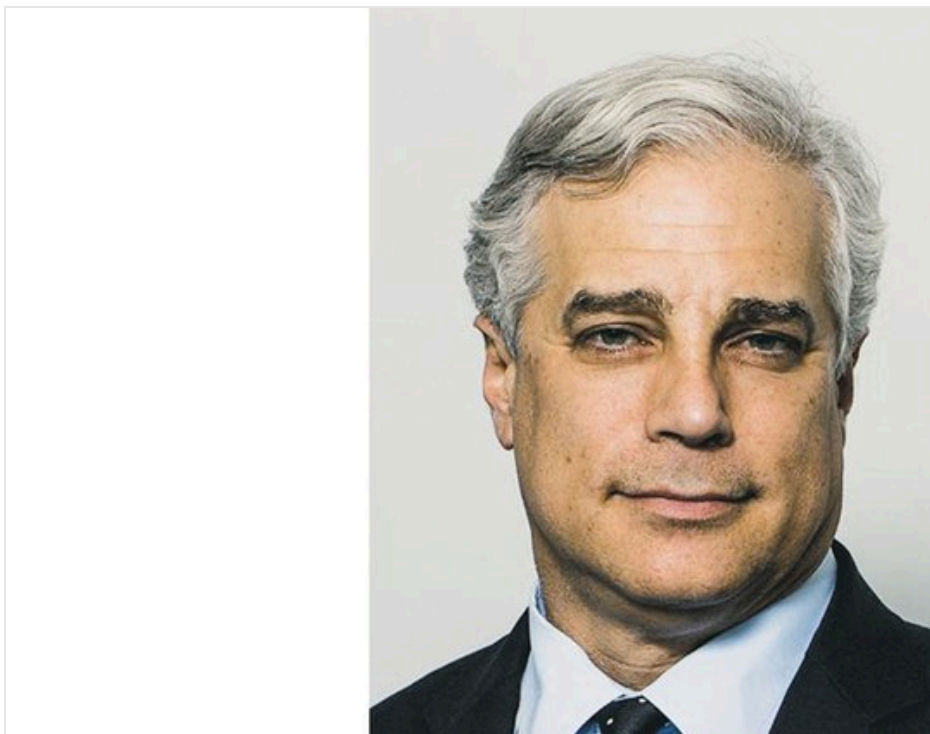


Image: Courtesy of NewtekOne

COURTESY OF NEWTEKONE

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Sloane leads capabilities
Newtek, he v

tory
r to joining

Birthplace: Brooklyn, New York

Education: Bachelor's degree, University at Buffalo; MBA, New York University

Advice to my successor in my business: The key to success is solving clients' problems.

What the next generation has taught me: The world is constantly changing and one must adapt.

My heroes growing up: My mother and father

I unwind at day's end by: Living my life with my girlfriend.

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Be in the gym as soon as I wake up.

Contact: www.newtekone.com, hello@newtekone.com, 212-356-9500

TECHNOLOGY

Dan Cane

Co-founder and co-CEO, ModMed

Boca Raton

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COURTESY OF MODMED

The health care technology company Cane co-founded in 2010 is transforming specialty care through innovative software solutions. ModMed has grown to over 2,000 employees, and has earned recognition for its impact on clinical efficiency and outcomes.

Birthplace: Lake Worth

Education: B.S., applied economics, Cornell University

What I miss about old-school work styles: Fourteen-hour, in-office work days, solving big problems.

Most important daily habit: Practicing “Inbox Zero.”

I unwind at day’s end by: Enjoying time with my family and our 10 pets.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Greenland

Splurge I've

If I retire Fri

Contact: ww

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Maurice Ferre Jr.

Chairman and CEO at Insightec

Miami



Maurice Ferre Jr.

INSIGHTEC

Insightec is the innovator of incisionless surgery. Last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the use of its Exablate Neuro platform for treatment of patients with advanced Parkinson's disease. Ferré was previously chairman and CEO of Mako Surgical Corp., a robotic surgical company he co-founded that was acquired by Stryker Corp. for \$1.65 billion in 2013.

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Birthplace: M

Education: M

Contact: www.insightec.com, 786-779- 3288

Henry Fleches

CEO, United Data Technologies

Miami



Image: South Florida Business Journal

JOCK FISTICK / SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

The company Fleches founded 30 years ago today provides endpoint, digital transformation, cloud and cybersecurity solutions, and managed telecommunications. In July, Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida named it a preferred vendor of IT solutions.

Birthplace: M

Education: B

Internationa

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Advice to my successor in my business: Stay close to the client.

What the next generation has taught me: To appreciate the generation before me even more.

Most important daily habit: Kiss my wife and daughters every morning when we are home together.

I define “balance” in my life as: Internal peace.

Splurge I’ve made that few would understand: Lots of Christmas lights.

Contact: www.udtonline.com, marketing@udtonline.com, 800-882-9919

Rick Mancinelli

CEO, C3 Cloud Computing

Delray Beach

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Image: C3 Cloud Computing

C3 CLOUD COMPUTING

Since 2009, technology consultancy C3 has delivered relationship-focused technology solutions to clients throughout North America. Products include infrastructure, virtual desktops, backup and disaster recovery. In 2024, C3 acquired TRACI.net, a communications consulting and services partner to hundreds of small and medium-size businesses.

Education: Attended Monmouth University with a major in computer science

Contact: www.c3cloud.com, 561-939-4035

Paul Mansur

CEO, NXT GEN Technologies

Miami

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NXT GEN TECHNOLOGIES

NXT GEN Technologies provides innovative, scalable and secure technology solutions to businesses locally and nationwide. Mansur has 20 years of growth, innovation and strategic experience in the field.

Birthplace: Brooklyn, New York

Education: Bachelor's degree, business management and organization, University of Miami

Advice to my successor in my business: Patience is key.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The ability to pick up a phone and speak to someone.

I unwind at c

Splurge I've

If I retire Fri

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lren.

Contact: www.nxtgentech.com, 305-602-0707

Manny Medina

Founder and managing director, Medina Ventures

Coral Gables

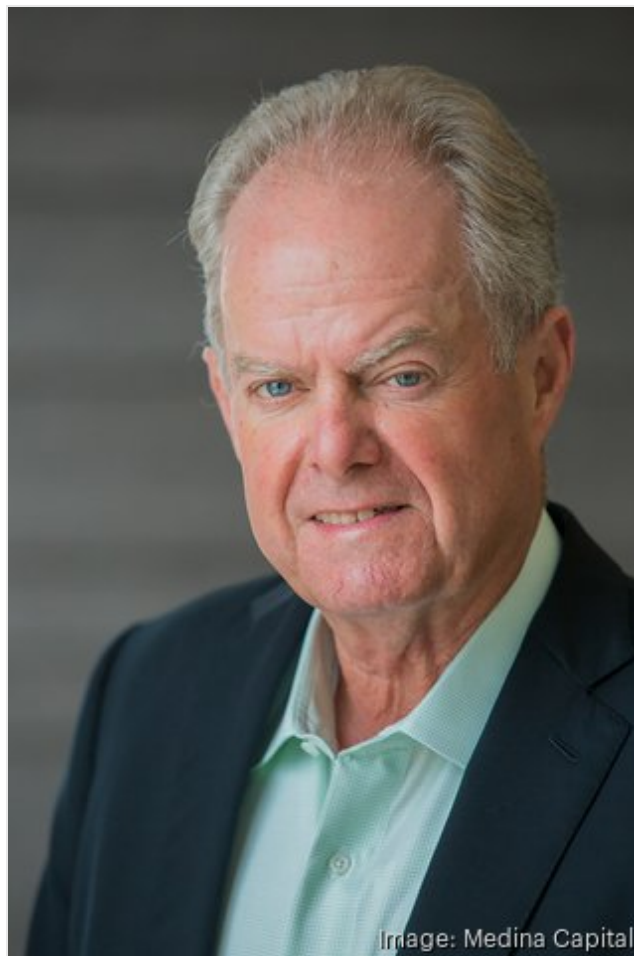


Image: Medina Capital

MEDINA CAPITAL

Medina has led
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persecurity
any and
on for an
e Americas.

Birthplace: Matanzas, Cuba

Education: B.S., Florida Atlantic University

Contact: tpc@medinacapital.com, 305-582-7545

Melissa Medina

Co-founder and CEO, eMerge Americas; partner, Medina Ventures

Coral Gables

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Image: South Florida Business Journal

JOCK FISTICK / SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

Medina is an entrepreneur, operator, investor, community leader and philanthropist. She leads eMerge Americas, whose mission is to establish Miami as a tech hub. The 2025 event brought together 300 exhibitors, 240 speakers and some 20,000 attendees from 60 countries. The conference has driven some \$2.6 billion economic impact over the past decade, according to a study by the Washington Economics Group.

Birthplace: Miami

Education: B.S.B.A., University of Florida; master's degree, international business, UF and ESADE

Contact: www.emergeamericas.com, www.medinavc.com

Robert Morcos

Founder and

Hollywood

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TOLGA KAVUT

Nexa – founded in 2011 as Social Mobile – is a global leader in enterprise mobility solutions. In 2025, it acquired Sonim Technologies, a provider of rugged mobile solutions. Morcos was named a 2025 Florida winner of Ernst & Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Birthplace: Amman, Jordan

Education: Bachelor’s degree, criminology, Florida State University

Advice to my
quick pivot.

Most import:

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ared for a

My hero growing up: Steve Jobs

I unwind at day's end by: Hanging out with my son and discussing his accomplishments.

Contact: www.nexamobility.com, info@nexamobility.com

Terence "Terry" Murphy

CEO, Gale Force Digital Technologies

West Palm Beach

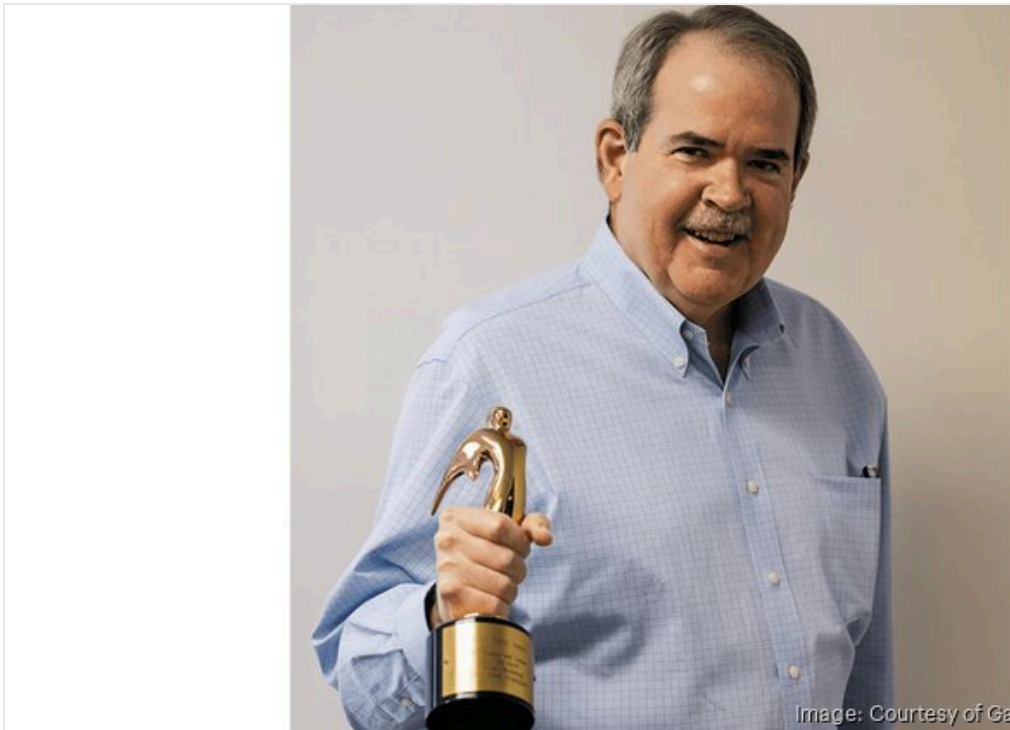


Image: Courtesy of Gale Force Digital Technologies

COURTESY OF GALE FORCE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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nd planning
ear, it was

Birthplace: St. Louis

Education: B.S., radio, television and film, University of Texas at Austin

Lesson from my mentor: Hard work is good for the spirit and the pocketbook.

What I miss about old-school work styles: People in the workplace dressing more professionally.

Most important daily habit: Prayer

If I retire Friday, Monday I will: Start a new company, but my wife might kill me.

Contact: www.galeforcedigital.com; terry@galeforcedigital.com; 561-406-8936

Chris Sullens

CEO, CentralReach

Fort Lauderdale

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Image: Courtesy of CentralReach

COURTESY OF CENTRALREACH

CentralReach is a leading software provider for therapists that serve individuals with autism and IDD. Sullens scaled CentralReach over 10 times in seven years, and sold the business to Roper Technologies for \$1.85 billion in April 2025.

Birthplace: Elmhurst, Illinois

Education: B.S., mechanical engineering, Virginia Tech; MBA, University of Chicago

Advice to my successor in my business: Focus on the needs of the individuals and families we serve.

Lesson from my mentor: Incentives drive behavior.

What I miss about old-school work styles: Long days of close collaboration in and out of the office.

My hero growing up: Michael Jordan

I define “balance” as family and n

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Contact: www.centralreach.com

Jim Walker III

CEO, CloudHesive

Fort Lauderdale

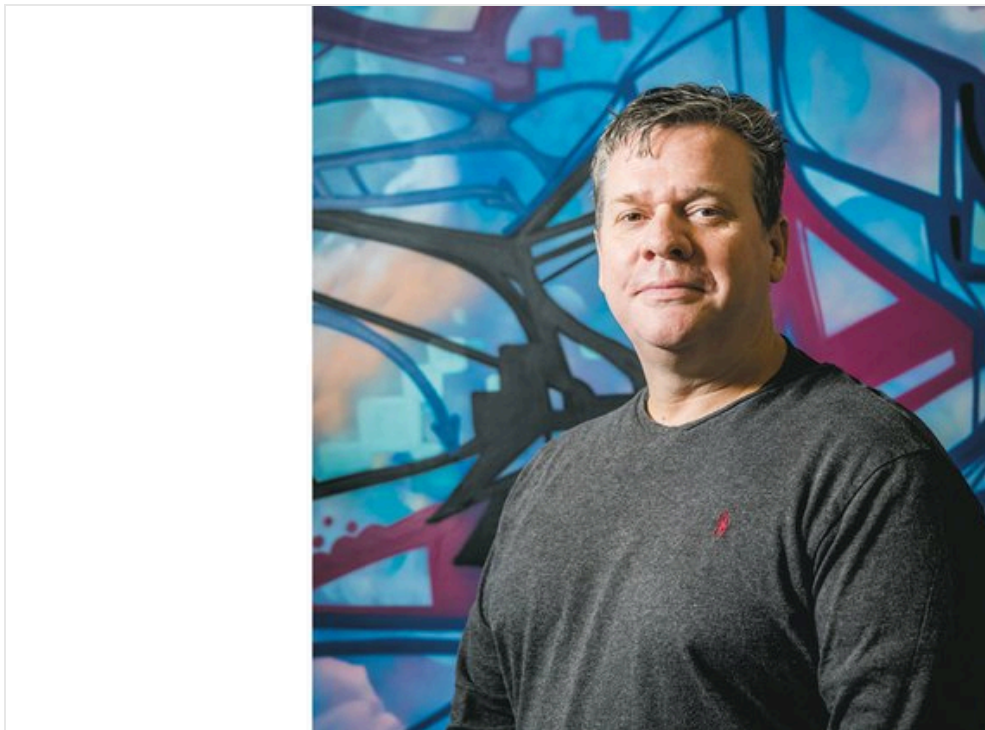


Image: CloudHesive

CLOUDHESIVE

CloudHesive provides secure, scalable cloud solutions from offices in Florida, Denver, Argentina, Colombia and Chile. The company has been investing in AI, machine learning and data-driven solutions to help businesses accelerate their digital transformation.

Birthplace: Corpus Christi, Texas

Education: B

Contact: ww

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Michael Davis

Past chairman, Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches; senior VP/chief strategy officer, WGI Inc.

West Palm Beach

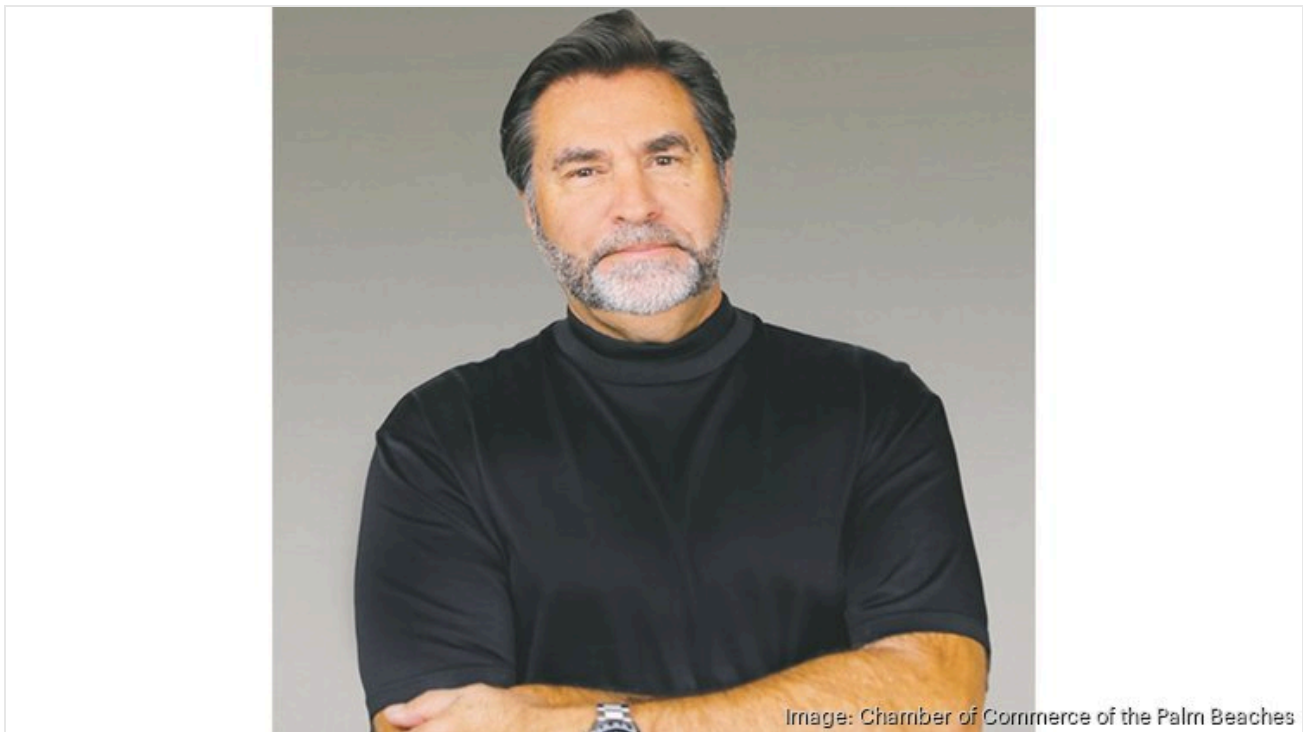


Image: Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PALM BEACHES

Davis is immediate past chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches. He has over 40 years of experience in strategic planning, transportation and water resources infrastructure, environmental policy and legislation. He has

held position

Engineers, and

Birthplace: N

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ps of

Education: B.S., environmental science, and M.S., environmental science and biology, Austin Peay State University

Contact: www.palmbeaches.org, 561-687-2220

Jennifer Bales Drake

Board chair, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance; shareholder, Becker & Poliakoff

Fort Lauderdale



Image: Courtesy of Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance

COURTESY OF GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE ALLIANCE

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ess For the
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Birthplace: K

Education: J.D., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

What the next generation has taught me: It is important to strive for a healthy work-life balance.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The cohesive balance daily interaction with colleagues brings to the workplace.

Most important daily habit: Check my calendar first thing each morning to optimize my day.

My hero growing up: My mother, Norma Bales

Place I recommend everyone visit: Anywhere in Italy

Contact: www.beckerlawyers.com, jdrake@beckerlawyers.com, 954-987-7550

Janna P. Lhota

Board chair, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce; partner, Holland & Knight

Fort Lauderdale

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Image: Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Along with her position as chamber board chair, Lhota practices in the firm's real estate section in the areas of land use and zoning. She also serves on the Broward Education Foundation, and other professional and civic groups.

Birthplace: Bridgeport, Connecticut

Education: B.S., criminology, Florida State University; J.D., Stetson University

Lesson from my mentor: The Five "P's: Prior preparation prevents poor performance.

My hero growing up: My mother, who taught me to keep my head down, work hard and positive results will follow.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: Not big on splurges, but a lay-down seat on an overnight flight would be one.

If I retire Fri
headed to Ita

Contact: ww

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down seat

Daniel Lindblade

President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

Fort Lauderdale



GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Lindblade leads the chamber's business advocacy, economic development and community partnerships to boost the county and regional economy. After nearly two decades with the chamber, he will be retiring this year.

Birthplace: Rockford, Illinois

Education: B

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Lesson from

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What I miss

the ability to

disagree and still be friends.

My hero growing up: Jesus Christ

I unwind at day's end by: Playing my guitar and singing my heart out.

Splurge I've made that few would understand: The one with the most guitars at the end wins.

Contact: www.ftlchamber.com, dan@ftlchamber.com, 954-462-4911

Rodrick T. Miller

President and CEO, Miami-Dade Beacon Council

Miami

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EILEEN M ESCARDA

Prior to being named to his role in 2023, Miller held economic development roles in Detroit, New Orleans and Puerto Rico. The Beacon Council's new business projects have brought thousands of new jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact.

Birthplace: Manning, South Carolina

Education: B.S., international business, Saint Augustine's University; M.P.P., Harvard University; graduate diploma, international management and finance, Fulbright fellowship, Tecnológico de Monterrey

Contact: www.beaconcouncil.com, president@beaconcouncil.com, 305-579-1300

J. Michael Prince

Chairman, Board of Directors
and board member

West Palm Beach

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President, CEO



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

Prince was named to chair Palm Beach County's official public-private economic development organization last fall. With USPA Global, he oversees the multibillion-dollar U.S. Polo Assn. brand.

Birthplace: Oklahoma

Education: B.S., East Central University; MBA, Duke University

Advice to my successor in my business: Lead by example.

What I miss about old-school work styles: The importance of in-person communication and interaction.

My hero grow

I unwind at c
a fun dinner

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doors or over

Contact: www.uspoloassnglobal.com, mkane@uspagl.com, 561-530-5301

Alfred Sanchez

President and CEO, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

Miami



ROBERTO VALLADARES

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housing adv
and elevated

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orkforce
e efforts,

Birthplace: F

Education: B.A., psychology, Arcadia University; M.A., University of Maryland, Baltimore County

What I miss about old-school work styles: Fewer emails, more eye contact, meetings that actually ended.

My heroes growing up: As a kid, Martin Luther King Jr.; as a young professional, Baltimore Mayor William Donald Schaefer; today, David Lawrence Jr.

I unwind at day's end by: Cycling, Peloton or reworking old folk and rock songs on the guitar.

Place I recommend everyone visit: Scotland

Contact: www.miamichamber.com, 305-577-5450

Kelly Smallridge

President and CEO, Business Development Board of Palm Beach County

West Palm Beach

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JOCK FISTICK

Smallridge is the longest-tenured economic development president in Florida. In the last year, Palm Beach County's public-private economic development organization attracted 28 companies, creating 2,857 high-wage jobs and \$306 million in capital investment.

Birthplace: Palm Beach County

Education: Bachelor's degree, public relations, University of Florida

Advice to my successor in my business: Listen first. Build trust and execute. This is not a 9-to-5 job.

My hero growing up: My mom, who owned a business and balanced three kids.

I unwind at day's end by: Playing pickleball

Splurge I've
purchased in

Contact: ww

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Bob Swindell

President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance

Fort Lauderdale



Image: Courtesy of Bob Swindell

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE ALLIANCE

Named to his post in 2009, Swindell and his team market and promote Broward County as a desirable destination for business, bringing high-skill, high-wage

jobs and diverse
investments

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million in
2025.

Birthplace: C

Education: Attended University of Florida

Contact: www.lesstaxing.com, bswindell@gflalliance.org, 954-627-0131

Michael Zeff

President and CEO, Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

West Palm Beach



COURTESY OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE PALM BEACHES

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support its b
development

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n business

Birthplace: U

Education: B.S.B.A., Barry University; MBA, marketing, Lynn University

Lesson from my mentor: People skills matter most.

What the next generation has taught me: Social media gives everyone a platform.

Most important daily habit: Walking 6 miles.

My hero growing up: Muhammad Ali

Splurge I've made that few would understand: I collect high-end pens.

Contact: www.palmbeaches.org, 561-833-3711

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