



**Address at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce's  
2016 Goals Conference**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on June 16, 2016**



*This speech was presented on June 16, 2016 to the attendees  
of the GMCC Goals Conference  
where Dr. Rosenberg became the Chamber's 109<sup>th</sup> Chairman.*

The best days for our community are still ahead of us! We can and must build a more prosperous and inclusive community.

Today, tomorrow, next week, and next year are about improvement; keeping the end in mind. We all want a better, more prosperous, and inclusive community that is people-based and meet the urgent human needs in our neighborhoods.

First, let me show some appreciation; then, speak directly to our community, our chamber, our action plan and the direction that I expect in the coming year.

### **Appreciations**

My wife Rosalie and I have been blessed with 42 years of love, 42 years of marriage. Today is our wedding anniversary! She has been a constant companion and supporter – thanks to Rosalie.

Our children - Ben, a lawyer with Diaz, Reus & Targ and a Chamber member, and Ginelle, a teacher who is returning home from Tampa - have put up with me and made many sacrifices so that I could pursue my passions. Sisters Risa and Berinthia, and Brother Geoff, have always been there for us. Sister Risa is here representing my siblings and my departed parents.

Stick with this Chamber long enough, and you will be graced with an unbelievable set of relations, contacts, and friends that will be second to none.

My Chamber mentors include: Bill Cullom, Barry Johnson, Carlos Migoya, George Foyo, Alex Villoch, the late Alvah Chapman, the late Martin Fine, the late Jay Malina, Jorge Perez, Jack Lowell, Lee Sandler, Walter Revel, Armando Codina, Sherrill Hudson, Susan Potter Norton, Bruce Colan, Hank Klein, Mike Caricarte, Rudy Moise, Adolfo Henriques, Phillis Oeters, Carlos Fernandez-Guzman, Tony Argiz, Rosa Sugranes, Basil Bernhart, Eric Knowles, Bill Diggs, Phil Blumberg, Bob Traurig, Jose Cancela, Christine Barney, and Gene Schaeffer our Chair-Elect.

What an FIU family!

With apologies to those I miss: Javier Marques, Breny Garcia, Sandy Gonzalez-Levy, Dania Pearson-Adams, Valeria Espina, and Tom Maxwell; Herbie Wertheim, Paul Cejas, Steve Green, Al Dotson Sr., Albert Maury, Claudia Puig, Jorge Arrizurieta, Cesar Alvarez, Gerald Grant, John Dasburg, Jorge J. Gonzalez, Xavier Rodriguez, Carlos Martinez, Fausto Gomez, Alina Gomez, Mary Hoelle, Martha Pantin, and Manny Diaz.

Thousands of former, present and incoming students Judge Cecilia Altonaga, Carlos Castillo, Cedric McMinn, Steve Bovo, Rene Garcia, Anitere Flores, Jeannette Nunez, Juan Carlos Zapata, Audrey Edmundsen, Juan Kuryla, Francis Suarez, Frank Carollo, Eddie Cora, Tony Gonzalez, Mike Hernandez, Rainier Gonzalez, and more recently Ernest "Tayon" Anderson, Alexis Calatayud, Steven Marin, the Tschir Sisters, and on and on!

And a special acknowledgement to my fellow educators...

Make no mistake, we have a superior Superintendent. As a community we can go no further than our public schools take us. Mr. Carvalho, thanks for your leadership and your no apologies insistence on quality.

Special thanks as well for Eduardo Padron and his hard working campus presidents who are here too; and to Miami Dade College for being an indispensable anchor for Miami as well.

President John Kelly from FAU – what a difference his leadership is making. Thanks also to Monsignor Frank Casale, Sister Linda Bevilacqua, George Hanbury, and Roslyn Artis for their friendship and deep involvement in helping to educate and improve our community.

THANK YOU ALL!

### **Community**

Our best days are still ahead of us. We wake up this morning happy to be in South Florida. Our geography and our demography are in fact our destiny.

We are blessed with public school systems in Dade and Broward that are hitting the highest standards.

We are privileged with honest determined public leaders who are mindful and respectful of their obligations to taxpayers. You have already heard from our Mayor, Carlos Gimenez. I thank him, our county commissioners and other elected officials for being here.

Every day our airports and seaports are globally connected and provide meaningful employment to thousands. Thanks to Emilio Gonzalez and Juan Kuryla for their leadership.

The visitors to most communities are measured in the hundreds or thousands. We measure in the millions. Bill Talbert, you and your team are LIT!

We generate some of the best music and cuisine anywhere. Our cafecitos allow us to see into the future for the next 30 years. We are now a design mecca and juxtapose our natural beauty against the built environment in market sensitive ways.

We are lucky to have an open, diverse, and tolerant community.

Our museums and performing arts venues are some of the best in the world.

Our Metro area is now over \$300B in production – comparable to Singapore and Hong Kong.

We *do have* some significant challenges. Public transportation, while improving thanks to Miami-Dade County and MDX initiatives, will have better days and hopefully soon.

Income gaps are growing in every quintile, in spite of rising employment and new job creation. Income gaps lead to opportunity gaps and then employment gaps. We hear you Chair Monestime, members of the Commission, and Rick Beasley – thanks for being here.

While our beautiful waterways and one of a kind Everglades are assets, we cannot take them for granted.

Youth violence is unacceptable. Some of our neighborhoods have become garrison states, contrasting with some South Florida neighborhoods just blocks away.

We can do so much better. We don't just want to improve, we **MUST** improve!

### **The GMCC**

We look around. Who can help? What can be done?

Today, our GMCC is a pillar of, and an action-agent in, our community.

Since its founding in the early 1900s, aside from the Church, the GMCC is one of the community's most enduring and impactful voluntary organizations. We cannot forget that it was the Chamber which had a leading role in:

- Creation of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (Bill Talbert), the Homeless Trust (Victoria Mallette O’Bryan), and the Beacon Council (Larry Williams)
- Establishing the “we will rebuild” campaign (Alvah Chapman)
- The community galvanizing initiative called One Community One Goal (ALC member institutions)
- Leadership Miami and the Senior Executive Orientation
- Port of Miami Tunnel – when it looked to be dead, it was resurrected by GMCC.

We owe significant appreciation to Barry Johnson who has had two roles in our chamber: as Chair and as President. Barry, let me thank you for all that you have done and will do! Your staff have been incredible, working leaner every day and still getting it done. Special thanks to Cornelia Pereira and her entire team.

Volunteers and chairs are pivotal to the work that we do. That is where I started with the Chamber in the early 1980s, thanks to Sandy Gonzalez-Levy who was a senior staff member then ... well, I mean senior in a youthful way! We have had thousands of volunteers and chairs in the century-long run of this business association. Many thanks to you.

Today we are in transition. As a Chamber ...

- *We can do better* in responding to the changing 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and business environment.
- *We can do better* for our members by creating more focused business-to-business contacts.
- *We can do better* in working with our political leadership – starting with county government.
- *We can do better* in forging chamber-to-chamber and regional collaboration.

I know that there are those that say our Chamber - any chamber - is outmoded, an anachronism in a 21<sup>st</sup> century digital environment.

Really?

There is a simple truth that you all know. We cannot depend on the web or the cloud or on holograms or doppelgangers to address the rich opportunities and complex challenges that we face. We cannot wait for Washington or Tallahassee to figure things out for us.

All politics are local. Good will is local, and can run very deep in our community. The action these days is local. The solutions are local. The key platforms are local.

Our GMCC is the strongest, best business platform in this community – and there are good ones to be sure! Why? Because you are here.

### **So what is our Agenda this Year?**

This is a pivot year, but we are not in a holding pattern!

Succession is on the agenda. New approaches to budget and member value are on the table. Deepened collaboration and win-win are necessities. Re-thinking, re-positioning, and re-modernizing our GMCC – that is why we have modified our goals conference!

The constant from our earliest years as a community organization? IMPACT! *Impact is our obsession!!*

We believe that our efforts this year will improve the business environment, and enhance actual job creation in our community.

Thanks to so many of you for working through May. Our 27 working committees have identified scores of community goals for this year. You will receive copies of this year's goals on your way out to the next session, or you can download them from the Chamber's website. I ask you to share any comments or concerns with the committee chairs, with Barry Johnson, and with me.

From the 2016-2017 goals, there are a few priority areas that I will personally focus on:

- TRANSPORTATION

As the Miami Herald editorialized last year, Miami traffic is the pits. But there have been some improvements to mobility in our community. We are very excited about All-Aboard Florida. The 2017 opening marks a paradigm shift in transportation in South Florida. Mike Reininger, thanks!

We are also excited about the possibilities that will spring forward from the recent legalization of ride-share providers. We appreciate the new initiatives being taken by Miami-Dade County – an impressive team, including Miami-Dade Commission Vice Chair Steve Bovo. County administrators, Alice Bravo and Aileen Boucle, are mobilized and dedicated. They have hit the ground running, and we need to work more closely with them.

Our number one priority as a business community is to move the needle – get some visible momentum with at least one project completed! Denver took about 20 years to transform its transportation system to become world class. Let's double down and get this done!

- ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As you will hear from Richard Florida in a few minutes, the Greater Miami economy is at an inflection point, in need of a new narrative. We must understand and celebrate the changing nature of our economy: from large and medium sized organizations to micro and small units; from service to technology; from a proprietary economy to a sharing economy; from taking good jobs to innovation/entrepreneurship, while also creating good jobs; and from brain-drain to brain-circulation.

Manifestations of this change are everywhere: there is a growing urban-centric creative class pivoting around media, the arts, education, software development, service oriented start-ups, and hospitality. At least \$300M in venture capital came into our community last year. There is a start-up ecosystem here that we must understand, work with and nurture. The people and capital in our chamber have the power to transform a number of these start-ups into scale-ups that will compete globally and harness our community's talent.

If a chamber of commerce can't do this, what can it do?

- YOUTH GUN VIOLENCE

As Congresswoman Frederica Wilson has pointed out, gun violence has reached epidemic levels in Miami-Dade County. Last year alone, 79 public school students were shot; 19 of whom died from their wounds. Our business community understands that every neighborhood deserves so much more than the hopelessness of debilitating violence.

The Mayor has issued a comprehensive plan on Youth and Community Safety that we must get behind and support. You can find it on his web page at [MiamiDade.gov](http://MiamiDade.gov). Information on Superintendent Carvalho's initiative, Together for Children, can be found at [news.dadeschools.net](http://news.dadeschools.net). Both offer menus of initiatives that give us plenty of room to act and make progress.

I want to thank Carlos Orta, our First Vice Chair, for agreeing to lead our GMCC engagement in support of county and school initiatives. We know that if we act collectively and comprehensively, that, as a business community, we can unlock resources to amplify those evidence-based solutions that have proven to work in other communities.

- AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The most successful cities in the world are now coming to grips with need for housing for their workforce. Just weeks ago (April 21, 2016), the *Wall Street Journal* published a series on five cities that are “Leading the Way on Urban Innovation.” Among the five: Houston, Medellin, and Singapore.

Houston and Medellin? S’up with that? Ahead of Miami? We gotta get on that list!

Over the next year we will partner with Miami Homes for All, led by Bobbie Ibarra, in a new effort to foster affordability in our core business areas.

- RESILIENCY / SEA LEVEL RISE

This is where we are as a community: the President of the United States calls us “ground zero” in sea level rise issues. Rolling Stone magazine noted that “by century’s end, rising sea levels will turn the nation’s urban fantasyland into an American Atlantis.”

Atlantis?! No, I want to be Miami!

Here are the facts:

1. We expect that by 2030, mean sea level will result in an incremental increase of up to six more inches of sea level rise in the Miami area.
2. With no intervention (flood mitigation) and this rate of increase, we can expect up to 20% of Miami Dade county land area will be inundated by then, and about 1% of urban land areas affected.
3. This will result in more frequent Spring and Fall high tide flooding, increasing land area inundated during these events up to 30%, our logistics infrastructure will be compromised.
4. Without intervention, seawater intrusion may affect well fields that supply 25-30% of the county’s freshwater.

Wait! Not so fast.

Our business community must engage this issue. Taking action as a business community on the implications of sea-level rise is not only our moral responsibility, it can very well become the source of an innovation economy that



sees businesses in Miami become globally renowned exporters of the most cutting edge solutions.

If a chamber of commerce can't do this, what can it do?

- ASIA/CHINA

Don't look now, but two of our major flagship companies (Carnival and Royal) are rapidly moving assets to Asia to capture the tourism market there.

Special thanks to the Government of Japan for locating a consulate here in Miami and providing us such an impactful consul with Ken Okaniwa!

Despite these advances, we must redouble our efforts to expand trade, commerce, and tourism with other Asian neighbors. This year, we expect billions in Chinese foreign investment pouring into the United States. We also expect five million tourists from China by 2019 that could spend up to \$50B, yet our share here in Florida is minimal. There is little Chinese foreign investment in Florida and fewer than 250,000 Chinese tourists (out of 100M visitors) to Florida.

Despite our world class air connections, we are still hampered by the absence of non-stop air travel to and from China; the absence of consulates from most Asian countries in Miami; and a limited ability to service their dietary needs if they were to arrive in large numbers. And we know that similar potential lies ahead from creating a gateway to those innovators blossoming in India.

So our work is cut out for us. We cannot get left behind.

- CUBA

We can all agree that the human cost of the Cuban Revolution has been staggering and unacceptable. The freedom and liberty that we enjoy here are not yet conditions of everyday life in Cuba. We will not rest until these freedoms have been restored. We cannot accept the notion that Cuba is best governed through dictatorship.

How to engage Cuba's transition is a question that rivets our entire community. What is clear is that our Chamber cannot sit on the sidelines. We must provide appropriate services to our membership about the challenges and opportunities during this arms-length transition and then prepare for full engagement in a post-Castro, democratic era.

If our business community, led by the Chamber, cannot have a frank and intentional approach to Cuba, who can? If we do not develop strategies and approaches to stay engaged, we allow others to set the Cuba agenda that are not in our interest.

Miami sets Miami's agenda!

The Chamber has always been a key part of this agenda setting, regardless of the issue. But I want to assure Miami that we respect the differences, and the deep pain around how best to engage our brothers and sisters in Cuba.

These seven pillars, tied to the goals set forth by our chamber groups and committees, will guide our work over the next 12 months!

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that we have the best-ever group of volunteers to address these issues and more. No doubt that there is much to do, but we are up to these challenges.

We have something special here in Miami that propels us forward: our optimism, our passion, our belief in each other, and the certainty that we can build a better tomorrow.

At our joyous FIU commencements, I speak about our Miami. Here is what I say: "There is no better place to live, to learn and to graduate than right here in Miami." Now as I look out over the audience, more than ever I am optimistic that I will never have to change this line.

Thank you for being here, for being a part of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, and for giving me the opportunity to be more involved with you in developing our vision of a more prosperous and inclusive community.

This gathering is a reminder of the advice that a Supreme Court Justice shared with the President of the United States upon his election. When asked what he must do to address the challenges and opportunities of the times, the Justice replied: "Muster your battalions."

You are our battalions! You care! You are willing to take responsibility! You want impact!

Now .... Let's do this!