



2016 SOBEEFF Tribute Dinner

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on February 27, 2016**



This speech was presented to the attendees of the 2016 SOBE Food and Wine Festival held at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel on February 27, 2016.

Good evening! On behalf of FIU, it is my pleasure to welcome you to tonight's Tribute Dinner honoring Jonathan Waxman, Rob Sands and Richard Sands. We are thrilled to be celebrating their accomplishments, the success of the Food Network & Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival presented by FOOD & WINE and our Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

I would like to give special thanks to the Loews Miami Beach Hotel for being a valuable Festival sponsor for the past 15 years! And thanks to all of our sponsors for your contributions! It has been 15 years since the first Florida Extravaganza was held on FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus.

FIU, the festival and the Chaplin School have come a long way since then!

This all began as a small festival, showcasing local chefs and international and national wineries. Today, under the leadership of Lee Brian Schrager, the festival is a national, star-studded, five-day destination event. This year it has expanded with the new Taste Fort Lauderdale Series. It features the world's most renowned wine and spirits producers, chefs and culinary personalities.

It is a hands-on, real-world educational opportunity for our students. About 2,000 of our FIU students will work in over 75 events. Approximately 200 of them will take on leadership positions. FIU's Chaplin School has established itself as a leading global resource for creating and cultivating innovative management talent and solutions for the hospitality and tourism industry.

Today, we boast the Wine Spectator Restaurant Management Lab and Mel Dick Wine Tower. This food production and brewing science lab represents the future of education in the hospitality industry. We have developed a very successful Hospitality & Tourism Management program in Tianjin, China. We have formed key partnerships with big names in the industry like Diageo, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. and Badia Spices.

We are educating a new generation of hospitality and tourism professionals. Working together, we are contributing to the success of this vital industry.