

**BLOG from St. Petersburg, FL for the 2011 Beef O'Brady Bowl**

December 20, 2011

*President Mark B. Rosenberg is in St. Petersburg, Fla., for the Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl on Tuesday, Dec. 20. The president is sharing commentary and photos from his trip, so be sure to check out his blog on this whirlwind trip. Yesterday FIU News published his [first](#) and [second](#) entries. Below is his third:*

Game day! Somewhere out there on I-75, thousands of FIU fans are descending on St. Pete to be a part of tonight's FIU-Marshall football game at the Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl here in St. Pete.

Football is remarkable in that the game itself brings families together to root and cheer for their favorite teams.



*Jazz Guillama, Jason Aurichio and Noel Guillama*

When I served as Chancellor of the State University System, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the legacy tail-gating of families at the University of Florida, where three generations of family gathered before and after games to celebrate their beloved "Gators."

We are starting to build a similar tradition at FIU. The Schmidt family—from Pembroke Pines, Florida is a great example. Kimmie is a recent FIU graduate, and her sister, Kristie is about to graduate in nursing. They are fiercely loyal FIU fans, tailgate with dear friends before every game, and have fully embraced the Blue and Gold as their team. This is a family that clearly enjoys each other's company. Debbie, their mother, is devoted and loyal to her kids and husband,



*The Schmidt family*

Buddy, who served as the chauffeur today to bring the family and two other FIU loyalists to this gleaming Florida city.

There are hundreds and hundreds of similar stories out there. As our institution continues its evolution, as we graduate more and more students, and as our athletic teams continue to give us something to cheer about, more families will identify with and support our institution; we are confident that these will soon mushroom into thousands of families who can celebrate FIU while they are rallying around each other.

Even before we know the final score, today's bowl is a victory for all of us who appreciate the joy of family joy! It should make us all feel good that our FIU can be a small part of these irreplaceable family moments of happiness.



*Alberto Padron and sons*



*Nick (age 12) and Raul Sondon '90, '92*



*Mirabal children*