

---

**From:** Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 1:44 PM  
**To:** Sanchez, Rodzandra (COE)  
**Subject:** Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor, Miami-Dade County (Gifts, Exploitation) INQ 15-175  
**Attachments:** 20150812104231167.pdf

INQ 15-175 Benford

---

**From:** Centorino, Joseph (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 12:30 PM  
**To:** Bethune, Ingrid (Office of the Mayor); Grice, Sonia J. (Office of the Mayor)  
**Cc:** Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE); Perez, Martha D. (COE); Sanchez, Gerald (CAO)  
**Subject:** INQ 15-175 Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor, Miami-Dade County (Gifts, Exploitation)

Ms. Bethune,

You have inquired on behalf of Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor of Miami-Dade County, regarding whether he may use his title as Deputy Mayor in correspondence concerning a Masked Ball fundraising event that he is involved with on behalf of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). It is noted that the letters are being sent out on UNCF stationery, not County stationery.

It is permissible for a public official in the County to be involved in a fundraising event on behalf any bona fide Section 501(c)(3) organization under Section 2-11.1(g). Assuming that UNCF fits this category, it is permissible for Mr. Benford to be involved in such activities.

Further, the fact that the letters are being sent out on UNCF stationery makes it appropriate for Mr. Benford to be involved with this particular correspondence, since it does not involve use of County resources, and, therefore, could not be considered an Exploitation of Public Office. It is permissible for Mr. Benford to use his official title in the correspondence where it is being used only to identify who he is and not in any inappropriate or exploitative way.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Centorino  
Executive Director and General Counsel  
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

---

**From:** Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 11:58 AM  
**To:** Centorino, Joseph (COE)  
**Subject:** FW: Russell's Letters

Given that this involves the office of the Mayor and other Elected Officials, I am forwarding to you.

---

**From:** Bethune, Ingrid (Office of the Mayor)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 10:50 AM  
**To:** Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE)

Cc: Grice, Sonia J. (Office of the Mayor)

Subject: FW: Russell's Letters

Good Morning Attorney Diaz-Greco,

Please review the attached letters and the email below and provide me with an answer if possible. The Deputy Mayor is asking if he is allowed to sign these letters with his job title at the bottom or if he has to remove it prior to signing? Thank you.

*Ingrid Bethune*

*Senior Executive Secretary to  
Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor  
Miami-Dade County*

*111 NW First Street, 29th Floor  
Miami, FL 33128*

*P: 305.375.5141 ~ [Bethune@miamidade.gov](mailto:Bethune@miamidade.gov)*

*Guilt is concerned with the past,*

*worry is concerned with the future,*

*contentment enjoys the present.*

*Worrying does not take away tomorrow's*

*TROUBLES, it takes away today's PEACE.*

**All lobbyists must register prior to a meeting with the Deputy Mayor.**

**Lobbyists Register: Clerk of the Board, 111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Contact person: Claude Francis at 305-375-5137**

---

**From:** Johnson-Stacks, Cynthia (CAO)

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 6:21 PM

**To:** Bethune, Ingrid (Office of the Mayor) <[BETHUNE@miamidade.gov](mailto:BETHUNE@miamidade.gov)>

**Cc:** Benford, Russell (Office of the Mayor) <[benford@miamidade.gov](mailto:benford@miamidade.gov)>; Smith, Terrence (CAO) <[ASMITH@miamidade.gov](mailto:ASMITH@miamidade.gov)>

**Subject:** Russell's Letters

Ingrid,

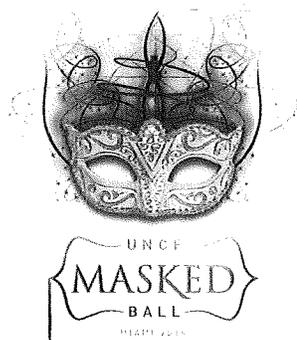
I have given the information re UNCF to my assistant, Lourdes Suarez. I would recommend that Russell ask the Ethics Commission for an informal or formal opinion regarding this matter, since that Commission is the only entity allowed to opine on ethics questions. In the folder with my assistant, you will find a summary of an ethics opinion which determined that it is legal for a County Commissioner to use his/her website to promote a non-profit organization, as neither the Commissioner or his/her staff will receive a personal benefit as a result of the solicitation. That opinion may be helpful on this issue.

Take care,

CJ

*Cynthia Johnson-Stacks*

Assistant County Attorney  
Miami-Dade County Attorney's Office  
111 N.W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 2810  
Miami, FL 33128  
Ph.: (305)375-5151  
Fax: (305)375-5634  
Email: [cjs2@miamidade.gov](mailto:cjs2@miamidade.gov)



July 20, 2015

Saturday, October 3, 2015

Miami Hyatt Regency

Mr. Ricky Wade  
McDonald's / B'ing the Best, Inc.  
1351 South Killian Drive, suite 1  
West Palm Beach, FL 33403

HOST COMMITTEE

**Russell Benford**  
Deputy Mayor  
Miami-Dade County

**Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis**  
President  
Florida Memorial University

**Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D.**  
President and CEO, UNCF

MASKED BALL LEADERSHIP

2015 Co-Chairpersons

**Gabriel Castrillon**  
General Manager  
Miami Hyatt Regency

Dear Mr. Wade:

On behalf of UNCF CEO Dr. Michael Lomax, Florida Memorial University President Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis, Miami-Dade County Deputy Mayor Russell Benford and the students of South Florida we are requesting that you serve as a Vice-Chair for the forthcoming UNCF inaugural **MIAMI MASKED BALL** at the Hyatt Regency, Saturday, October 3, 2015.

We would consider it a great honor if you would agree to serve as a Vice-Chair and for South Florida's McDonald's Black Franchise Owners to support the event as major sponsors. This highly successful UNCF fundraising gala is held in fifteen major U.S. cities including Atlanta, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, DC. Since its inception, these events have generated over \$24M in contributions from corporate sponsors and individuals.

Our goal for UNCF in Miami is to raise \$500,000.00 from this event. As Vice-Chair and sponsor, McDonald's Black Franchise Owners could extend to South Florida the visibility and prestige UNCF gains from McDonald's long-term support of UNCF through scholarship and event support.

I have attached information on the **MIAMI MASKED BALL** sponsorship opportunities and, I hope you will consider supporting this event that is conducted in partnership with Florida Memorial University, South Florida's only HBCU.

I will follow-up with your office to in the coming week. In the meantime, let me take this opportunity to thank you for believing in UNCF's famous motto that, "*A mind is a terrible thing to waste.*"

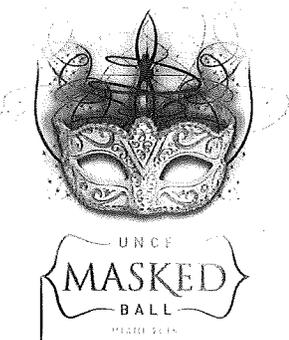
With kindest regards,

Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor Miami-Dade County  
Miami Masked Ball Host Committee



United Negro College Fund, Inc.  
1222 South Andrews Avenue  
Suite 502A  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
T 954 527 3315  
F 954 527 3319

UNCF.org



July 27, 2015

Saturday, October 3, 2015  
Miami Hyatt Regency

HOST COMMITTEE

**Russell Benford**  
Deputy Mayor  
Miami-Dade County

**Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis**  
President  
Florida Memorial University

**Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D.**  
President and CEO, UNCF

MASKED BALL LEADERSHIP

2015 Co-Chairpersons

**Gabriel Castrillon**  
General Manager  
Miami Hyatt Regency

Mr. Jawan Strader  
Co-Anchor NBC News  
NBC 6 South Florida  
15000 SW 27<sup>th</sup> Street  
Miramar, FL 33027

Dear Mr. Strader:

On behalf of UNCF's inaugural **MIAMI MASKED BALL** Leadership, Florida Memorial University President Dr. Roslyn Artis and UNCF CEO Dr. Michael Lomax thank you for agreeing to serve as emcee for our event October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Miami Hyatt Regency. An audience of over 500 *masked gala guests* is expected to attend.

The UNCF MASKED BALL is a major national signature fundraising gala held by UNCF in several major cities across the U.S. including Atlanta, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Newark and Chicago. Over the years, these events have generated over \$20M in annual contributions from corporate sponsors and individuals.

The **MIAMI MASKED BALL** is planned in collaboration with, and to benefit, Florida Memorial University –South Florida's only HBCU. UNCF's goal is to assist young people *to get to and through college* by providing the financial assistance they need. The style of this event includes the announcement of dignitaries, VIP and *parade of mask awards*. We ask that you co-emcee with Calvin Hughes as this event is our opportunity to *showcase the best of the best in Miami TV news*. And, as with other charitable causes, we'll hope for a "shout-out" on your evening news broadcasts.

UNCF will be sending you further information: script, timing, and other event logistics. In the meantime, I have attached the **UNCF MIAMI MASKED BALL** Signature Features and Event Timeline.

We are grateful to have your interest and support and thank you for believing that, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste, but a wonderful thing to invest in."

Kindest regards,

Russell Benford  
Miami-Dade County Deputy Mayor  
*Host Committee, UNCF MIAMI MASKED BALL*



United Negro College Fund, Inc.  
1222 South Andrews Avenue  
Suite 502A  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
T 954 527 3315  
F 954 527 3319

UNCF.org