



For Immediate Release: September 12, 2018  
Contact: Jose Arrojo, Executive Director  
305-579-2594 / [jose.arrojo@miamidade.gov](mailto:jose.arrojo@miamidade.gov)  
Rhonda Victor Sibia, Communications Director  
305-350-0631 / [rhonda@miamidade.gov](mailto:rhonda@miamidade.gov)

### **Sunny Isles Beach Teacher to Earn Ethics Honor**

A former social worker and career counselor turned middle school civics teacher will be awarded as the 2018 Ethical Governance Day Teacher by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE), which approved the nomination today. Rosa Alejandro is the Social Studies Department Chair and teaches Geography, U.S. History, Civics and Law Studies to sixth through eighth grade students at Norman S. Edelcup/Sunny Isles Beach K-8. Ms. Alejandro, who was named Rookie Teacher of the Year in 2009, has been in the classroom for only a decade. Prior to joining Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the North Miami Beach resident served as a Career Advisor at Unidad of Miami Beach and as a Service Coordinator for special needs children at the University of Miami.

It was her inspiration and motivation that has led her students to become State Finalists in both the “We the People” Mock Congressional Hearings and “Project Citizen” competitions for the past several years that helped earn the honor. Ms. Alejandro credits the extracurricular programs and competitions for empowering her classes. “Each year I get students who start out being shy or who don’t often use critical thinking skills, but by the end of the school year they become confident, deep thinkers who excel in civics and law,” she said, adding, “They become constitutional experts and involved citizens who truly understand that their voice counts.” Last year her students put together a new ordinance for their city to promote bike safety, which is now on its way to being enacted. She will be honored as part of the 2018 Ethical Governance Day commemoration, during which the Ethics Commission places civic leaders and activists in government classes across the school system to inspire students to be active, informed citizens. Those interested in volunteering can find information at < [ethics.miamidade.gov](http://ethics.miamidade.gov) >.

Also today, the Ethics Commission approved a Letter of Reprimand for North Miami City Clerk Michael Etienne, who last month settled a complaint (**C 18-28-07**) of exploitation of official position in connection with city travel. The Letter recounts that Etienne accepted \$233.60 in advance expenses for a conference he did not attend. He also had the City absorb the costs of “circuitous route of travel to Omaha for a conference that enabled Etienne to take a personal side trip to Mount Rushmore” that cost the City \$3,280. The Letter states that Mr. Etienne’s conduct “evidenced a clear intent to misuse public resources for his personal benefit. This type of violation seriously undermines the public trust.” It adds, “We are hopeful that Mr. Etienne has learned from the experience of paying a substantial fine and restitution [\$1,000 to the Ethics Commission and \$2,155.66 to the City of North Miami] and receiving this reprimand and will use this letter to guide his future conduct.”

Probable Cause was found that an employee of a company that designs and manufactures products for traffic control lobbied without following the proper registration requirements. Ivette Arango O’Doski represented the firm Trafficware when she organized a meeting between her company executives and various elected and appointed Miami-Dade County

officials in May 2017. She had registered to lobby, but failed to file an authorization form and affidavit specific to Trafficware. Once notified of the requirements, Ms. O'Doski filed the required forms. Because of her swift compliance, the Ethics Commission dismissed the complaint (**C 18-30-07**) and will issue a Letter of Instruction.

A member of the Miami-Dade County Affordable Housing Advisory Board and Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust Board may contract with the County as an Infill housing developer. That is the COE's response to a Request for Opinion (**RQO 18-03**) by Charles Sims, whose company, SIMCAR DEV LLC, acquired a County-owned lot to erect low cost housing and is also building retail outlets on adjacent property. Both State law and County ordinances require that both boards on which he serves include experts in affordable housing. And, since Sims is not seeking any public funding for the projects, the Opinion permits Sims to contract as an Infill developer as long as he avoids any conflict of interest. That means he may not appear before those boards and participate or vote on any matter in which he may receive a direct or indirect benefit on behalf of his company; he may not represent third parties before the board; may not use his position to secure special privileges; and, may not disclose confidential information regarding board business.

The Ethics Commission dismissed a complaint (**C 18-23-06**) filed against Frandzy Pierre Michel, a former member of the North Miami Advisory Committee on the Disabled and on the City's Affordable Housing Committee for not filing financial disclosure forms for 2016 and 2017. Once informed of the complaint, Michel completed the required Source of Income statements for both years.

*The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.*

###