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EYE ON ETHICS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



Issue 12 - August 2020 Happenings



Commission on Ethics & Public Trust by the Numbers:

The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust is Staffed with 16 Full time Employees Including 6 Attorneys and 4 Investigators.

Director's Message



Dear Friends & Colleagues,

We are in full election season, having just completed primaries with less than sixty days until the November elections. For the Ethics Commission, that means presenting ethical campaign practices training sessions throughout Miami Dade County, in partnership with the County Elections Department staff, Municipal Clerks, and the various City Attorneys. The County's Ethical Campaign Practices Ordinance governs the practices of County and municipal candidates and their campaign staffs. The ordinance generally prohibits candidates from making knowingly, false and malicious attacks on political opponents. The Ethics Commission is charged with enforcing the ordinance

Quick Links

24 Hour

**Complaint
Hotline**

786-314-9560



Visit Us

Commissioners

Nelson C. Bellido Esq.,

Chair

and our legal staff has been providing guidance to candidates for local elected office throughout this election cycle.

Also, as regards incumbents seeking reelection or election to higher office, we have been busy providing guidance on what is permissible use of public resources to communicate with constituents versus the prohibited use of those resources for campaigning. Towards the goal of affording continuing guidance in this area, in web based training offered later this month on September 29, 2020, we will be providing the ethics and criminal enforcement perspective on prohibited use of public resources by incumbent candidates and partnering with First Amendment law experts, municipal attorneys, and local officials who will provide their own perspectives. Please check on the Ethics Commission website for webinar information. Participation is free of cost.

This past month, we sadly said goodbye to Ethics Commission staff member, Machell Anderson. Machell passed away unexpectedly after contributing over thirty-five years to public service with the Miami Dade State Attorney's Office and returning from retirement to serve the Miami Dade County Commission on Ethics as an executive assistant. Her competence, guidance and smile will be missed county-wide by all those who dealt with her over the years.

Finally, the Ethics Commission is now in place at our new staff offices at Overtown Transit Village North. Our move from the Biscayne Building on Flagler Street is complete and staff, the Ethics Commission, and members of the public will benefit from our more modern and accessible offices. Special thanks to our partners in the County's Internal Services Department who built out our new space and facilitated our move.

Best regards,
Jose Arrojo

Dr. Judith Bernier,
Vice Chair
Judge Lawrence A.
Schwartz
Jan Jacobowitz, Esq.
Wifredo Gort

Executive Director
Jose J. Arrojo, Esq.

Advocate
Michael P. Murawski, Esq.

General Counsel
Martha Perez, Esq.



**Florida Commission
on Ethics**

Let's Help Stop the Spread of Coronavirus



Best Practices for Social Distancing at Your Business

Florida Department of Health • FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19

**KEEP AT LEAST 6-Feet
between people whether
they are employees or
customers**

**ROUTINELY CLEAN &
DISINFECT ALL FREQUENTLY
TOUCHED SURFACES**

DISCOURAGE HANDSHAKING

**PLACE HAND SANITIZERS IN
MULTIPLE LOCATIONS &
ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES AND
CUSTOMERS TO WASH THEIR
HANDS OFTEN**

**PROVIDE TISSUES AND
NO-TOUCH DISPOSAL
RECEPTACLES**

**DO NOT HOLD GATHERINGS OR
MEETINGS IN EXCESS OF 10
PEOPLE. EVEN IN SMALL
MEETINGS, MAINTAIN
6-FOOT DISTANCE.**

**DISCOURAGE WORKERS FROM
SHARING PHONES, DESKS,
OFFICES OR OTHER WORK
TOOLS**

**USE PRECAUTION WITH SICK
CUSTOMERS**

**EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE
OF STAYING HOME IF AN
EMPLOYEE IS FEELING SICK**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Chairman Interviewed by Organization that Seeks Diversity



Commission on Ethics & Public Trust Chairman Nelson Bellido recently took part in an interview session spearheaded by The National Association of Minority & Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF), an organization that seeks to promote diversity in the legal profession by fostering successful relationships among

preeminent minority and women owned law firms and private/public entities. Chairman Bellido, who early this year was elected to NAMWOLF's Board of Directors, spoke about several topics but the primary focus of the interview was related to the importance of diversity and inclusion in our community. "When it comes to diversity and inclusion, it's about feeling comfortable with other races and genders, said Chairman Bellido. "I've been living it a long time. I am very involved in my community and I support organizations like NAMWOLF that promote diversity."

During the interview, Chairman Bellido also points out the importance of his role as an ethics commissioner and how much it says about his belief in honesty and integrity.

To see the interview in its entirety click [here](#).

August Ethics - Commission Meeting Actions

Summary of the
Miami-Dade County Commission on
Ethics & Public Trust
Meeting Held on August 12, 2020



The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public held a virtual Commission Meeting on August 12, 2020 by way of the ZOOM platform. The following actions took place:

Miami Beach Lobbyist Fined for Non-Compliance

Lobbyist Juan Carlos Planas received a reduced fine of \$262.50 for his failure to file expenditure and compensation statements as required by the City of Miami Beach Lobbyist Ordinance.

Hearing Date in Case Involving State Representative to be Determined at a Later Date

The hearing date for case **C 18-17-04** involving State Representative Michael Grieco will be discussed at the September Commission Meeting. The feasibility of having the case heard virtually will also be determined.

Executive Director's Report

The Ethics Commission declined to issue a formal opinion regarding prohibitions on public comment by public officials with a voting conflict on the matter relating to the conflict and instead will continue to rely on prior formal and informal opinions on the subject.

The Commission on Ethics Staff Office continues to pack in preparation for its move to a new location by the end of September.

No Probable Cause Found in Case Involving the Manager of the City of North Miami

C 20-21-06: The Ethics Commission unanimously found No Probable Cause that North Miami City Manager Arthur Sorey violated the Public Records Section of the Citizen's Bill of Rights.

Complaint against North Miami Beach Mayor Dismissed

C 20-22-06: A complaint filed against the Mayor of North Miami Beach, Anthony DeFillipo, alleging that he was in violation of North Miami's Beach Citizen's Bill of Rights was Dismissed for lack of legal sufficiency.

Complaint against Village of El Portal Councilwoman Dismissed

C 20-23-06: A complaint filed against Village of El Portal Councilwoman Vimari Roman, alleging that Councilwoman Roman exploited her official position was Dismissed for lack of legal sufficiency.

Complaint against Candidate for County Commissioner Dismissed

C 20-24-07: A complaint filed against Mark Coats, candidate for County Commissioner in District 9, alleging that he was in violation of the Ethics Campaign Practices Ordinance, was dismissed for lack of legal sufficiency.

Providing Training to Committee Members

Miami-Dade County uses selection and evaluation committees in competitive solicitations of County contracts. The members of the committees must be fair,



impartial, objective and qualified in the subject matter area of the respective solicitation. All prospective members of a selection committee are **required** to attend a workshop, facilitated by the Department of Procurement Management, aimed at discussing the role and responsibilities of a selection committee member. Ethics Commission staff participate in these workshops, training all prospective selection committee members on the County's Cone of Silence, Florida

Sunshine Law and Florida Public Records. These workshops are conducted on a monthly basis and are an integral part of the County's commitment to ensuring a fair and impartial process in awarding County contracts.

In Memoriam: Machell Anderson



This past month, the Ethics Commission, and the greater Miami-Dade Community, lost long-time public servant, Machell Anderson. Machell passed away unexpectedly at her home. She was a life-long time resident of this community, graduating from Carol City Senior High School and receiving her undergraduate and graduate degrees in criminal justice from Florida International University. Machell dedicated 35 years to the Miami Dade State Attorney's Office. As a legal secretary, trial coordinator, and executive assistant, Machell was assigned to work on some of the most sensitive and significant cases handled in that office. She

worked alongside County Inspector General Mary Cagle and Ethics Commission Executive Director Jose Arrojo when they served as Chief Assistant State Attorneys. She returned from retirement last year to serve the Ethics Commission. Machell's competence, devotion to public service, and easy smile that put everyone at ease will be greatly missed.

At the most recent COE meeting a moment of silence was observed in her honor. "Machell was a quiet leader who was there to hold our executive director up," said COE Chairman Nelson Bellido. "If there is something I remember about Machell is that great smile and that she was such a welcoming person. She was somebody you could always count on to make you feel better."

Ethics Commission in the News

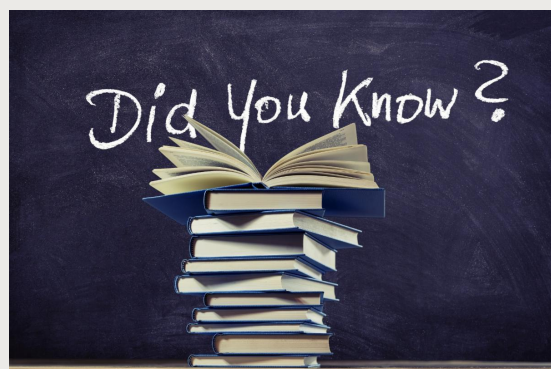
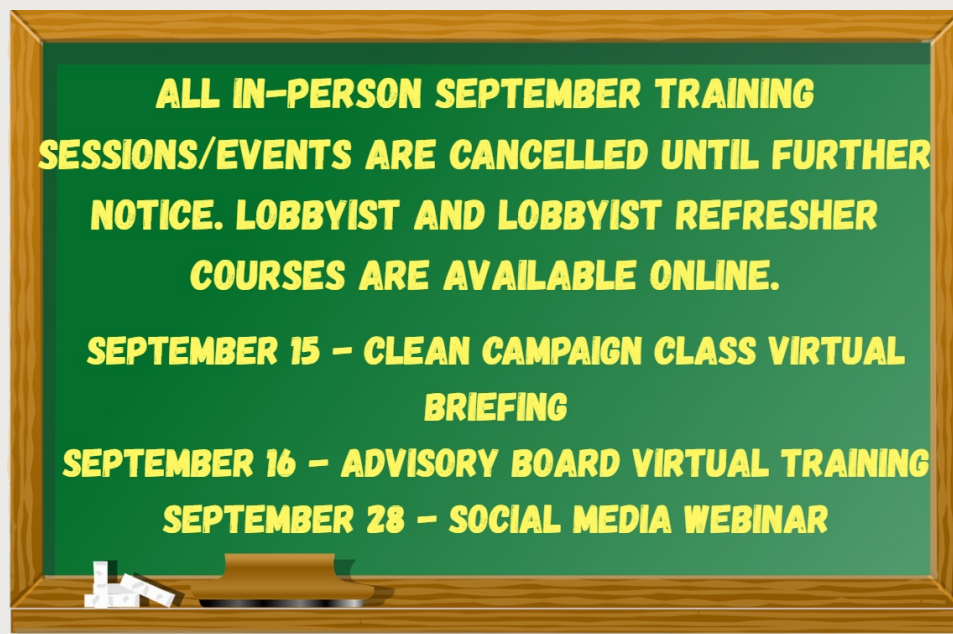


To read the article click on the link below:

Sweetwater Commissioner Sophia Lacayo Deliberately "Swore to False Information"

CBS 4 Miami, September 1, 2020

Educating the Community / Upcoming Events



The Ethics Commission is happy to provide ethics training and/or discuss civic engagement with any government entity, philanthropic organization, homeowner or business association. Please call 305-579-2594 for information and scheduling.

Miami-Dade County Commission on
Ethics & Public Trust
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Website: www.ethics.miamidade.gov

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