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### **Semi-Finalists Named for Ethics Commission Director**

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) today selected seven semi-finalists in the effort to find a replacement for Executive Director Joseph Centorino, who will leave his position at the end of August. The candidates are (in alphabetical order): Chief Assistant Miami-Dade State Attorney Jose Arrojo, Attorney Kathryn Estevez, former Ft. Lauderdale City Attorney Cynthia Everett, United Nations Director of Alliance of Civilizations Matthew Hodes, Senior Circuit Court Judge Judith Kreeger, Deputy Miami City Attorney Barnaby Min and Ethics Commission Advocate Michael Murawski. Ethics Commissioners will conduct interviews with those individuals in June. They hope to approve a contract with the chosen candidate at the July meeting.

In other action today, the Ethics Commission closed cases involving two officials of a consulting company to Miami International Airport who were accused of breaking County rules while the Aviation Department was soliciting proposals to revamp its baggage system in 2015. A complaint (**C 18-06-01**) against Robert Binish accuses the Vice President of AvAirPros of violating the Cone of Silence when he communicated with Debra Shore – a former Aviation Manager who was serving on the selection committee to recommend a vendor to operate the baggage system at MIA – including recommending how to score the three companies vying for the work. After the preferred vendor was selected, it subcontracted with AvAirPros where Shore had been hired after leaving County service. Today, the COE approved a settlement in which Binish pled no contest to the allegation. He paid \$500 of investigative costs and will accept a Letter of Instruction. Another AvAirPros Executive, Christopher Bradley, served on the same selection committee, which complaint **C 18-10-02** cites as creating a conflict under the Ethics Code, since Bradley voted in favor of recommending the company that hired his firm as a subcontractor. However, because Bradley's employment was disclosed to the County and neither the County's Procurement Division nor County Attorney's office recognized his conflict or objected to his participation on the selection panel, the COE dismissed the complaint. A Letter of Instruction will be issued to document the conflict for future procurement matters.

The former Assistant Chief of the North Miami Police Department, Neil Cuevas, filed a complaint (**C 18-16-03**) against Police Chief Larry Juriga, alleging that he was demoted to road patrol sergeant in retaliation for "blowing the whistle" on improper conduct with the department and for accusing Juriga of violating the North Miami Honor Code ordinance. Because the Ethics Commission can only provide whistle blower protection for Miami-Dade County employees and does not have legal authority to enforce the North Miami Honor Code for non-elected officials, the complaint was dismissed as Not Legally Sufficient.

Ethics Commissioners confirmed today they will hold a public hearing next week on a complaint (**C 16-34**) accusing North Miami Beach Councilman Frantz Pierre of abusing his position by threatening a code compliance officer and threatening to fire city officials when he was cited for property violations in February 2015. Probable Cause was determined in

November 2016 that Commissioner Pierre violated the “exploitation of official position” provision of the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance. The hearing will take place at 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2018, in the COE conference room.

Also today, Ethics Commissioner Carol Zeiner was honored for her service on the board. While she filled an incomplete term for only one year, St. Thomas University Prof. Zeiner was applauded for dedication and quick adaptation to her COE duties. Her position is an alternating selection that now turns to the University of Miami School of Law, which has appointed faculty member Jan Jacobowitz. She serves as Director of the Law School’s Professional Responsibility and Ethics Program and as Director of UM’s Government and Ethics Project. Ms. Jacobowitz will be sworn in as the newest Ethics Commissioner next month.

*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.*

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