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SESSION GUIDE

Monday, December 16th, 2024
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Kenneth C. Griffin is the Founder and CEO of Citadel, one of the world's leading alternative investment firms, and the Founder and Non-Executive Chairman of Citadel Securities, one of the world's preeminent market makers. In 1990, Ken founded Citadel on the belief that extraordinary individuals, equipped with advanced quantitative analytics and powerful software, could unlock opportunities in the world's capital markets. A commitment to continuous learning, problem-solving, and meritocracy defines the firm's culture. In 2002, Ken and his partners established Citadel Securities as a market maker in the U.S. capital markets. Today, Citadel Securities is one of the world's largest liquidity providers, and is routinely recognized among the best places to work and is renowned for advancing the careers of its team members. A passionate philanthropist, Ken has donated more than \$2 billion to advance education, opportunity, and health sciences initiatives that significantly transform people's lives. In 2023, he launched Griffin Catalyst to encompass his personal philanthropy and community impact efforts.

Heat, Floods and Storms:
Regional Collaboration for Preparedness and Response

From hurricanes to extreme heat, Miami-Dade County faces pressing challenges that highlight the need for collaboration to enhance community resilience and trust. Join us for a panel discussion featuring county and municipal leaders as they explore current initiatives, best practices, and innovative solutions aimed at improving regional preparedness and response efforts to safeguard our communities and ensure a sustainable future.

Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County



Daniella Levine Cava was elected Miami-Dade County's first-ever woman mayor in November 2020, after 40 years of advocacy for South Florida families. As mayor, she oversees nearly 30,000 county employees, serves nearly 3 million residents, and manages an annual budget of nearly \$12 billion. She is focused on building a more resilient and prosperous Miami-Dade. Her initiatives include combating gun violence, building a future ready economy full of opportunity, tackling the housing crisis, and preserving our precious environment. A social worker, lawyer, and activist, she previously served as the County Commissioner for District 8 and worked with vulnerable populations through Legal Services of Greater Miami and Catalyst Miami, an organization she founded. With her husband, Dr. Robert Cava, she raised two children, Eliza and Edward, in Miami-Dade.

Alix Desulme, Mayor, City of North Miami



North Miami Mayor **Alix Desulme** is a dynamic leader whose dedication to community service shines brightly in every aspect of his public service career. As a lifelong educator, Mayor Desulme has touched the lives of countless students, from at-risk youth to gifted learners, with his unwavering commitment to their growth and success. His entrepreneurial spirit as a small business owner further demonstrates his versatility and drive for excellence. In 2009, Mayor Desulme made history as North Miami's first Black City Clerk and the youngest Haitian American to hold such a position in the United States. His trailblazing journey continued in 2015 when he was elected to the North Miami City Council, and in 2016 when he became the youngest Vice-Mayor in the City's history. Mayor Desulme now serves as Mayor of North Miami since being elected in 2022. As an educator, Mayor Desulme founded the NoMi Leaders in Training Program (L.I.T.) to prepare the next generation of public servants and ensure a seamless transition into the City's Youth Opportunity Board (YOB) Summer Internship Program. In his current role as an Adjunct Professor at St. Thomas University and an Educational Consultant for ELB Global, Mayor Desulme continues to influence and inspire.

Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Dr. Jose L. Dotres is the Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), the third-largest school district in the nation with over 40,000 employees and 330,000 students. At the age of five, he arrived in Miami, Florida – an immigrant boy from humble beginnings who enrolled in M-DCPS as an English Language Learner, graduated from high school, and began a long and rewarding career serving students, parents, employees, and the larger school community within the system that welcomed him as a child. Having held multiple instructional and administrative leadership roles over the course of his career in M-DCPS and other educational organizations, Dr. Dotres is a proven educator with a wealth of experience. He has served in the capacity of Teacher, Reading Coach, Principal, District Administrator, Regional Administrative Director, Region Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer of Broward County Public Schools, Chief of Staff, Chief Human Capital Officer, and most recently, Deputy Superintendent of Collier County Public Schools. Dr. Dotres holds a doctorate degree in Leadership and Innovation from St. Thomas University, an educational specialist degree in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Miami, a master's degree in Reading from Barry University, and a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Florida International University.

Heat, Floods and Storms:
Regional Collaboration for Preparedness and Response

Rebecca Fishman Lipsey, President & CEO, The Miami Foundation



Rebecca Fishman Lipsey is President and CEO of The Miami Foundation, the home base for generosity, leadership, and connection focused on building a Miami where everyone thrives. Since her appointment in 2020, Rebecca has grown the Foundation by 50%, infusing a commitment to equity into every grant program and initiative at the Foundation. Prior to leading The Miami Foundation, Rebecca was the youngest person in history appointed to the Florida Board of Education, overseeing educational policy impacting 3 million children from kindergarten through college. Rebecca founded Radical Partners, an incubator for social impact ventures. She started her career as a public-school teacher, inspired by her grandparents' experience as refugees years ago. Rebecca holds a master's from Bank Street College of Education and graduated as valedictorian of her University of Pennsylvania undergraduate class.

Dr. Jesse Spearo, Assistant Director, Miami-Dade County Emergency Management



Dr. Jesse Spearo has served as a public safety practitioner for nearly 20 years, having worked in positions at all levels of government including Federal, Tribal, State, County, and Municipal. He has responded to nearly a dozen Presidential Disaster Declarations. He is the author or co-author of more than 50 emergency management plans and publications, and regularly presents his findings at national and international conferences. Currently, he serves as the Assistant Director for the Miami-Dade County Department of Emergency Management. Dr. Spearo was previously the Senior Emergency Management Program Specialist for the Broward County Aviation Department - Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (FLL) Prior to his work in aviation, Dr. Spearo served as the first emergency manager for the City of Cape Coral, where he developed a nationally recognized municipal emergency management program. Dr. Spearo holds a Ph.D. in Public Safety and Emergency Management; a dual Master's of Science in Emergency Planning Administration and Criminal Justice Administration; and a Bachelor's of Arts in Criminal Justice and Political Science.

Notes:

Shaping Florida's Future Workforce

High-quality early learning programs are essential, not only for supporting families but also for building a stronger future workforce, ensuring long-term economic prosperity.

Miami-Dade's affordability crisis has placed an immense strain on working families whose incomes cannot keep up with the rising cost of living. Despite state-mandated minimum wage increases, many families find themselves losing essential benefits and facing tough decisions. Meanwhile, employers, both in the public and private sectors, are grappling with labor shortages that hinder their economic growth.

This crisis has created a lose-lose situation for both families and industries throughout Miami-Dade. Childcare affordability directly impacts Florida's workforce and economy. According to the Florida Chamber of Commerce's 2023 "*Untapped Potential in Florida*" report, the state loses an estimated \$5.38 billion annually due to insufficient childcare access, along with \$911 million in tax revenue and \$3.47 billion in employer costs tied to turnover and absenteeism.

Families who lose access to critical services like Florida's School Readiness childcare subsidy program often face overwhelming financial burdens, with childcare costs consuming more than 40% of their income. This creates significant barriers in high-cost areas, forcing families to choose between quality childcare and other essential needs. The panel will explore these pressing challenges and potential solutions that your city or organization can support.

James R. Haj, President & CEO, The Children's Trust



James R. Haj joined The Children's Trust as president and CEO in April 2016. With Mr. Haj at the helm, The Trust has enjoyed one of its most successful periods. Trust investment in programs and services for children and families in Miami-Dade County has risen to its highest levels. At the same time, administrative expenses dropped to their lowest percentage in the organization's history. He also led The Trust through the unprecedented challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, expanding funding for emergency assistance programs, strengthening neighborhood supports and serving as an essential voice for children and families during unprecedented hardships.

Alfred Sanchez, President & CEO, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce



Alfred Sanchez is the president and chief executive officer of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, South Florida's first and the longest-sustaining business development organization and one of the largest chambers in the southeastern U.S. In this role, Alfred directs a team of 25 chamber professionals, supporting more than 400,000 employees of chamber member companies in South Florida. His involvement with the chamber spans 21 years and includes serving on the board of directors, chairing the Marketing Committee and Leadership Programs Group, and serving on the Nonprofit Committee. He attributes much of his success in South Florida to his deep involvement with the chamber



Shaping Florida's Future Workforce

Madeleine Thakur, President & CEO, The Children's Movement of Florida



Madeleine Thakur is president & CEO of The Children's Movement of Florida, a statewide advocacy organization focused on the policies and investments that help each child in Florida thrive in their first five years. She leads The Movement's state-level policy efforts, building strong relationships with elected officials and informing the public about early childhood issues in the legislature. She provides strategic direction for the business engagement initiative Bosses for Babies, the early literacy mentorship program ReadingPals, and the community-centered work of The Future Project. Madeleine sits on the board of the Florida Chamber Foundation and chairs the Florida Early Learning Consortium, whose focus is legislative advocacy. In 2024, she was named an Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow. Before joining The Movement in September 2017, she spent nearly a decade focused on economic and social development in Latin America, working closely with senior executives in the legal, tech, consumer goods, and financial sectors.

Evelio Torres, President & CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe



Evelio C. Torres has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe counties since 2007. In the 16 years that Mr. Torres has led the organization he has expanded its reach, programs and budget through strategic partnerships at the local, state and federal level. Mr. Torres is a strong policy advocate who has been intricately involved in state policy changes to improve the quality of Florida's early learning programs. In partnership with over 1,300 early care and education programs and other community partners, the Early Learning Coalition and its team of 300 dedicated professionals deliver community-based services in culturally diverse, child and family friendly settings to over 40,000 children annually.

Rodrick Miller, President & CEO, Miami-Dade Beacon Council



Rodrick Miller is a globally respected economic development leader and strategist with expertise in navigating complex political and business environments to create sustained growth for communities and investors. Currently, he serves as President and CEO of Miami-Dade County's official economic development organization, focusing on attracting companies that drive inclusive, long-term prosperity. Miller has spearheaded economic recovery efforts across the U.S. in cities like New Orleans, Detroit, and Puerto Rico, bringing over \$6 billion in private investment and 50,000 new jobs to communities. He is also the founder of Ascendant Global, advising clients on innovative economic solutions. Miller holds a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School and is a Visiting Fellow at Harvard's Taubman Center, where he is building a community of practice to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development, training future leaders, and researching topics such as inclusive growth, incentives, and the Build Back Better program. Recognized with awards like Young Economic Developer of the Year and Michigan Man of Excellence, he serves on various boards and frequently lectures and publishes on economic development and the future of work.



Achieving Your Goals...and...Celebrating Your Birthday!!!

Within Work, Government, and Beyond... How do you achieve your goals? What are the steps to achieving your goals? What does success and goal achievement look like? There will be obstacles and challenges that will confront you while working within Municipal Government and Throughout Your Life. What are the steps that you need to take? What do you need to have in place to assist you? We will get answers that will lead to Success and the Celebration of Your Birthday!!!

Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson, Ph.D., Mayor, Village of El Portal



Mayor Omarr C. Nickerson, Ph.D. was born in Miami, Florida. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Miami "The U" in Liberal and Social Arts. He then went on to obtain his 1st Master's Degree in Global History and Socio-Geographic Studies from the University of Cairo, in Egypt. He got his 2nd Master's Degree in International Political Science and Economic Development from the University of Damascus, in Syria. His Doctorate Degree was also acquired in International Studies and International Relations/Affairs from the University of Beijing, in China, and the University of Damascus, in Syria, respectively. Mr. Nickerson is first and foremost a lecturer, who has given numerous speeches to the public throughout the Middle East and Asia. He also works as a "hands-on" educator with schools that are listed under the educational transformation status, due to their low scores on standardized tests. He has obtained Certifications in Micro and Macro Economics, World History, American Government, American History, and Geography. He also has Certifications to educate individuals with a wide range of disabilities, including those with Special Learning Needs, Varying Exceptionalities, Specific Learning Disabilities, and Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. As Mayor of El Portal, he has overseen Historic Economic, Financial, Infrastructure, Development, and Business Success. He credits the Residents of El Portal, the El Portal Administrative and Governmental Team, Ms. Clerk Jacobi, CMC, and Ms. Christia E. Alou, Esq., who he refers to as his "Tag- Team Partner in Success" regarding and in connection with these Historic Levels of Accomplishments and Achievements. When asked what he wanted for the village and community, he stated "More Council-Community Involvement and Improved, Transparent Communication," which would be his primary focus for El Portal's immediate future.

Notes:



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**Florida's Cyber Future:
Insights and Expectations from New State Leadership**

This panel will provide a forward-thinking discussion on the role of Florida's newly elected state leaders in shaping the future of the state's cybersecurity landscape.

Key topics will include recent advancements and successes in cyber resilience, emerging threats to digital infrastructure, and the impact of legislative priorities on state and local cybersecurity initiatives. The panel will also explore the role of public-private partnerships, workforce development programs, and funding strategies in aligning with statewide goals to ensure a secure digital future for Florida.

Mike Asencio, Acting Director of Cybersecurity Policy, FIU Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy



Mike Asencio is the Acting Director of Cybersecurity Policy at the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, leading the institute's Cyber pillar and multiple initiatives, including the CyberSecureFlorida Training Initiative. He has a focus on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cyber infrastructure resiliency, cyber safety, and cyber policy, dedicated to enhancing cyber readiness. Previously at Florida International University (FIU), Mike directed the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC), expanding its global reach, and managed projects on emerging technologies like blockchain and Web3 at the Office of Engagement. He collaborates with government and industry to develop innovative solutions, shaping robust cybersecurity strategies and policies. Fluent in Spanish, Mike holds an M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction focused on Learning Technologies, and a B.A. from FIU.

Candace Wynn, Cyber Community Operations Manager, Florida Digital Service (FL[DS])



Candace Wynn is a recognized cybersecurity professional with over 12 years of experience in information technology and security. As the Cyber Community Operations Manager for the Florida Digital Service (FL[DS]), she plays a pivotal role in strengthening cybersecurity collaboration among state and local governments. Among her notable achievements is her effort to break down silos among government entities, fortifying their collective cybersecurity response. Additionally, she acts as a liaison between the Florida Cybersecurity Advisory Council and the FL[DS] and is the cybersecurity training coordinator for the state. Before her role at FL[DS], Candace provided critical cybersecurity insights as a Cyber Navigator for the Department of State and as a Security Analyst Lead for the Department of Revenue, both in the state of Florida. Her expertise ranges from establishing robust security frameworks aligned with NIST guidelines to leading compliance audits and risk assessments.



**Florida's Cyber Future:
Insights and Expectations from New State Leadership**

James "Jim" Aldrich, Associate Director for Education & Training, CyberFlorida



Jim joined the Center in July 2022 after serving over 50 years in the Intelligence Community (IC) in a variety of positions focused on Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Cyber Security missions as well as associated Education & Training. He is a retired Marine Corps Intelligence Officer, and Arabic linguist, who served 28 years in a wide range of assignments within the U.S. and overseas locations. After retiring in 1998, he worked for the Aerospace Corporation supporting the National Reconnaissance Office from 1998-2002 and then became a National Security Agency (NSA) employee for 20 years; the last 18 as a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES). He held several positions spanning the agency's SIGINT and Cyber Security missions: NSA Representative to U.S. Special Operations Command, NSA Representative to U.S. Transportation Command and NSA Representative (forward deployed) in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. In these roles he evaluated the customers' requirements and ensured agency resources were applied. 2004 – 2010 Jim served as the senior NSA official in Operations at the agency's facility on Fort Gordon Georgia – focused largely on support to USSOCOM, USCENTCOM, and JSOC. Based on his breadth of experience, and previous work as both an Instructor and Course Director, he was selected to serve as the Deputy Commandant of NSA's National Cryptologic University; responsible for orchestrating Education & Training to over 40,000 civilians and military members working with the agency. In his last assignment at NSA his office provided strategic planning support to the NSA Board of Directors and several large NSA organizations located both in the U.S. and overseas locations. Jim is a graduate of Texas A&M (BA in International Relations) and the U.S. Naval War College (MA in National Security & Strategic Studies) and has also completed several Senior Executive level leadership courses sponsored by the IC and DoD.

Lawrence Embil, Security Manager, Miami-Dade County



Lawrence is a cybersecurity strategist with 25 years of experience across private, public, and academic sectors. He has served in CTO, CISO, and Director roles, and currently manages Miami-Dade County's Security Architecture, Risk and Compliance, and Incident Response teams. Specializing in critical infrastructure security, he implements prescriptive controls for projects such as nuclear plant control systems, election security, and Smart City initiatives. Skilled in leading risk assessments, he holds multiple cybersecurity certifications and co-founded an AI and cybersecurity advisory practice in 2017. Committed to supporting the South Florida community, Lawrence enjoys mentoring and serves on the cybersecurity curriculum advisory committee for Miami Dade College.



Session on Constitutional Officers

How the role of the newly created constitutional offices will impact local government. This session explores their decisions and strategies for fostering collaboration in governance.

Senator Rene Garcia, Miami-Dade County Commissioner



René Garcia is a product of Northwest Dade. He was born and raised in the City of Hialeah. Commissioner Garcia’s passion for serving his community began more than 20 years ago as a Councilman in the City of Hialeah. As a State Representative, and then as a State Senator, Rene focused on helping those most in need. Giving a voice to the voiceless has always been Rene’s number one priority. He advocated for comprehensive reforms to our mental health laws, sponsored legislation to end surprise medical bills after any hospitalization, promoted the importance of expanding health care services for children through the Florida KidCare program, and has been a staunch advocate for the seniors in our community. Elected in 2020 as County Commissioner for District 13, Commissioner Garcia truly believes in the importance of balancing the economic progress and growth of a community with the social needs of its people, while working together to address the pressing issues of the community such as workforce housing, the environment, our crumbling infrastructure and safety in our communities, using a pragmatic approach to leave this community a better place for our children.

Juan Fernandez-Barquin, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, Miami-Dade County



Juan Fernandez-Barquin serves as the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller for Miami-Dade County, overseeing public records and taxpayer funds for one of the nation’s largest judicial circuits. Appointed in 2023, he manages a \$105 million budget and leads a team of 1,100 employees across 16 facilities. Previously, he represented House District 119 in the Florida House of Representatives, chairing key committees on ethics, elections, and government transparency. A Miami native and graduate of Florida International University, Juan’s career reflects a commitment to efficiency, accountability, and public service.

Alina Garcia, Supervisor of Elections, Miami-Dade County



Alina Garcia is a former Florida State Representative and small business owner with over 30 years of experience serving her community. Raised in Miami, she graduated from Miami Senior High School and Miami Dade Community College, benefiting from a robust public education. A dedicated public servant, Alina focuses on ensuring transparent and inclusive elections, driven by her personal experiences escaping Cuba’s oppressive regime and witnessing the value of democracy firsthand. Elected to the Florida State House in 2022, she advocates for policies that uphold democratic integrity and protect the rights of all Floridians.

Rosie Cordero-Stutz, Sheriff, Miami-Dade County



Rosie Cordero-Stutz is Miami-Dade County’s first elected Sheriff since the 1960s, bringing extensive law enforcement experience to her role. As Assistant Director of Investigative Services for the Miami-Dade Police Department, she led the transition to the Sheriff’s Office, showcasing her expertise in public safety. Rosie is committed to fostering collaboration, transparency, and fairness while ensuring that all Miami-Dade neighborhoods feel secure. Her vision prioritizes unity, community trust, and proactive law enforcement for a safer Miami-Dade County.

Session on Constitutional Officers

Dariel Fernandez, Tax Collector, Miami-Dade County



Dariel Fernandez is a Miami-Dade County community leader dedicated to advancing small businesses and fostering community engagement. Since immigrating from Cuba in 2002, Dariel has built a career centered on service and entrepreneurship. As the founder of Ponemus Group, a consulting and technology firm, he leverages innovative tools to support small businesses. Dariel is active in several organizations, including serving on the Miami-Dade County Community Council Board, which addresses zoning, municipal services, and community concerns. In addition, he represents District 34 for the Miami-Dade Republican Party and contributes to local economic development through his work with the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Tomas Regalado, Property Appraiser, Miami-Dade County



Tomas Regalado, a seasoned journalist and public servant, served as Mayor of Miami from 2009 to 2017, focusing on economic recovery, tax reduction, and municipal service improvements. Under his leadership, the city balanced budgets, grew reserves, and introduced the popular trolley transportation system. Born in Cuba and arriving in Miami via Operation Peter Pan, Tomas’ career began in journalism, eventually leading to roles in local and international media. His tenure as mayor demonstrated a commitment to fiscal responsibility and community investment, leaving a lasting impact on Miami’s infrastructure and financial stability

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Richard Kuper, Esq.
Executive Director, MDCLC
2655 S. Le Jeune Road, Suite 1014
Coral Gables, FL 33134
(305) 416-4155
