

MIAMIBEACH
HALL of FAME

Nominee's Name: Jorge M. Gonzalez

Nomination Submitted By: Alex J. Fernandez

MIAMI BEACH HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FORM

>>>Please Type All Information<<<

Nominee's Name: Jorge M. Gonzalez

Nominee's Occupation, Field of Achievement or Title:

Civic Leader: City Manager and Resident, City of Miami Beach, 2000-2021

SUBMITTER INFORMATION

Nomination Submitted by: Alex J. Fernandez

Title/Occupation of Submitter: Public Servant

Relationship to the Nominee: colleague

(Example: friend, colleague, student, employee, relative, etc.)

Address of Submitter: 3200 Chase Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33140

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Signature of Submitter:  Date: March 21, 2021

Jorge M. Gonzalez is a professional public administrator with more than 30 years experience in the field serving at the highest levels of local government administration. He has served as the Village Manager of Bal Harbour Village since November 12, 2013. Mr. Gonzalez is responsible for providing executive level leadership, vision and guidance to the organization, providing recommendations to the Village Council and implementing policy directives in an efficient and effective manner – all part of an incredibly diverse and dynamic community.

Previously, Mr. Gonzalez served as the City Manager of the City of Miami Beach from August 21, 2000 through September 30, 2012, becoming the City's 19th Manager since its incorporation in 1915. To date he was the youngest and longest-serving City Manager in the City's modern era. Miami Beach has a rich history as an entertainment and cultural destination, and during his tenure, Mr. Gonzalez made significant contributions to ensure the City's position as a world-class destination, while confronting the challenges of managing and servicing approximately 90,000 residents, along with an average daily population of more than 160,000 and over 15 million visitors per year.

Prior to joining the City of Miami Beach, Mr. Gonzalez was the Senior Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for Montgomery County, Maryland, the highest position in the County merit employment system. As Senior Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Gonzalez was part of the County's management team and was responsible for the coordination, direction and guidance of all aspects of the organization's operations, with special focus on technology, budget, personnel and labor/management issues.

From 1995-1999, Mr. Gonzalez was an Assistant County Manager for Arlington County, Virginia. While at Arlington County, he helped to coordinate the functions of a variety of departments, developed the County's plan and budget to prepare for Y2K, and was the County's point person on all interactions with Arlington Public Schools. In addition, he served concurrently as acting director of the Human Resources Department for almost two years.

From 1990 – 1995, Mr. Gonzalez held a number of positions with Miami-Dade County, including Assistant Director of Administration for the Center for the Fine Arts; Management Consultant with the Audit and Management Services Department; and a Management Trainee with the Office of the County Manager.

In 2004, Mr. Gonzalez received the first-ever *City Manager of the Year Award* from the Florida League of Cities. This award was created to honor a city manager in the state of Florida who displays exceptional excellence in the areas of judgment, initiative, integrity, innovation, professionalism, commitment, and citizen relations. The Florida League of Cities presented this award to Mr. Gonzalez in recognition of his commitment to public service, innovative thinking, and results-oriented accomplishments. In 2005 the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce presented Mr. Gonzalez with the *Citizen of the Year Award*. In 2002, Mr. Gonzalez received the Miami-Dade City/County Management Association's first ever *Leadership Award*. This award was established to honor

individuals who by force or initiative, innovation and perseverance have made an outstanding and significant contribution to the public interest in the area of government performance, leadership, ethics and policy. In 2009 Mr. Gonzalez received the *Public Official of the Year* from the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and in 2010 the *Member of the Year Award* from the International Hispanic Network. In 1999, Mr. Gonzalez was named by the Washingtonian Magazine among the "100 People to Watch in the New Millennium".

Mr. Gonzalez received a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Public Affairs and a Master Degree in Public Administration from the University of Miami. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia's Senior Executive Institute and both Leadership Washington, D.C. and Leadership Florida.

Mr. Gonzalez is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA), and the Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN). Mr. Gonzalez also serves as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Miami, since 2010. As a result of his distinguished career and record of achievement, Mr. Gonzalez has been invited to speak at various international, national and state conferences on a range of topics.

Mr. Gonzalez contributes his experience and leadership by actively serving/leading on the governing boards of several national, state and local organizations including: Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Executive Board of Governors, Greater Miami and the Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau (Executive Committee), Bass Museum of Art (Executive Board), Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami City Ballet, Miami Beach United Board of Directors, Adopt A Classroom, United Way of Arlington County, St. Patrick Catholic Church and School (Parish Council and Finance Committee), as well as professional organizations such as: ICMA-RC Client Advisory Board, ICMA Task Force on the Future of the Profession, ICMA International Committee, ICMA Strategic Planning Task Force, Local Government Hispanic Network, the Miami-Dade City/County Management Association and the Florida City/County Management Association Board of Directors (District V Representative).

In addition to these affiliations, as a resident Jorge has supported the community through the North Beach Elementary PTA, Friends of North Beach, and the St. Patrick Home and School Board Association.

Mr. Gonzalez was born and raised in South Florida, and has made Miami Beach his home for the past twenty years with his wife and children.

Nomination Jorge M. Gonzalez – *Civic Leader*
City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Jorge M. Gonzalez for the City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame in the category of *Civic Leader*.

Jorge has been a resident of Miami Beach for over 20 years, making Miami Beach his home upon relocating his family to our beautiful coastal city in 2000. Since arriving in Miami Beach, Mr. Gonzalez has served the community in both personal and professional capacities. For twelve (12) of these years, from August 21, 2000, through September 30, 2012, he served as City Manager of Miami Beach, where he was instrumental in establishing programs and legacy projects that have transformed our community in long lasting and meaningful ways. These efforts have contributed to making Miami Beach a highly desirable place to be for residents and visitors alike.

Miami Beach has a rich history as an entertainment and cultural destination, and during his tenure, Mr. Gonzalez made significant contributions to ensure the City's position as a world-class destination, while confronting the challenges of managing and servicing approximately 90,000 residents, along with an average daily population of more than 160,000, and over 15 million visitors per year.

Positioning the City as a cultural destination, Mr. Gonzalez successfully negotiated to make the City of Miami Beach the home of Art Basel Miami Beach, the sister event of the world's most prestigious art show, Art Basel. The City has hosted the most important art show in the Western Hemisphere, bringing an exclusive selection of more than 250 leading art galleries from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa to exhibit 20th and 21st century artworks by over 2,000 artists. He secured the permanent home for the Miami City Ballet and spearheaded the New World Center, home to the New World Symphony, the Country's Orchestral Academy, and oversaw the region's only convention center, which encompasses one million square feet. Mr. Gonzalez' leadership and initiative led to the newly reimagined convention center renovation and convention center hotel projects, which resulted in a \$600 million plus investment in the facility, completed in 2019. Mr. Gonzalez was also instrumental in attracting and promoting high-profile special events for the destination, ranging from Super Bowl (2007 and 2010), the Latin Grammys, MTV Latin Music Awards, the SOURCE Awards, the Latin Billboard Awards, and the ever-popular Food Network & Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. As a result, the City of Miami Beach continues to enjoy a reputation as a trend-setting destination.

Leading the City of Miami Beach into a number of exciting joint partnerships, Mr. Gonzalez successfully negotiated and entered into a joint development agreement with the New World Symphony in 2004 to develop a six-acre site, consisting of a symphony building, a public garage designed by world-renowned architect Frank O. Gehry, with a total construction value in excess of \$200 million, and the spectacular Soundscape park designed by the Dutch firm, West 8. The project's unique design allows enjoyment of indoor concerts and performances, which can be broadcast outdoors into Soundscape

Nomination Jorge M. Gonzalez – *Civic Leader*
City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame

Park. Soundscape Park continues to be programmed nearly year-round with free outdoor concerts, movies and other events for residents and visitors to enjoy.

In addition, the City of Miami Beach was in an enviable position with the two top producers of live music, AEG and Live Nation, and a world-renowned brand, Cirque du Soleil, competing to use and manage the Jackie Gleason Theater. In 2007, Mr. Gonzalez successfully negotiated a management agreement with Live Nation, considered the world's largest producer of live music, which brought the City over \$1 million in distributed proceeds in its first full year. Re-branded in its newest reiteration, the Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater opened in October 2007 and continues to offer live entertainment in Miami Beach.

As the Chief Executive Officer of a full-service urban community, Mr. Gonzalez was responsible for the development and oversight of an operating budget of approximately \$400 million and more than 1,700 employees. His twelve year tenure resulted in the City's highest bond ratings from Moody's and Standard and Poor's in the City's history, the City's lowest tax rates in decades, the City's highest reserves in history, a lesser tax burden on residents by having more of the City budget supported by non-property tax revenue, and successful navigation through the 2008 financial crisis – one of the most challenging economic periods for local governments in our generation.

This strong fiscal management enabled the City to attract investment, and undertake a Five Year Capital Improvement Plan of more than \$1 billion to both renovate the City's aging infrastructure, as well as design and develop new parks, facilities and signature green spaces. Projects revitalized all areas of the City, fortified underlying infrastructure, activated new spaces, and beautified public places. It is difficult to imagine our city today without the renovated and iconic South Pointe Park and Baywalk, credited with accelerating the revitalization of the South of Fifth neighborhood. Or the Collins Park Cultural Campus with its new Miami Beach Regional Library, renovated Bass Museum of Art, and public art installations offering open green space and views of the ocean. Or without Soundscape Park and the Frank Gehry designed New World Symphony concert hall and parking garage. Or the reimagined Miami Beach Botanical Garden redesigned by noted landscape architect Raymond Jungles, the renovated North Beach Band Shell Park that is programmed with concerts and events, or the signature Miami Beach Beachwalk, the seven-mile paved pathway that runs from South Beach to North Beach. The Miami Herald reported on January 27, 2021 the last and final segment of the Beachwalk is scheduled to be completed in 2022. "Our beachwalk is one of the great amenities of our community," Mayor Dan Gelber said in a statement. "Having an uninterrupted path down the entirety of our ocean front will be spectacular."

Neighborhood streets and roadways were improved and traffic calming measures were added to several neighborhoods. Hundreds of millions of dollars were invested in neighborhood improvements including road, lighting, landscape and beautification, and the much less visible but no less important aging water and sewer line replacement. Recreation facilities were added or renovated from Flamingo Park Pool and Tennis

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City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame

Center to Scott Rakow Youth Center to Normandy Pool and North Shore Park and Youth Center. New tot lots with shade structures were constructed at 53rd & Collins, 46th & Collins, South Pointe Park and Lummus Park, and shade structures became standard with every park renovation to allow for year-round enjoyment and protection from the sun. Bark Parks were added for our four-legged companions. Bus shelters were redesigned and new ones were added. Golfers enjoy the renovated Miami Beach Golf Club and Normandy Shores Golf Club, with newly constructed clubhouses and courses redesigned by golf course architect Arthur Hills. Seven new parking garages were constructed at Alton & 5th, 10th & Collins, 16th & Washington, Jefferson & 17th, the Frank Gehry designed garage at the New World Symphony, the public/private Sunset Harbor parking garage, and the City Hall parking garage at 17th & Meridian. If parking is a challenge today, imagine what it would be like without the addition of these thousands of new parking spaces. As an added benefit for residents, the Administration established a resident discount program for reduced rate parking at City owned garages, meters and parking lots. Residents and visitors enjoy all of these improvements today and will continue to do so for decades to come.

Under Jorge's leadership, the City developed a comprehensive sustainability plan that began with the early work of the Green Committee in 2007 and culminated with the first Sustainability Master Plan approved by the Commission in 2011. The plan was a roadmap to help the City sustain our natural resources, reduce consumption and educate the community. Under this plan, the Administration developed the first Stormwater Master Plan and the first Urban Forestry Master Plan. Beaches were renourished and dunes were restored and enhanced. Mr. Gonzalez developed and negotiated energy conserving alternative transportation programs, including the Decobike/CitiBike shared bike program and the Hertz On Demand shared car program, as well as affordable transportation options, including the South Beach Local bus service and the Airport Express Airport Shuttle. The City partnered with Ameresco in an energy savings performance contract to identify energy savings and efficiencies in buildings and operations that resulted in more than \$1 million reinvested annually in the city. In 2009, the United Nations Livable Communities recognized the City with a *Gold Award* as one of the most livable communities in the world.

Projects and accomplishments of this scope and scale do not happen without a high performing team working under your direction. In addition to recruiting top talent for leadership positions, Mr. Gonzalez raised the standard for all City employees and City departments to achieve professional accreditation. During his tenure, several City departments worked towards and achieved professional accreditation including Police, Fire, Parks and Recreation and Public Works, meeting national standards in their respective areas.

During his twelve-year tenure, Mr. Gonzalez developed and implemented the City's strategic planning framework, establishing a formal planning process and fostering an organizational culture focused on teamwork, performance measurement, effectiveness and out-of-the box thinking. This focus resulted in the City of Miami Beach's recognition

Nomination Jorge M. Gonzalez – *Civic Leader*
City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame

for a variety of projects and initiatives, including one project selected as the Governor's Florida Sterling Council 2007 Quality Team Showcase State Champion. That program – the Public Area Cleanliness Program – was created to address community feedback on cleanliness throughout the City, and was recognized as the project that imparted the greatest community impact. The American Planning Association (APA) Gold Coast Section also recognized the value and effectiveness of the City's strategic planning process in 2007, as they selected our City's Strategic Planning Process to receive the Award for Excellence for an Outstanding Strategic Planning Project or Study.

Being a resident of the city, while serving as City Manager, gave Mr. Gonzalez a unique perspective in understanding the community and its needs beyond City Hall. In 2008, he developed and negotiated a comprehensive Education Compact with the Miami Dade Public School system, which has become the model for Miami-Dade County. Included among the elements is the signature component, a Kindergarten through 12th grade, non-magnet, International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme implemented in every school, in every grade, available to every student in the Miami Beach feeder pattern culminating in the highly rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme in high school – the first of its kind in the nation. All students in public schools on Miami Beach can derive the benefit of this inquiry-based learning program. Under his leadership, the Parks Department expanded recreational programming and made it affordable for families. Parks were programmed with family oriented movies, carnivals, and special events. The City's pools and parks, and the popular tot Learn to Swim program, were made free for residents. For teens, the Administration created the Teen Club at 21st Street, a free after-school program funded by a federal grant from the Department of Juvenile Justice. Parks programming was expanded to include more after-school programs and regular and specialty summer camps. Scholarships were made available to ensure program access for all children and that no one was turned away for financial reasons.

Mr. Gonzalez made it a priority to engage Miami Beach residents in local government. To bring government closer to its citizens the Administration created the Miami Beach A-Z Guide for New Residents, a comprehensive guide to city services. In 2005 the Administration debuted a bi-monthly, bi-lingual news magazine, MB Magazine, with feature articles on people and places on Miami Beach and information on City programs and services including the Recreation Review and Summer Camp guide. Published continuously and mailed to all households on Miami Beach since 2005, the most recent Winter 2021 edition just arrived in mailboxes in January.

To develop future civic leaders and improve residents' participation in Miami Beach government, in 2002 Mr. Gonzalez created the Miami Beach Neighborhood Leadership Academy, an interactive civic and public information program to educate residents on City programs, services and functions. By 2011 the program had more than 550 graduates. A testament to the success of this program, several Miami Beach elected officials as well as numerous members of the City's boards and committees are graduates of the program. In 2003, Mr. Gonzalez' efforts resulted in the City of Miami

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City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame

Beach receiving the “*All America City*” Award from the National Civic League, the only community in the state of Florida and only one of 10 from around the country, to receive this prestigious, national award that recognizes communities that leverage civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness and innovation to successfully address local issues. Towards the end of his tenure, the City experienced the lowest crime rates and the City’s highest community satisfaction ratings from residents and businesses. In the Citizen Satisfaction Survey conducted in early 2012, 89% of residents rated their Quality of Life as Excellent or Good.

Mr. Gonzalez has demonstrated that his commitment to the City of Miami Beach went beyond his employment. He continues to serve the Miami Beach community by sharing his knowledge and experience to ensure that the community thrives in changing economic and political environments. Locally Mr. Gonzalez serves on the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Executive Board of Governors, the Miami Beach United Board of Directors, and the St. Patrick Catholic Church and School Parish Council and Finance Committee.

Although his tenure as City Manager came to an end, Jorge’s love and commitment to the community never wavered. He made good on his promise when he became City Manager: he left Miami Beach better than he found it. He had a direct impact on quality of life for residents, while, at the same time, promulgating Miami Beach as a global brand, and ensuring the financial health of the City. That was a difficult balancing act, which many times seemed easy to the casual observer. He left the City well-positioned financially and structurally, to continue its trajectory of success under new leadership. Mr. Gonzalez’s mark on the community is visible and palpable. In his over twenty years of living and working on Miami Beach, Mr. Gonzalez has certainly become part of the community fabric, today and for many generations to come.

March 17, 2021

Miami Beach Hall of Fame Nominating Committee
Department of Tourism and Culture
1755 Meridian Avenue, 5th Floor
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Dear Sir/Madam:

It is with great pleasure that we, Miami Beach United, submit this letter of support for Mr. Jorge Gonzalez' nomination as a Civic Leader to the Miami Beach Hall of Fame.

Mr. Gonzalez served for the twelve years as City Manager, the youngest person with the longest tenure of any City Manager in our City's history. He has consistently demonstrated exemplary leadership and contributed to Miami Beach in ways that will endure for generations to come and which positioned our City to become the world-class destination it is today.

Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Gonzalez was instrumental in the development of our City's strategic planning framework which established a formal planning process and fostered an organizational culture focused on teamwork, performance measurement, effectiveness and out-of-the box thinking, and which was recognized by the American Planning Association (APA) Gold Coast Section for its value and effectiveness in 2007.

Mr. Gonzalez secured a permanent home for the Miami City Ballet and spearheaded the New World Center, home to the New World Symphony, the Country's Orchestral Academy. He successfully negotiated to make the City of Miami Beach the home of Art Basel Miami Beach, the sister event of the world's most prestigious art show, Art Basel, and reimagined the convention center renovation project and convention center hotel projects, which was instrumental in attracting and promoting high-profile special events for the destination, ranging from Super Bowl (2007 and 2010), the Food Network's South Beach Food & Wine Festival, the Latin Grammys, MTV Latin Music Awards, the SOURCE Awards, and the Latin Billboard Awards.

Mr. Gonzalez successfully negotiated a management agreement with Live Nation (2007), considered the world's largest producer of live music, which brought the City over \$1 million in distributed proceeds in its first full year. Re-branded in its newest iteration, the Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater opened in October 2007.

Being a resident of the city while serving as City Manager gave Jorge a unique perspective in understanding the community and its needs. In 2008, Jorge developed and negotiated a comprehensive Education Compact with the Miami Dade Public School system which has become the model for Miami Dade County. Included among the elements is the signature component, a Kindergarten through 12th grade, non-magnet, International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme implemented in every school, in every grade, available to every student in the Miami Beach feeder pattern culminating in the highly rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB)

- 2009- *Gold Award* presented to the City of Miami Beach for being one of the most livable communities in the world by the United Nations Livable Communities.
- 2007- *Quality Team Showcase State Champion award* presented to the City of Miami Beach by the Governor's Florida Sterling Council.
- 2005- *Citizen of the Year Award* presented to Mr. Gonzalez by the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce.
- 2004- *City Manager of the Year Award* presented to Mr. Gonzalez by the Florida League of Cities.
- 2003- *All America City Award* presented to the City of Miami Beach by the the National Civic League, the only community in the state of Florida and only one of 10 from around the country, to receive this prestigious, national award.

To date Mr. Gonzalez continues to contribute his experience and leadership by actively serving/leading on the governing Board of several national, state and local organizations including: Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, Greater Miami and the Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau (Executive Committee), Bass Museum of Art (Executive Board), Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami City Ballet, Miami Beach United, Adopt A Classroom, United Way of Arlington County, and St. Patrick's Church and School (Parish Council and Finance Committee).

Mr. Gonzalez is an extremely competent and ethical leader who has a concrete history of making outstanding, significant and lasting contributions to our City. His work has directly positioned our City to be the world-class destination we are today and deserves to be recognized in our City's history.

We strongly urge you to award Mr. Gonzalez with this prestigious award and assure you that it is most deserved.

Sincerely,



Raquel A. Pacheco
Chair
Miami Beach United

2021 MBU Board of Directors

Officers

Raquel Pacheco, President
Saul Gross, Treasurer
Ron Starkman, Government Affairs
Tanya K. Shatt, Marketing
Hortense De Castro, Membership
Rhea D'Souza, Administration

Directors

Ryan Barros
Gayle Durham
Herb Frank
Jorge Gonzalez
Jack Johnson
Adam Kravitz
Sarah Leddick
Scott Needleman
Kirk Poskal
Manning Salazar



1920 Meridian Ave. Miami Beach, FL 33139

March 19, 2021

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to nominate former City Manager, Jorge Gonzalez, to the Miami Beach Hall of Fame in the Civic Leader category. Mr. Gonzalez's list of outstanding accomplishments would fill several pages; however, I will limit my comments to those that have had the greatest impact on our city as well as those that have produced long-lasting positive benefits.

Jorge served as our City Manager for 12 years, from 6-7-2009 until 9-30-2012 and his leadership was instrumental in refocusing the world's attention on Miami-Dade County and specifically Miami Beach as a cultural attraction. During his tenure as City Manager, the longest on record to date for our city, he successfully negotiated to make our city the home of Art Basel Miami Beach, the sister event of the world's most prestigious art show, Art Basel. I don't believe that there has been a single event that has had a greater impact on our city. Art Basel Miami Beach amounts to the Super Bowl of Culture each and every year filling our hotels at top rates and providing spinoff events that filter throughout the entire County.

He was also successful in securing the permanent home for Miami City Ballet as well as the New World Symphony/America's Orchestral Academy. The latter also produced the development of our world-class, Frank Gehry designed New World Center and Soundscape Park. The combined impact of these three signature moments in our City's history could easily justify Jorge's selection to our Hall of Fame as each has produced significant tourism, as well as superior cultural programming for our residents year after year.

Mr. Gonzalez was brilliant in building collaboration amongst the elected officials (I was proud to serve as one of those from 2005-2013) and as a result was able to assist the GMCVB in their efforts to secure the bid for Miami to host Super Bowls in both 2007 and 2010. In addition, he was able to conclude successful negotiations to attract The Latin Grammy's Award Show, MTV Latin Music Awards, the Source Awards, and The Latin Billboard Award program. Along with all of these amazing shows, he ushered in the wildly popular South Beach Wine and Food Festival. Once again, each of these signature events has had long-lasting significant positive impact on the positioning of our city as a Cultural destination.

From a resident's perspective, Mr. Gonzalez was always seeking to elevate civic pride and bring recognition to our city for outstanding achievement and his efforts were amply rewarded in 2003 when Miami Beach was selected as an "All American City" by the National Civic League. Miami Beach was the only city in Florida to be selected and was one of only 10 cities chosen. In 2009 the United Nations Livable Communities recognized Miami Beach with a Gold Award naming us as one of the most livable communities in the world.

A few additional points that I would like to make include that through his astute negotiating skills, he was successful in negotiating an extension of the South Beach RDA in 2001, which had a \$400 million present day value for our residents and he consummated a successful negotiation to attract Live Nation to sign a long-term contract to manage our Gleason Theater, now the Fillmore. Although I could continue, I will conclude my nomination by saying that I am proud to nominate Mr. Gonzalez, who I believe has brought tremendous global recognition to our community through his efforts and has elevated our status as one of the most desirable cities in the world in which to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Libbin".

Jerry Libbin, President and CEO
Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce

Saul Gross
2900 Flamingo Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33140

March 19, 2021

City of Miami Beach Hall of Fame
Office of City Clerk
1700 Convention Center Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33139

To Whom It May Concern:

Jorge Gonzalez served as the City Manager for twelve years and during this time he was responsible for major accomplishments that benefitted the quality of life of Miami Beach residents, including the following:

Brought the International Baccalaureate Program to all Miami Beach schools, thereby enhancing the quality of education for every Miami Beach student.

Expanded parks programming to include more after school programs and summer camp programs, with scholarships available so that no one was turned away; free arts in the parks programs including Opera in the parks.

Re-imagined and reinvested in South Pointe Park, to make it one of the finest waterfront parks in the country and safeguarded the park for resident use.

Renovated the Flamingo Park Pool and the Normandy Isle pool and made them admission-free for residents.

Renovated Scott Rakow Youth Center and built the North Beach Youth Center.

Conceptualized, secured funding for and began construction of the Beachwalk creating a pedestrian path along the Ocean to interconnect the entire length of Miami Beach.

Managed, funded and implemented hundreds of millions of dollars of capital improvements including renovating two fire stations, two golf courses, the Collins Park library, the North Beach Senior Center, Band Shell Park and the Botanical Garden; expanding the Bass Museum of Art, and building 4 new neighborhood parks and 6 new parking garages.

Under Jorge's tenure, almost every residential neighborhood received improvements to their water, sewer and storm water systems, roads, lighting and landscaping, updating infrastructure that was 80 years old.

Jorge's accomplishments were appreciated by residents as evidenced by the results of Citizen Satisfaction Surveys in which 89% rated their Quality of Life as Excellent or Good and 80% would recommend Miami Beach as a place to live.

Jorge significantly enhanced Miami Beach's reputation as a cultural, entertainment and tourism capital highlighted by the following accomplishments:

Helping secure and support Art Basel Miami Beach which is now one of the world's premier art fairs. The economic impact of this fair including the ancillary events and satellite fairs, has been estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars per year,

Working cooperatively with FIU to establish South Beach Food and Wine Festival which now has more than 80 events over the course of five days. The Festival's collective media outreach has amassed more than 2.3 billion impressions.

Coordinating the master planning and creation of the New World Symphony campus including the Frank Gehry designed New World Center and Soundscape Park, a former parking lot! which has become the living room of Miami Beach, where residents come together to experience wallcasts of free music and movies.

Strikingly, Jorge was able to accomplish so much while maintaining tight control of the City's finances. The professional, open and accessible budget process he created was a model for other cities. During Jorge's tenure, Miami Beach had the highest bond credit ratings in its history and the lowest millage rate in decades. Jorge successfully navigated the City through the Great Recession of 2008- 2009, and amazingly during this most challenging economic period in 80 years, the City had 2 bond rating upgrades. Jorge twice renegotiated the Convention Development Tax Agreement with Miami Dade County securing additional funding of more than \$500 million, which was instrumental in later financing the renovation of the convention center.

But budgets and projects don't tell the full story of Jorge Gonzalez. Jorge relocated his family and bought a house in Miami Beach, living in the community he was managing. He re-shaped the City's work force to be more professional, more diverse and more reflective of our community. And he created a leadership academy to educate residents about City government and train future community leaders. Jorge accomplished all of this with his calm demeanor, his compassion for the less fortunate and his ability to bring out the best in others around him. He must have done a lot of things right to be the longest-serving City Manager in the City's modern era!

I proudly nominate my friend, Jorge Gonzalez, to be installed in the Miami Beach Hall of Fame.

 Former Miami Beach City Commissioner 2001-2009



SALOMON SMITH

**JOSE SMITH, ESQUIRE
OF COUNSEL**

887 N. Shore Drive
Miami Beach, Florida 33141

March 19, 2021

TO: Miami Beach Hall of Fame Nominating Committee
Department of Tourism and Culture
1755 Meridian Avenue, 5th Floor
Miami Beach, Florida 33139

Dear Sir or Madam:

During my tenure as Miami Beach City Commissioner, one of my proudest achievements was hiring Jorge Gonzalez as City Manager; a position he held with honor and distinction for 12 years. Upon his hiring, I referred to him as our “future Dan Marino”; a superstar in the making.

It soon became evident that Jorge was a perfect fit. In addition to intelligence and superb managerial skills, Jorge brought a vision that would make Miami Beach a world class destination, recognized as a mecca for fine arts, culture, and historic preservation. He made Art Basel possible by amending the Convention Center Booking Policies, working with prominent local art collectors and leading several delegations of city leaders to Basel Switzerland.

Jorge balanced the tension between a tourist based economy and development interests while preserving the residents’ quality of life. Controlled growth, insisting on excellent architecture and fixing a crumbling infrastructure became his top priorities. Every neighborhood in the city received a much

needed face lift, every park was improved, and all development projects drew world class architects, like Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid. South Point Park, the

New World Symphony, the North Beach Youth Center, our popular golf courses, our Beach and Bay Walks and much more became a reality.

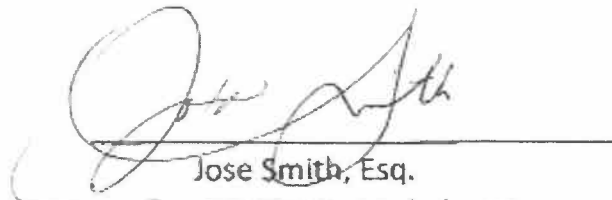
His negotiation and managerial skills with vendors, developers and other government entities brought us many public benefits and fiscal savings. I was in awe of his ability to negotiate the best possible deals for the city. His "Interlocal Agreement" with Miami-Dade County governing the South Point Redevelopment Agency was a stroke of genius. It became the most successful RDA in history after beginning with scandals, and mismanagement in its early days.

During Jorge's tenure, the city was fiscally sound despite economic downturns, even in the aftermath of 9/11. Our reserves grew, the tax millage was reduced, our bond rating improved (to an all time high), reducing the cost of borrowing. We diversified our economy and grew our tax base.

Jorge's creativity and "out of the box" ideas introduced yearly commission "retreats" improving collegiality, communication, and good governance, a "Citizens' Academy" to explain to residents how government functions, and other initiatives enhancing transparency and public participation.

I will always be indebted to Jorge because he helped me become a better Commissioner and a better City Attorney, indeed a better person. I dare say that Jorge was by far the best manager in the City's history.

For these and many other reasons, I am proud to endorse, support and recommend Jorge Gonzalez to the Miami Beach Hall of Fame under the "Civic Leader" Category



Jose Smith, Esq.
Former City Commissioner
and City Attorney

NOMINATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST:

- COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM
- BIOGRAPHY ON NOMINEE
- LETTER OF NOMINATION
- TWO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

830 Raymond Street
Miami Beach, FL 33141

March 21, 2021

Miami Beach Hall of Fame Nominating Committee
Department of Tourism and Culture
1755 Meridian Avenue, 5th Floor
Miami Beach, FL 33139

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Jorge Gonzalez to the Miami Beach Hall of Fame, in the category of Civic Leader. In his professional capacity, his volunteer contributions, and his overall comportment as a resident of our city, Jorge is exemplary in a multitude of ways, and his legacy will serve our city well for decades to come. In addition to highlighting his professional impact for the greater good, this letter will confirm his contributions as an engaged resident and neighbor.

Mr. Gonzalez' list of accolades and accomplishments for the City of Miami Beach is long, impressive and well-known. To list but a few highlights:

- Mr. Gonzalez served for 12 years as the Manager of the City of Miami Beach, the youngest city manager in the history of the city and the longest tenure of any city manager in our history.
- Mr. Gonzalez' tenure resulted in the City's highest bond ratings from Moody's and Standard and Poor's, the City's lowest tax rates in decades, the City's highest reserves in history, the City's lowest crime rates and the City's highest community satisfaction ratings from residents and businesses.
- Mr. Gonzalez was instrumental in developing and implementing a formal planning process and fostering an organizational culture focused on teamwork, performance measurement, effectiveness and out-of-the box thinking, and which was recognized by the American Planning Association (APA) Gold Coast Section for its value and effectiveness in 2007.
- Mr. Gonzalez was also instrumental in making Miami Beach a world class arts destination, by securing permanent homes for the Miami City Ballet, the New World Symphony (including developing a six-acre site which features the symphony building and a public garage designed by world-renowned architect Frank O. Gehry, and the spectacular Soundscape park), and the Art Basel/Miami Beach global art fair. He also negotiated a management agreement with Live Nation, the largest global producer of live music, and rebranded the venue as the Fillmore Miami Beach at the Jackie Gleason Theater, which opened in October 2007.
- Mr. Gonzalez attracted and oversaw significant special events, including such high-profile "high impact" draws with national and global exposure, ranging from festivities around the Super Bowl in 2007 and 2010, the Food Network's South Beach Food & Wine Festival, the Latin Grammys, MTV Latin Music Awards, the SOURCE Awards, and the Latin Billboard Awards.
- While under Mr. Gonzalez' leadership, the City of Miami Beach, or Jorge himself, received the following awards acknowledging various aspects of urban excellence:
 - The first-ever City Manager of the Year Award from the Florida League of Cities, created in 2004 to honor a Florida city manager who displays exceptional excellence in the areas of judgment, initiative, integrity, innovation, professionalism, commitment, and citizen relations. The Florida League of Cities presented this award to Mr. Gonzalez in recognition of his commitment to public service, innovative thinking, and results-oriented accomplishments.
 - The Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year Award in 2005
 - The "All America City" Award was presented to the City of Miami Beach in 2003 from the National Civic League, the only community in the state of Florida and only one of 10 from around the country, to receive this prestigious, national award.
 - The Governor's Florida Sterling Council, in 2007, awarded the City its Quality Team Showcase State Champion award.

- The United Nations Livable Communities recognized the City with a Gold Award as one of the most livable communities in the world 2009.

Jorge has also devoted a significant amount of time to volunteer and educational endeavors. The list of organizations to which he donates his considerable expertise and wisdom include, but are not limited to, Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, Greater Miami and the Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau (Executive Committee), Bass Museum of Art (Executive Board), Wolfsonian-FIU, Miami City Ballet, Miami Beach United, Adopt A Classroom, United Way of Arlington County, St. Patrick's Church and School (Parish Council and Finance Committee). As well as professional organizations such as: ICMA-RC Client Advisory Board, ICMA Task Force on the Future of the Profession, ICMA International Committee, ICMA Strategic Planning Task Force, Local Government Hispanic Network, the Miami-Dade City/County Management Association and the Florida City/County Management Association (District V Representative).

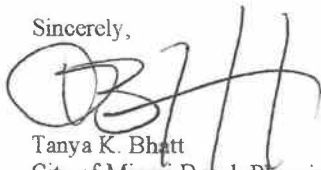
His experience before and after having been City Manager for Miami Beach shows that he has been consistent in his excellence, from his early academic days to his roles in Miami Dade County and in the states of Maryland and Virginia. He continues on his path of stewarding livable communities, putting the needs of the residents first, as Village Manager of Bal Harbour Village since November 12, 2013.

While we no longer enjoy Jorge's professional capabilities at City Hall, we continue to benefit, as a community, by Jorge's commitment as an engaged active resident. I have had the pleasure of knowing Jorge since the early '00s, when I met his wife Lesley as a fellow member of the Friends of North Beach Elementary board. I met Jorge shortly thereafter at an event; having moved recently from Boston, where one didn't just "interact with" one's civic leaders, I was impressed with his welcoming yet straightforward demeanor, affability, and knowledge. He was encouraging and generous with his input, upon request, for various endeavors we undertook to fund-raise for the elementary school. Since that time, I got to know him further, as a friend and fellow board member on the Bayshore Homeowners Association, and as fellow board members of Miami Beach United. When I was elected President of that organization, I would often draw on Jorge's experience, expertise, wisdom, and insight to help navigate the shoals of policy, politics, best practices, and practical advice.

Mr. Gonzalez is firm, fair, friendly, and an excellent advocate for civic leaders, both professionally and on his own time. His integrity and ethical modus operandi is a model for civic leaders everywhere. As a leader within the City of Miami Beach's government, his public record of making significant, long-lasting contributions to our city, in the form of enhancing our city's attractions, advocating for quality of life issues, and implementing strong leadership protocols has enhanced our city's appeal in the long-term. His ongoing dedication to serving the community in which he lives and has raised his family reinforces that his professionalism, advocacy, and commitment are still serving his city well. His stellar record as a manager and as a neighbor have had, and will continue to have, a great impact and make a lasting contribution to the unique character of this city, and for that he should be included in the Hall of Fame.

I encourage you to recognize Mr. Gonzalez with this prestigious award.

Sincerely,



Tanya K. Bhatt
City of Miami Beach Planning Board – Historic Preservation Seat
Miami Beach United – Board Member, past President and on-going Marketing
Miami Design Preservation League – Board Member