

BRANCH, Gregory

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This application form is required as part of the City Commission Group IV Vacancy application submittal. The completed application MUST accompany your letter of interest, current resume, photograph, and City of Miami Beach oath. You may attach additional sheets, if necessary, to provide the required information. See the Notice of Commission Vacancy for additional information.

Branch	Gregory	T
Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial
6365 Collins Avenue Apt#3707	Miami Beach	FL
Home Address	City	State
347-738-2089	gregory.branch@nm.com	
Cellular Telephone	Email Address	
Northwestern Mutual	Financial Advisor	
Business Name	Occupation	
100 SE 2nd St Suite 2610	Miami	FL
Business Address	City	State
		Zip Code

- Have you been a resident of Miami Beach for a minimum of one year? Yes No
- Are you a registered voter in Miami Beach? Yes No

Florida Voter Registration Number (located on your voter information card): 120817373

- Are you presently a registered lobbyist with the City of Miami Beach? Yes No
- Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Yes No
- Have you been issued a violation(s) of the City of Miami Beach Code that remains open or pending?
 Yes No

If yes, please explain in detail: _____

- Do you currently owe the City of Miami Beach any money? Yes No

If yes, please explain in detail: _____

- In what organization(s) in Miami Beach do you currently hold membership?

Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce

Organization Name

Position

Organization Name

Position

- List all properties owned or in which you have an ownership interest in Miami Beach:

None

- How long have you lived in Miami Beach? 14 years

- Have you served on any City of Miami Beach Board(s) or Committee(s)? Yes No

If yes, which Board(s) or Committee(s)?

What were your contributions to the Board(s) or Committee(s)?

- Why are you interested in serving on the City Commission? I owned and operated a small business on Miami Beach (at 2000 Collins Ave) with my wife from 2013 to 2018. In that time, we observed the environment become increasingly inhospitable for small local business owners. I believe the insight I gleaned as an owner will help catalyze useful initiatives and change.

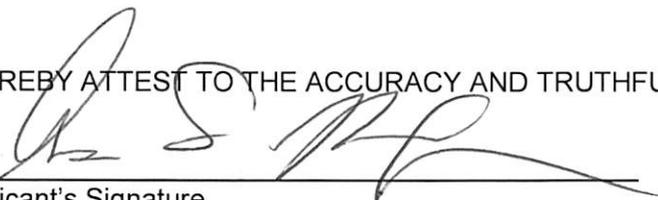
*** PLEASE SEE LETTER OF INTEREST FOR FULL DETAILS ***

- How does your education and/or experience complement the powers and duties of the City Commission?

I graduated cum laude from Princeton University in 1992, and from Harvard Business School in 2001. After business school, I served as a Vice President at AllianceBernstein, an Executive Director at UBS, and a Managing Director in charge of the SE region at Collins Stewart. I have extensive experience in corporate governance/oversight, change management, and operations,

- Will you run for a City Commission seat in 2019? Yes No Undecided

I HEREBY ATTEST TO THE ACCURACY AND TRUTHFULNESS OF THIS APPLICATION.


Applicant's Signature

January 16, 2019

Date

NOTE:

The completed application MUST accompany your letter of interest, current resume, photograph, and City of Miami Beach oath. You may attach additional sheets to provide the required information.

The completed application along with all accompanying materials may be submitted via:

- Email to RafaelGranado@miamibeachfl.gov
- Hand delivery to the Office of the City Clerk, 1700 Convention Center Drive, First Floor
- Postal mail to City of Miami Beach, Office of the City Clerk, Attention: Rafael E. Granado, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139

PUBLIC RECORD:

Pursuant to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, this application and everything attached to it is a public record. The materials you provide will be posted on the Office of the City Clerk's Election webpage and will be available for inspection. If you are an individual listed in Section 119.071, F.S., whose home address is exempt from disclosure, the City Clerk will maintain that confidentiality if you submit a written request.

F:\CLERK\ALL\REG\ELECTION FORMS\VACANCY APPLICATION REG FINAL DRAFT.rtf

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH OATH

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE

Before me, an officer authorized to administer oaths, personally appeared GREGORY BRANCH
_____ to me well known who, being sworn, says that he/she is seeking
appointment to the Office of City Commissioner (Group No. IV) for the City of Miami Beach,
Florida; that he/she is a qualified elector of said City residing within the City at least one year
before applying for this office; that his/her legal residence is:
6365 Collins Avenue, Apt # 3707, Miami Beach, FL 33141
Miami Beach, Miami-Dade County, Florida; that he/she is qualified under the ordinances
(including Miami Beach City Code Chapter 38 governing "Elections") and Charter of said City to
hold such office.

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of Candidate

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this 17 day of January, 2019,
by Gregory Branch.

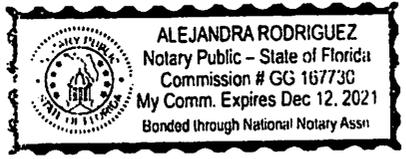
(NOTARY SEAL)

Alejandra Rodriguez
Signature of Notary Public-State of Florida

Name of Notary Typed, Printed, or Stamped

Personally Known OR

Produced Identification _____
Type of Identification Produced _____





January 16, 2018

RE: Letter of Interest for City Commission Vacancy Group IV

Representatives,

Through much of the city's history, Miami Beach has maintained the delicate balance of offering our residents an amazing place to live and raise a family, while simultaneously embellishing a reputation as a world class tourist destination. I have been fortunate enough to experience Miami Beach through all of the various perspectives -- first as a tourist and business traveler (pre-2005), then as a seasonal resident when I purchased my first home here in 2005, and finally as a full time resident from 2009 to present. As residents, we often fret about the issues that tourism tends to exacerbate -- traffic, infrastructure constraints, upkeep, and the occasional unruliness/belligerence in our streets and neighborhoods. That said, we grin and bear it (to varying degrees!) because we know that many of our fellow residents depend on that same tourism for their very livelihood. And we are comforted by the knowledge that our law enforcement and elected officials are always monitoring the equilibrium to be sure that our community does not skew out of balance. Whether it is a relatively immediate fix (such as the scooter, Memorial Day, or Airbnb issues), or long-term/strategic initiatives (parking, flooding/sea level countermeasures, convention center), our City Commission plays *the* central role in making sure that our community always maintains the necessary balance.

Critical to maintaining that balance is having the awareness to properly deal with what the winds of change bring, if not the foresight to prepare for them. And here is where my specific interest lies. While the issues I mentioned above have all received a great deal of our attention and resources, I do believe that there are a few important (perhaps seismic) shifts that currently threaten our community that have gone relatively underreported/unaddressed. Namely, Miami Beach is becoming increasingly inhospitable to *local* small business owners, and, simultaneously, the socioeconomic groups that staff those SMB's are being priced off the beach. These are very dangerous shifts that I, unfortunately, have experienced quite personally.

My wife came to me with the idea to start a business in Miami Beach in 2013. As someone who loves both my wife and the Beach (and as it was a business she's successfully owned/operated in the past), I was 100% behind her. Moreover, as we had accumulated 7 years of intimate experience with the Beach by that time, we believed that the normal flow of tourists could more than support her financial projections, and we invested significant resources into bringing her vision to reality. While the business (at 2000 Collins Ave) performed well the first few years, like many around us, we were not adequately prepared to deal with the winds of change. Throughout my entire experience with Miami Beach, it had been the case that people vacationing in Miami Beach stayed in Miami Beach. Almost all of their time, and more importantly, almost all of their budget was spent at businesses on the Beach. But the rise of Wynwood, Fashion District, Brickell City Center, Top Golf, Aventura, etc changed that dynamic. And, without local landlords who could see these shifts for themselves firsthand, the commercial rental market did not/has not adjusted accordingly. In our building alone (2000 Collins Ave), we watched every other original independent SMB tenant go out of business (Adore, Barezzito, Curve, I'm so Chic, Suit Shop)...and then we watched some of the replacement tenants go out of business (Ora, DOA). Universally, the issue was the same, and it eventually forced us to close our Miami Beach location as well – not enough traffic to support the rent. And it wasn't just our building. As a Pillar Member of the Chamber of Commerce at the time, I had countless (literally, countless) conversations with other SMB owners who decried the exact same thing – they were no longer experiencing a level of traffic that could support their rent load. A drive down Washington Avenue will also bear witness to the many many casualties.

But the suffering was/is not borne only by our business-owner residents. One of the things that my wife and I were most proud of is that we created approximately twenty middle-income jobs in the creation of our business. When we first opened the business in 2014, nineteen of those jobs were filled by Miami Beach residents. By the time we closed the business in 2018, none of those jobs were filled by Miami Beach residents – either because employees had moved off-Beach, or because those who had come to Miami from elsewhere (with a dream of living on the Beach) had to move back to where they were originally from. With the decreased tourist spending, decreased hours available, and increasing/predatory residential rents, and increasing cost of living, most of our workforce simply couldn't afford to live on the Beach anymore. And, as you might imagine, the job loss and economic disruption caused every time one of our SMB's closes can be devastating (and have a lasting impact on our community).

I have long believed that our socioeconomic diversity, and our broad base of locally-owned SMB's are part of the lifeblood of our community – part of what gives Miami Beach it's unique charm and allure. But we are moving headlong in the opposite direction – a Miami Beach that does not offer any opportunity for local small business creation on Lincoln...or Collins...or Washington, and increasingly more and more neighborhoods. As a community, I believe that we have a choice to make: either we are going to continue to embrace and encourage the very same local small business creation, and socioeconomic diversity that has created the Miami Beach that we know and love...or we are going to proffer our neighborhoods and our opportunities exclusively to the highest bidders. If we chose the latter, I think our children and grandchildren will experience a very different Miami Beach than we have enjoyed...if they are lucky enough to be able to still live here.

To be clear, this is not an incrimination of what has, or has not, been done to date. Rather, this is simply to articulate how passionate I am about this issue going forward. I think it is at least worthy of our time and discussion...if, for no other reason, to ensure that we are actively choosing the path that we will travel. And this is a discussion that I am eager to engage in as part of the City Commission...along with all the other issues we must be vigilant about to maintain our necessary balance. I am keenly aware that there are other candidates for this position who have held various community positions previously, and a few that have even been past Commissioners, and if you are looking for “more of the same” then I obviously cannot compete with those candidates. I cannot offer you the installed base of knowledge that they can offer.

Conversely, I also believe that I can offer a combination of valuable attributes that no other candidate, including past Commissioners, can offer:

- A perspective into the challenges faced by our resident small business owners
- A perspective into the challenges faced by our pockets of ethnic minority residents
- An extensive corporate governance skill set
- An extensive change management skill set
- An intimate knowledge of public finance, bond issue, portfolio construction, etc
- A fresh, yet informed, critical perspective on old challenges and old solutions

While the perceived benefit of choosing an experienced hand to fill this role is clear, I would humbly submit that this “limited run” position is actually the perfect opportunity for the City Commission to gain exposure to new ideas and perspectives, from a passionate new voice. In this case, the case of my candidacy for Commissioner, I think the small risk (relative to an experienced hand) is vastly outweighed by the significant potential rewards.

In summary, I am thankful for this opportunity to apply for the vacant seat on the City Commission, and the opportunity to help shape the future of our Miami Beach community. I believe that I could add immense value to the City Commission with my appointment, and I submit this official Letter of Interest and application in order to obtain said appointment.

I thank you all, in advance, for your time and considerations.

Highest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by 'B', a large 'S', and a final flourish.

Greg Branch

GREGORY T. BRANCH

6365 Collins Avenue, Apt 3707

Miami Beach, FL 33141

(347) 738-2089

gregory.branch@nm.com

education

1999 – 2001 **HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL**
Master in Business Administration degree, June 2001.

1992 – 1996 **PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**
Bachelor of Arts degree, cum laude, June 1996.

experience

- 2017 – 2019 **NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL**
Financial Advisor
Established a financial advisory practice with three distinct specialties:
- Family needs – lifestyle protections (insurance), retirement savings, investment portfolio construction, strategic financial plans
 - Business needs – liquidation strategies, business protections, tax strategies, qualified retirement plans, buy/sell agreements, keyman and group policies
 - Estate needs – estate planning, trust and ownership advice, multi-generational instruments and strategies
- 2013 – 2018 **DRY DE LUXE HAIR SALONS**
Owner/Operator
Co-founded Miami Beach’s highest rated hair salon
Constructed two de novo locations – Miami Beach and Dolphin Mall
- 2009 – 2013 **COLLINS STEWART LLC (NOW CANACORD GENUITY)**
Managing Director and Head of Southeast Region
Hired to build out Southeast operations for the firm.
- Opened over 59 new accounts, and generated over \$10MM in de novo revenues for the firm
 - Initiated and opened the firm’s first revenue-generating relationships in the Southeast region
 - Built a regional office in Miami Beach
- 2007 – 2009 **UBS INVESTMENT BANK**
Executive Director – Institutional Sales
Scouted and hired by UBS with the specific tasks of improving relationships with a number of high-profile institutional clients, and sharing best practices to create a “winning” and effective sales culture.
- 2002 – 2007 **ALLIANCE BERNSTEIN**
Vice President – Institutional Sales, Hedge Fund Division
Worked with top hedge fund professionals to develop successful investment strategies, exploit high-potential trading ideas, and increase overall investment returns..
2000-2002 BROADVIEW INTERNATIONAL
- 2000 – 2002 **BROADVIEW INTERNATIONAL**
Senior Associate – Mergers and Acquisitions
Executed mergers and acquisitions transactions with companies in the businesses of Healthcare, Business Applications, and Data Management Technologies. Served as firm expert in these areas, and frequently marketed to company executives to demonstrate firm expertise.