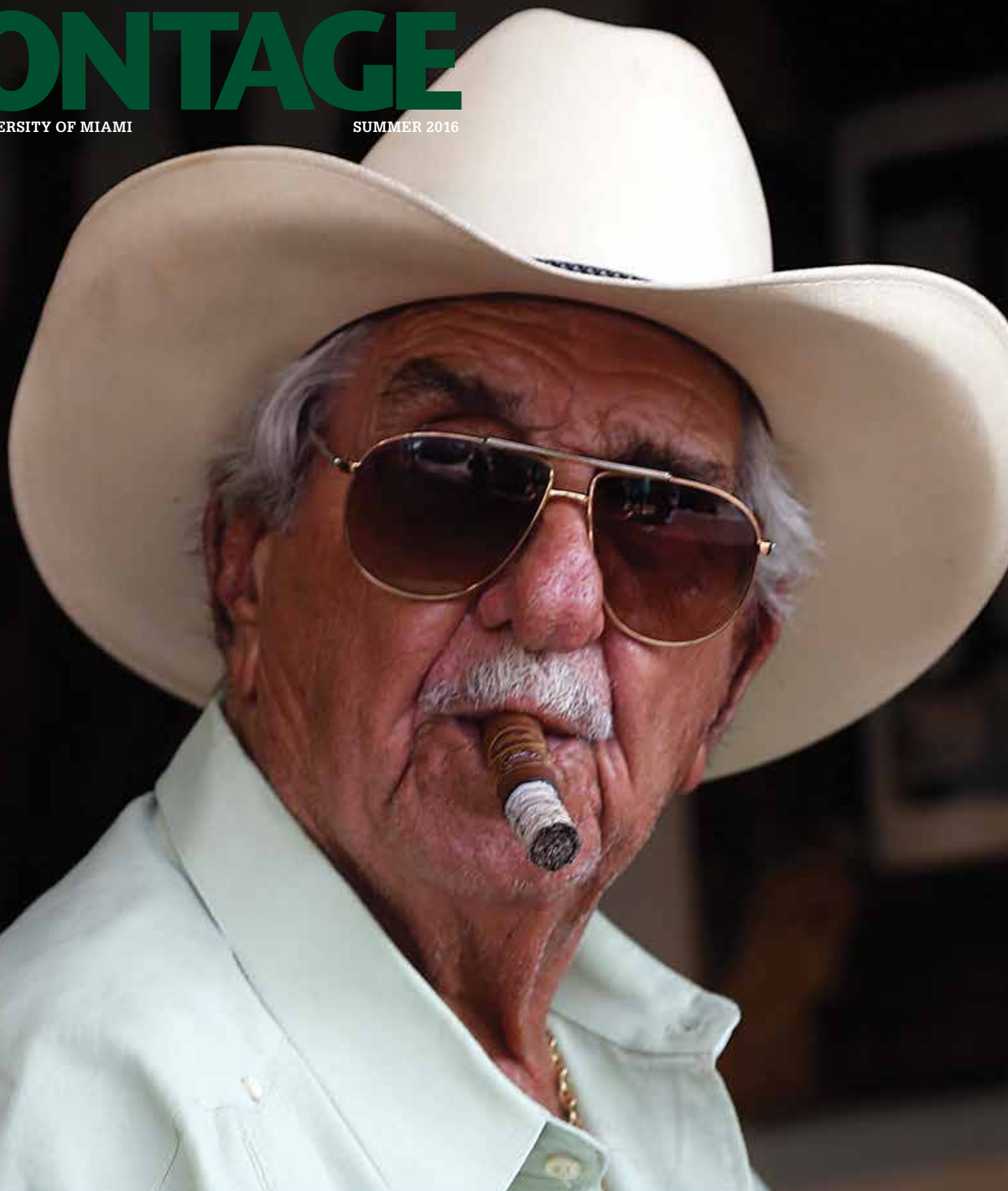


# MONTAGE

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

SUMMER 2016



# Cigars, Refugees, Music and Fashion

Stories and images that shape South Florida's past and future



Photo by Miami Montage staff

**MIAMI MONTAGE 2016:** (front row, from left) Martina Maurici, Christopher Vazquez, Nicole Via Y Rada, Marlowe Starling, Albany Muria, Devoun Cetoute, (middle) Talia Pfeffer, Uma Chatterjee, Stella Ikpatt, Reagan Creamer, Christian Lozano, Diana Riojas, Jessica Koernig, Keilah Angueira, Danyel De Villiers, (back) Matthew Rembold, Anthony Fernandez, Corbin Bolies, Kyle Wood and Karina Blodnieks.

**University of Miami  
PEACE SULLIVAN/  
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SCHOOL WORKSHOP  
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**In Memoriam**

Miami Montage is published in perpetual memory of Mupalia Wakhisi



**ON THE COVER:** Uma Chatterjee photographed Don Pedro Bello, founder of the Cuba Tobacco Cigar Co. Bello has been selling cigars in Little Havana since 1994.

# Hey, where are you from?

## Old identities fading as new and diverse residents settle in

BY ANTHONY FERNANDEZ

Christopher Columbus High School

Many Miami residents know the city's identifiable neighborhoods: Little Havana, Little Haiti, Overtown and Liberty City. Each neighborhood has had its own distinctive identity over the years.

Today, that is changing.

"In the '70s and '80s, there was a clearer demarcation between cultures and people," said Jorge Zamanillo, director for the HistoryMiami Museum. "Now, you're from 'Miami', where everyone is accepted for their cultures."

As South Florida continues to attract those looking to make Miami home, the city's cultural identity is becoming more diverse and integrated.

"I started at Miami-Dade College 25-plus years ago, and it was heavily Hispanic," said Miami historian and Miami-Dade College professor Paul George.

However, throughout his tenure at MDC, George experienced a change in the student demographic.

"As well as Hispanic, it has become increasingly Haitian and African-American," George said.

In 2010, Hispanics accounted for 65 percent of Miami-Dade's 2.5 million residents, according to the U.S. Census. While Cubans continue to make up the majority of the Hispanic population in Miami-Dade, the city's South and Central Americans are on the rise.

Of the 1.6 million Hispanics, Cubans represent 53 percent. South Americans make up 17 percent and Central Americans 13 percent, according to census data. The populations of Venezuelans, Argentines, Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, Ecuadorians, Colombians and Dominicans



Photo by Anthony Fernandez

**HAITIAN HANGOUT:** Evens Jean Joseph, 16, left, and William Oscar, 15, take a break on the streets of Little Haiti. Scenes like this one occur during summer days in Miami's ethnic neighborhoods.

have increased the most since 2000.

Like the Cubans before them, South and Central Americans are coming to Miami, in part, because of political and economic turmoil.

The black or African-American population in South Florida has also been evolving through the years. Of the total South Florida population in 2010, 19 percent is black or African-American, according to census data

from 2010.

While Miami's black community has not grown at the Hispanic's rate, the number of Haitians and those from other Caribbean islands has increased. Many Haitians moved to Miami following the country's devastating earthquake in 2010.

With the population increases, the identity of some of South Florida's neighborhoods have and will continue to change.

The FIU Metropolitan Center conducts research and releases data about communities in the South Florida area. In 2014, they began to publish statistics regarding population changes in many South Florida neighborhoods.

The center reports that Little Havana has experienced a 19 percent increase in total population from 2000-2014. Of that population increase, 8 percent came from Hispanic backgrounds. The African-American population has increased 34 percent.

Little Haiti, which always has been predominantly black or African-American, has seen a 54 percent increase in non-Hispanic white citizens over the past 14 years, according to the FIU Metropolitan Center.

Little Haiti has also gained a close relationship with Hispanics.

"We feel really comfortable with the Cubans, said Georges Metellus, a board

**DOMINO DAZE:** Little Havana's iconic park bustles with the street sounds of Latin culture.



Photo by Kyle Wood

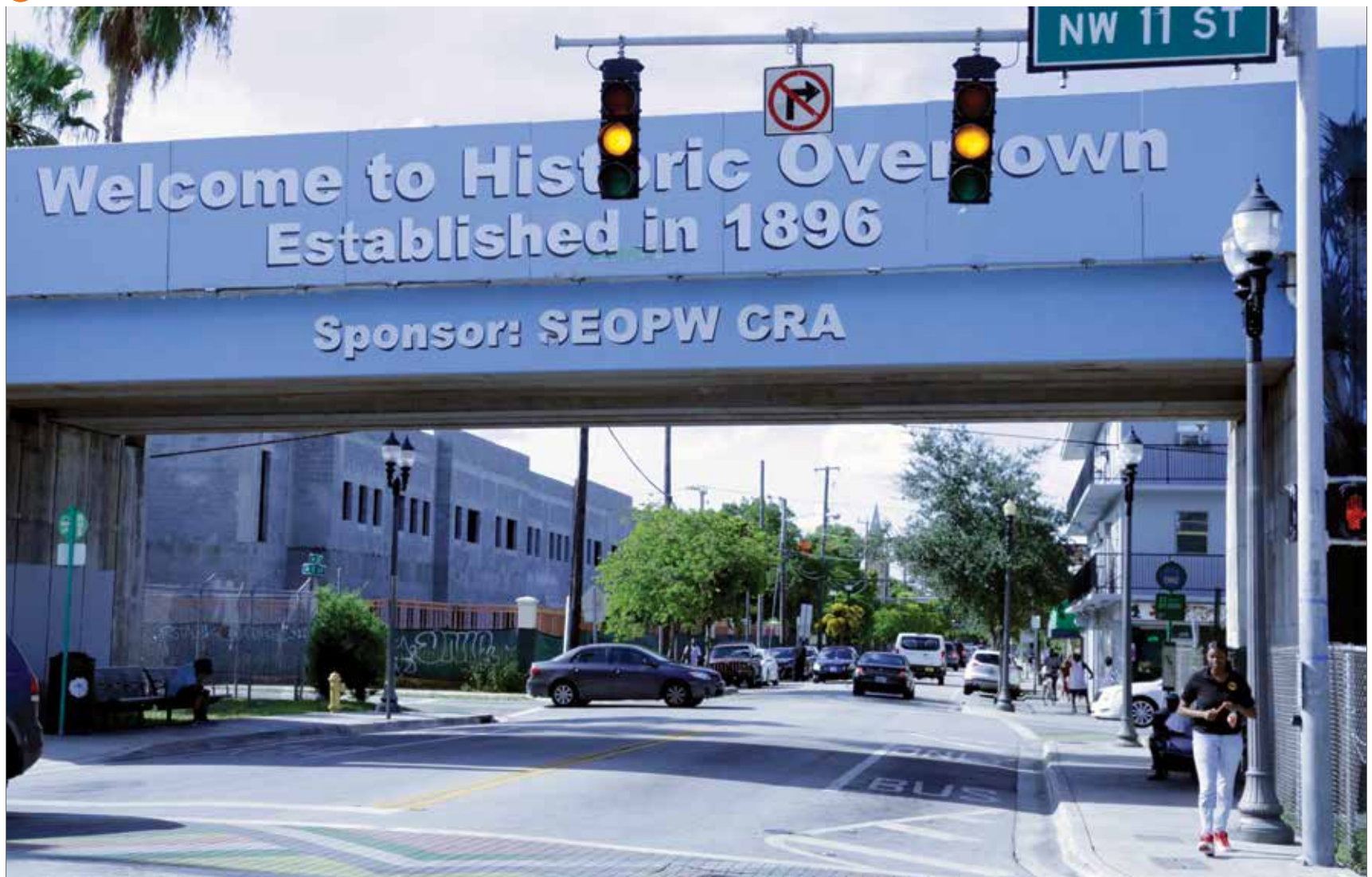


Photo by Kyle Wood

**OVERTOWN BLUES:** History is rich in this old neighborhood, which once was the heart of African-American music, food and entertainment. Today, it's struggling through population shifts that are destined to change its identity and image.

member of the Center for Haitian Studies. "We eat the same thing, our music is very similar and our religion is very similar."

The CHS is a nonprofit organization that provides social services such as health care for the Haitian citizens in South Florida.

Another predominantly African-American neighborhood is Liberty City. In 2014, Liberty City's population was made up of 85 percent African-Americans. Although the African-American population in Liberty City is still high, it has dropped 13 percent since 2000 while the Hispanic population has jumped 201 percent.

Overtown has always been a heavily African-American area, but during the first 14 years of the new century, the rate of Hispanic population growth has outpaced African-American growth, with Hispanics shooting up 140 percent, compared with a 26 percent decrease in African-Americans. It is evident times are changing within Overtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

"It's nothing new that our culture has been collaborating with people of other cultures," said Garry Lafaille, an administrator for the Neighborhood Enhancement Team, which serves as a bridge between the government and South Florida's neighborhoods.

Many experts are predicting South Florida's population will continue to diversify well into the future.

"We are going to become more and more of an international city," George said. "More and more of a Hispanic city."



Photo by Christopher Vazquez

**A DYING ART:** In Wynwood, change is under way as gentrification pushes rent for housing and art spaces higher and higher. Some artists and residents have been forced to other parts of the city.

# The little tribe that could

## Miccosukee Indians adapt to changes in habitat and culture

BY UMA CHATTERJEE

Design and Architecture Senior High

For nearly 200 years, the Florida Everglades has been home to the Miccosukee tribe.

Over that period, the tribe has adapted for survival, evolving from hunters and gatherers to enterprising entrepreneurs of organized tourism.

That change started in the 1940s, as tribe members began to realize they could not solely live off the land. Today, the population of 589 is among the smallest of all indigenous peoples.

The midcentury shift also was facilitated by road building that connected the Everglades and the Miccosukee to a suburban population.

The tourism industry in South Florida began to grow, presenting the native tribe with the fortuity to share their culture with outsiders, as well as make a decent living.

The Miccosukee people stopped trading skins and began to profit from wrestling alligators, running wildlife preservation sites, serving native cuisine at restaurants and selling art and handmade jewelry.

In 1999, the tribe opened the Miccosukee Resort and Gaming facility to the public at a cost of approximately \$45 million. Casino revenue is distributed among the tribe members and used to raise tribal history awareness.

“Thousands of people throughout the world discover Native America through the marketing, coordination, and financing skills of the Miccosukee,” said Dennis Wiedman, professor in the Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies of Florida International University.

The tribal members who live in the Everglades today descended from roughly 200 Seminoles who refused to move west during the Third Seminole War.

A 2014 Bureau of Indian Affairs report states that the Miccosukee population is miniscule compared to other tribes. The Navajo Nation has 194,563 members, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida is at 3,680.

Keeping a stable population has always been a struggle for the tribe. Prior to industrialization, the Everglades’ vast ecosystem ran wild, serving as the perfect hiding place for anyone wishing to live a life connected to nature.

Cypress wood and cabbage palm chickees built on islets around the Everglades once housed families like the Tigertails for many years. Those have now been repurposed to please the tourist eye. Displays ranging from the totem poles of other tribes to massive turtle shells are artifacts attesting to what used to be.

Tribal businesses that now operate out of

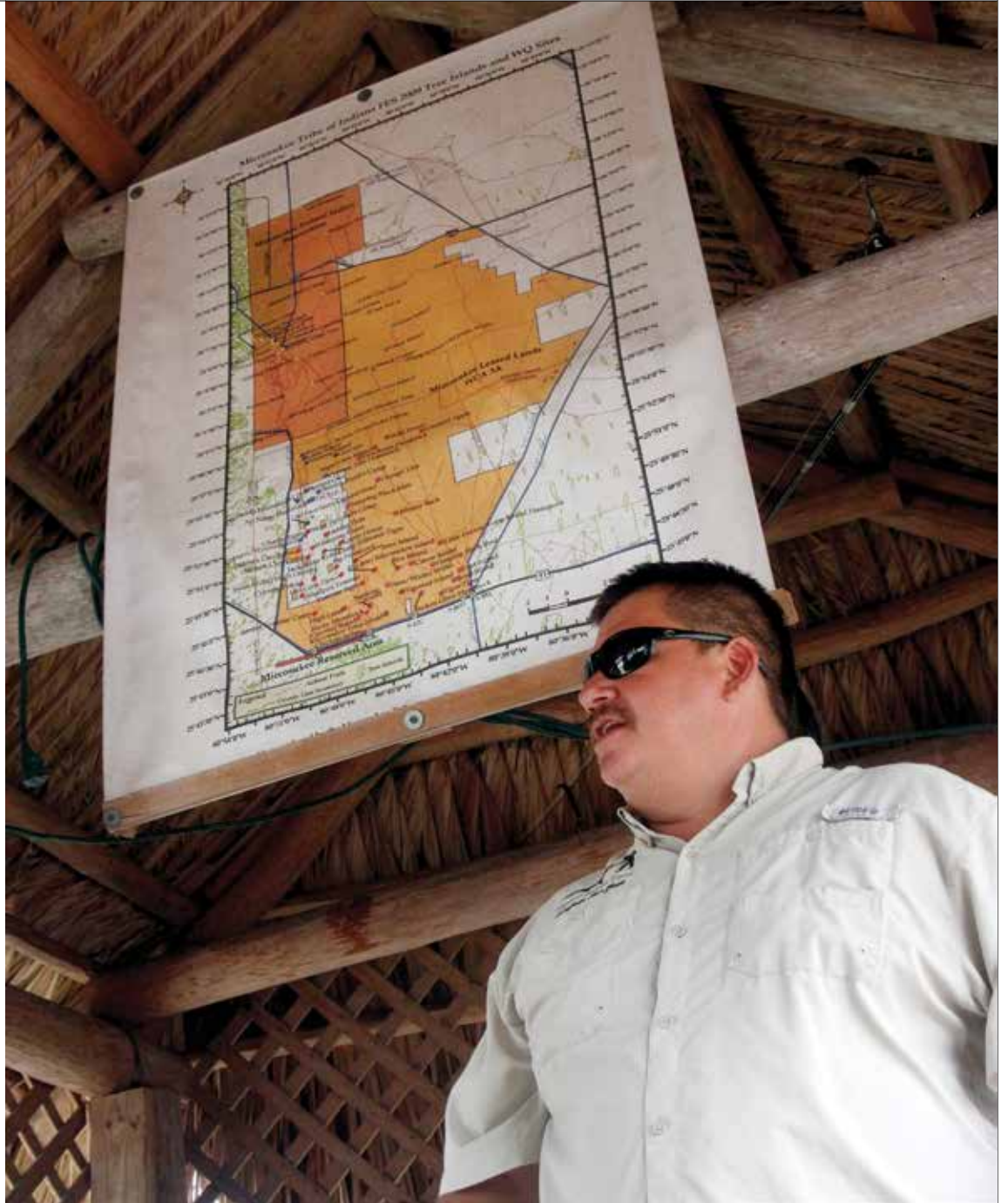


Photo by Jessica Koernig

**GOOD BUSINESS:** John Tigertail, owner of Tigertails Airboat Tours, says the future is bright for the Miccosukee tribe, one of the smallest indigenous populations in the United States.

the Everglades area are being passed down to younger generations.

Within the tribe, more and more indigenous parents are sending their children to school. In Florida, the compulsory education law states children ages 6 to 16 must attend school. However, this law does not apply to the Miccosukee and other tribes across the nation due to their self-governing status.

“My grandpa would tell me to stay in school,” said John Osceola, a 38-year old elderly care worker at the Miccosukee reservation.

Schools on the reservation place an additional emphasis on cultural studies in order to keep the youth connected to their roots.

If students do graduate high school and go

to college, they always have multiple career options at the reservation. Job opportunities at the reservation include positions in the fire department, police department, hospitality, water resource department, wildlife unit, administration and even dentistry.

The Miccosukee tribe has a rich history and flourishing relationship with the Everglades ecosystem. Although industrialization and suburban population growth have altered aspects of the culture, this inherent oneness with nature will be passed down for years to come.

John Tigertail, owner of Tigertails Airboat Tours, said optimism will prevail in the face of adversity.

“During our ceremonies, there’s a lot of young ones out there, really participating, so it gives you a lot of hope,” Tigertail said.

# A gay (r)evolution



Photo by Karina Blodnieks

**ARCHIVING A MOVEMENT:** Ed Sparan, operations manager of the World AIDS Museum, was diagnosed with HIV in 2002, prompting him to become active in the LGBT community in Miami.

## Miami's struggle for LGBT rights has taken a rich and unique path

**BY KARINA BLODNIKES**

Cooper City High School

Faced with a decision between violence or fighting back, the nation's LGBT community uttered its first organized call for recognition during the Stonewall riots of 1969.

From 1,200 miles away, Miami responded.

Around 2 a.m., on June 28, 1969, the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village, was raided, resulting in a battle between New York police and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, or LGBT, community. The riots that emerged lasted a week and propelled LGBT discrimination into the national spotlight.

"In 1970, we started saying we're gay, and we're proud," said Ed Sparan, operations manager for the World AIDS Museum. "That was when the door opened for our community to express their sexuality."

Leading up to Stonewall, Miami was no safe haven for the LGBT community. The community had survived since the 1930s through a nightlife in backroom bars, and discrimination was rampant. It was only when Stonewall shook the U.S. that the Miami LGBT community began to out itself. Since then, the community has experienced

failed equality referendums, HIV/AIDS, staggering mental health statistics, governmental discrimination and, finally, a victory.

Throughout the 1970s, South Florida raids were common. Then, in 1977, the city found itself on the national front of LGBT issues when Miami-Dade passed one of the first U.S. ordinances prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Shortly after, though, well-known singer and Florida Citrus Commission spokeswoman Anita Bryant organized an anti-LGBT movement to repeal the legislation.

Bryant was victorious when a countywide vote that year struck down the initiative.

"I think we've never really recovered from that," said Luigi Ferrer, health services manager for PrideLines. "There has been a political divide in Miami's LGBT community between the assimilationists and the liberationists."

Later that year, high school student Alexei Guren created the Gay Teen Task Force. This kicked off the youth movement in Miami. The group became PrideLines, now Miami's oldest LGBT youth organization.

"We founded a place where youth could talk to other youth while feeling safe," Guren said. "This was the only place where we could talk about who we were and what we felt in a place where we didn't need to worry about being kicked out of our houses."

In 1981, the American gay community again gained national attention when the HIV/AIDS epidemic hit the United States. The media dubbed it "the gay cancer."

Ferrer was diagnosed with HIV in 1990. In response, he became an active member of the Miami LGBT community. In 1991, he became the executive director of Body Positive, a support organization for HIV positive individuals. Ferrer remains an advocate for the community, teaching safe sex in schools and hosting support groups for LGBT youth.

When an anti-discrimination ordinance was brought to the Florida Legislature again in 1998, lawmakers pushed it into action by one vote. Twenty-one years after the initial referendum, the Miami-Dade LGBT community was protected against discrimination.

Today, the battle has shifted.

Megan Muralles, a youth leader in the movement, says that while sexual health is still a major issue, other issues have taken center stage, such as transgender visibility, mental healthcare access, media representation and school curriculum.

"There are still movements in countries trying to legalize being gay," Muralles said. "Every person you meet will say the movement is focused on something different because there are so many issues and so many solutions, but every one of those people are right."

One of the recent LGBT issues South Florida weathered was the single-sex bathroom law. In 2015, state lawmakers tried to ban transgender individuals from using their preferred facilities. The bill was similar to controversial laws passed in Houston and North Carolina.

State Rep. George Moraitis, the bill's co-sponsor, says it was meant to address women's fears of being harassed in public restrooms. When asked for any supporting statistics, he could provide none.

"It's kind of sad because [bills like this are] sort of divisive," Moraitis said. "I guess some people felt like it was targeting them."

While the bill didn't pass the House, it reflected deeper ideas about the community.

Mental illness is another pressing issue in Miami's modern LGBT community. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to self-harm than heterosexuals. Muralles, 17, started self-harming at age 11. She had to date in secret and could not tell her parents she was in her school's Gay-Straight Alliance.

After two years of recovery from self-injury, Muralles says she is happier with herself. She went on to speak at multiple conventions, including the 2015 Stonewall National Education Program.

Denise Palazzo, LGBT facilitator for Broward County Public Schools, says that because of youth leadership like Muralles', every public high school in Broward County has an active Gay-Straight Alliance. Together, these clubs discuss advocacy and emotional support.

"We're going to hear more voices," Palazzo said. "Young people nowadays won't stay silent about harassment. There's much more dialogue taking place."



Photo by Uma Chatterjee

**UP IN SMOKE:** Don Pedro Bello, founder of the Cuba Tobacco Cigar Co., sits outside his shop, keeping watch on Miami's Calle Ocho, where he has become iconic.

# No burnout here

## Miami cigar industry not concerned about Cuban competition

**BY KEILAH ANGUEIRA**

South Dade Senior High School

A short walk from Little Havana's Domino Park leads straight to Cuba Tobacco Cigar Co., one of the most recognizable cigar shops in the area.

In front of the store sits Don Pedro Bello, the founder of the establishment. Wearing a pastel green guayabera and a Panama hat, the aroma of his cigar invites customers in to watch as cigar rollers press tobacco leaves.

Scenes like this one are part of the everyday culture of Calle Ocho. Today, the street is lively, with tourist buses riding through the city, and the proprietors of local businesses bustling about.

Last December, after a meeting with Cuban President Raul Castro, President Barack Obama announced the United States will begin to restore diplomatic ties with Cuba. For the first time in 60 years, there's a very real possibility of the United States trading with the tobacco producers in Cuba.

The country from which many of these cigar shop owners escaped will be competing

with them head-on, but will Cuban cigars smoke the locals?

"In my 22 years of experience making cigars, I've realized that the product coming from Cuba is not consistent," said Adiocha Fernandez, a cigar roller in Bello's shop. "There aren't any strict regulations to maintain its consistency."

Cigar connoisseurs, such as Fernandez and

Emilio Rangel, a 12-year cigar aficionado, believe the Cuban tobacco quality is much lower than the tobacco from Nicaragua. This is due to their lack of supplies, old methods, facilities and equipment.

"Cuban tobacco was the world standard 60 years ago, but it doesn't compare now," said Rangel, a regular at Cigar Cellar and Lounge.

The loosening of the embargo doesn't seem to worry those in South Florida's cigar industry.

In 2013, Cigar Aficionado Magazine recognized Miami as the "new hotspot for creative cigar makers." But "new" isn't the right term for a city with decades of cigar rolling history.

"For generations, businesses kept their heritage alive by growing their own strains of Cuban tobacco in countries like Honduras and Nicaragua," said Rhea Planes, owner of Cigar Cellar and Lounge. "They set up small factories and import the product back to Miami for rolling and retail purposes."

The strongest agreement among cigar experts is people continue to buy Cuban stoggies for the appeal of their scarcity and a way to connect with their family's heritage. The ability to roll cigars like they did in Cuba allowed these cigar owners to keep their traditions intact and shifted the popularity from Cuban cigars to Miami cigars.

Local rollers seem far more concerned about the Food and Drug Administration starting to regulate tobacco. They fear new rules, released in June, will subject their cigars to expensive inspections and certifications, forcing small operations to go out of business and diminishing South Florida's cigar culture.

It's a culture that has infiltrated many facets of Miami life. Atlanta-based artist Charlie Havanich showcased a portrait of Don Pedro Bello at Art Basel Miami in December 2015.

"This painting means the most to me," Havanich said. "Mr. Bello with a cigar in his mouth seems to represent Miami, and that's where my heart is."

Adiocha Fernandez took the final puff of his cigar, saying, "I believe tobacco here will continue its course. Cuban cigars will have a distinct clientele, and so will we."



**A NEW LEAF:** Adiocha Fernandez, a roller at Cuba Tobacco Cigar Co., rips the leaves to make the tobacco ready for rolling.

Photo by Keilah Angueira

# Castro, Communism, Closure

## Anxious Cubans fled their island homeland in two huge exoduses

BY NICOLE VIA Y RADA

Coral Glades High School

As the captain prepared for liftoff, Cuban ‘pioneros’ prepared for the start of a new life.

The captain fidgeted with gears, while the passengers fought back tears.

Once the cabin door closed, the fears of living under Fidel Castro’s communist control began to fade.

This scene was the culmination of efforts by Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh, the Catholic Welfare Bureau and James Baker, headmaster of Havana’s Ruston Academy, to launch “Operation Pedro Pan.” The goal was to fly children out of Cuba and provide shelter for them in Miami.

From 1960 to 1963, more than 7,000 children from the ages of 12 to 18 were successfully lifted out of Cuba and brought to the states.

Francisco Angones was airlifted on June 11, 1961, when he was only 10 years old. He ended up living in a foster home for several months.

“It was a Pan American Airlines flight,” Angones said. “I cried my entire way here.”

Teresa Ponte, chair of the Department of Journalism + Media at Florida International University, had a similar experience during her migration to Miami.

At just nine years of age, Ponte “felt abandoned and torn away from everything [she] knew.”

Ponte moved in with her aunt, who already lived in Miami, making her transition somewhat easier in comparison with Angones’, who ended up in a foster home when he arrived. Both Angones and Ponte eventually reunited with their families.

“My sister was two years old when I left,” Angones said. “Everyday I wondered if she would remember me.”

When they finally met, he was pleasantly surprised.

“What struck me was that my sister called me ‘Achi’ [his nickname] and ran towards me. It was a moment I will never forget.”

After living in exile for three months, his family reunited at Miami International Airport. Angones would later graduate from the University of Miami and become a human rights lawyer and president of the Florida Bar.

“This country opened its doors, and gave me opportunities to advance and accomplish what I have accomplished,” Angones said. “Even though you aren’t born into wealth and prestige, you can still achieve an advanced level of success in this country.”

Ponte also seized her new life and made the best of it. Before her FIU days, she worked as a producer for NBC News, CBS, and Telemundo, actively involved in expressing



Photo by Matthew Rembold

**HIGH ACHIEVER:** Francisco Angones displays one of the artifacts he has collected as remembrances of his experiences in “Operation Pedro Pan,” the airlift of thousands of young children from Cuba.

her desire for equality through journalism.

“Things worked out well for me,” Ponte said. “Now I have a moral responsibility to use my voice and bring justice to those who need it.”

Seventeen years later, other Cuban citizens had the chance to flee Cuba en masse. But this second wave wasn’t as pleasant.

After an attack on the Peruvian embassy in Cuba, Castro allowed prospective migrants to leave the island via boat on April 20, 1980. More than 170 boats, previously anchored in the Port of Mariel, just west of Havana, became the vessels of the Mariel Boatlift.

The economic crisis that dawned over the streets of Cuba compelled migrants to follow in hot pursuit of a new life. Castro encouraged all criminals to move out in an attempt to make a nation of only law-abiding citizens who supported his regime.

“Cuba had a very negative atmosphere at the time,” said Faustino Alberto, a ‘Marielito,’ 77. “The American government opened a door for everyone to leave the island.”

The negativity on the streets of Havana followed the Mariel migration. The 125,000 new Miami residents were housed in closed military facilities and the Orange Bowl. Crime rates spiked in the city, and social services were taxed to the limit.

For Tatiana Vachon and her family, the negative atmosphere worked to their advantage. After numerous attempts to

leave the island, Vachon’s father decided that declaring themselves as delinquents would do the trick. He went to the American embassy and confessed his “acts of crime,” thus granting him and his family the opportunity to leave.

“Everyday was a mystery,” Vachon said. “We kept waiting to leave, and when times seemed rough, we never gave up.”

Vachon reached Key West on Aug. 4, 1980, when she was 16. She and her family were transferred to what would become the Krome Detention Facility, reopened and converted from a Cold War missile base to accommodate the new refugees.

“We ate McDonald’s and went to Disney World,” Vachon said. “It was kind of exciting to see staples of American culture.”

Currently, the creative director for Memorial Health Care, Vachon, 62, has come a long way from those desperate times in Cuba.

“I have been given opportunities, and I learned a lot,” Vachon said. “I did the best I could and eventually got a better lifestyle.”

These two mass migrations, though vastly different, have had a significant impact on the identity of both the Cuban community and culture.

“Miami gives us the sense of being at home,” Alberto said. “The language (bilingualism) is similar, and the climate is spot on. Miami is our home away from home.”





Photo by Jessica Koernig

**RUNWAY REVIVAL:** The kickoff event to Miami's Swim Week was a runway show by students at Miami International University of Art & Design. Here, a model displays one of the many swimsuits designed by MIUAD students, many of whom say the city's fashion culture will keep them here.

# Made in Miami

## The fashion industry is beginning to roar again in South Florida

**BY REAGAN CREAMER**

Atlantic High School

The dance tracks echoed through the low-lit tent as bikini-clad models glided down the runway. An audience of about 400 observed works ranging from Caribbean-inspired one-pieces to mesh-detailed, waterproof jackets.

But while this runway at Funkshion's annual July Swim Week might have resembled a scene out of New York, it actually took place in the heart of Miami.

"Miami has always had a lot of fashion," said Charlene Parsons, fashion director of Miami International University of Art & Design (MIUAD). "Most people don't realize that years ago it was very well-known for childrenswear and many other markets."

That label is beginning to change, and the city appears to be in the midst of a fashion resurgence. In 2014, Miami was the 19th most talked about fashion spot in the world, according to Global Language Monitor, a content analysis website that monitors internet trends. Two years earlier, it barely cracked the top 40.

"The fashion world is beginning to understand that Miami is more than swimwear," the website said.

During the 1960's, the country looked up

to The 305 for the latest trends in summer fashion, Parsons said. In 1962, the fashion industry became Miami-Dade County's largest single industrial employer, and more than 60 percent of Florida's manufacturing in apparel and related items took place in Miami, according to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's blog.

"Miami is an incredible place to get into the fashion business, as you can well-imagine by just looking at what we have going on now," Parsons said, motioning toward the designs of her students at the Funkshion event.

For the past three years, the company has invited MIUAD students to display their swimwear designs as the opening show of the weeklong series.

This event and many others like it are evidence that Miami is making a future for itself in fashion, students say. MIUAD professor Eyda Jove notes that the enthusiasm has yielded an increase in the number of aspiring designers coming to Miami to study. Jove estimates that since 2002, there has been a 40 percent increase in the number of Miami designers.

"We are getting bigger in the sense that more people want to come to study here," Jove states. "I think that New York is still the capital of fashion, but Miami is giving them a run for their money. I think that Miami will become the next 'it' place for fashion designers."

After being accepted into New York's Pratt Institute, Coraliz Morales-Martis, 21, chose

to study at MIUAD in Miami.

"A lot of things are happening in Miami right now," said the fashion design major from Ft. Lauderdale.

"We've been doing Miami Fashion Week, Swim Week, and now all of the corporate offices are moving closer to Miami to be part of the growing city. New retail spots are coming up in the design district, and designers are coming here to show their collections. So it only made sense for me to stay down here and be a part of that."

Many other students have decided to start their fashion careers in Miami rather than New York.

"The New York market is oversaturated with people trying to be designers and do everything," said Craig Segura, 26, another MIUAD design student. "I feel like Miami is an up-and-coming area for fashion."

As does Judith Cabrera, 27, of South Beach.

"I wanted to go to New York at first because it's the fashion capital," the first-year student admitted. "But I found out that this school [MIUAD] has a really good fashion design program and that there are a lot of designers that are studying here and then staying here. I realized that Miami is growing into a fashion capital itself."

Natalia Velaquez, also attending MIUAD, won the Perry Ellis Women's Swimwear award for her design at Swim Week.

"Miami is definitely one of the biggest places for fashion," the 27-year-old student designer said.

Like many of her peers, she plans to start her own fashion line and stay in Miami.

"Miami is growing a lot in fashion," she added. "I want to stay for that. I want to see it grow. I want to be a part of that."

# Miami's state of the art

## Explosive growth over 5 decades draws eyes from across the globe

BY CHRISTOPHER VAZQUEZ

Christopher Columbus High School

After living in New York during the September 11 attacks, South Florida native Felice Grodin realized two things: she wanted to become an artist, and she couldn't stay in the city.

"That actually is what caused me to be an artist, to be honest," Grodin, 47, said. "So after that happened, I really reevaluated everything and decided to, in a way, come home. And it just so happened that South Florida, and especially Miami, was this incredible community for art."

South Florida artists have begun showcasing their work across multiple platforms, from crowded city streets to chic gallery showrooms. The Miami art scene has always existed, but only recently has the city become a hotspot for creative minds, helping shape its cultural identity.

"It's like night and day," said Lilia Garcia, Coconut Grove Art Festival curator and gallery director. "When I was growing up, maybe there were one or two galleries."

Now home to more than 200 galleries, South Florida's art scene has gone from barely visible to globally acclaimed. In 2015, Art Basel Miami Beach attracted approximately 77,000 attendees and exhibitors from 32 countries.

Miami has emerged into an artistic hub, developing its own iconic art district, Wynwood, now home to more than 70 galleries.

"I've only been here for four years," said Lisa Leone, National YoungArts Foundation vice president of artistic programs. "Even in those four years, I've seen so much growth. In Wynwood, there were a few walls and restaurants. Now I can't even find a parking spot."

Katerina Wagner, founder of the blog The Miami Art Scene, agreed.

"It reminds me of New York City with all these little neighborhoods starting to develop," she said. "And Miami didn't have that before."

While South Florida has experienced a recent artistic boom, art made its way to the area before on a smaller scale. In 1963, the Coconut Grove Art Festival began as merely a promotional effort for the Coconut Grove Playhouse.

"It started off as a clothesline art festival, which was as simple as it sounds. People hung up their art on clothes lines," said Katrina Delgado, the festival's artist director. "As time went by, it grew."

That growth, however, was slow.

The Center of Fine Arts, Miami's first public art museum, opened in 1984, 19 years after the Coconut Grove Art Festival. The

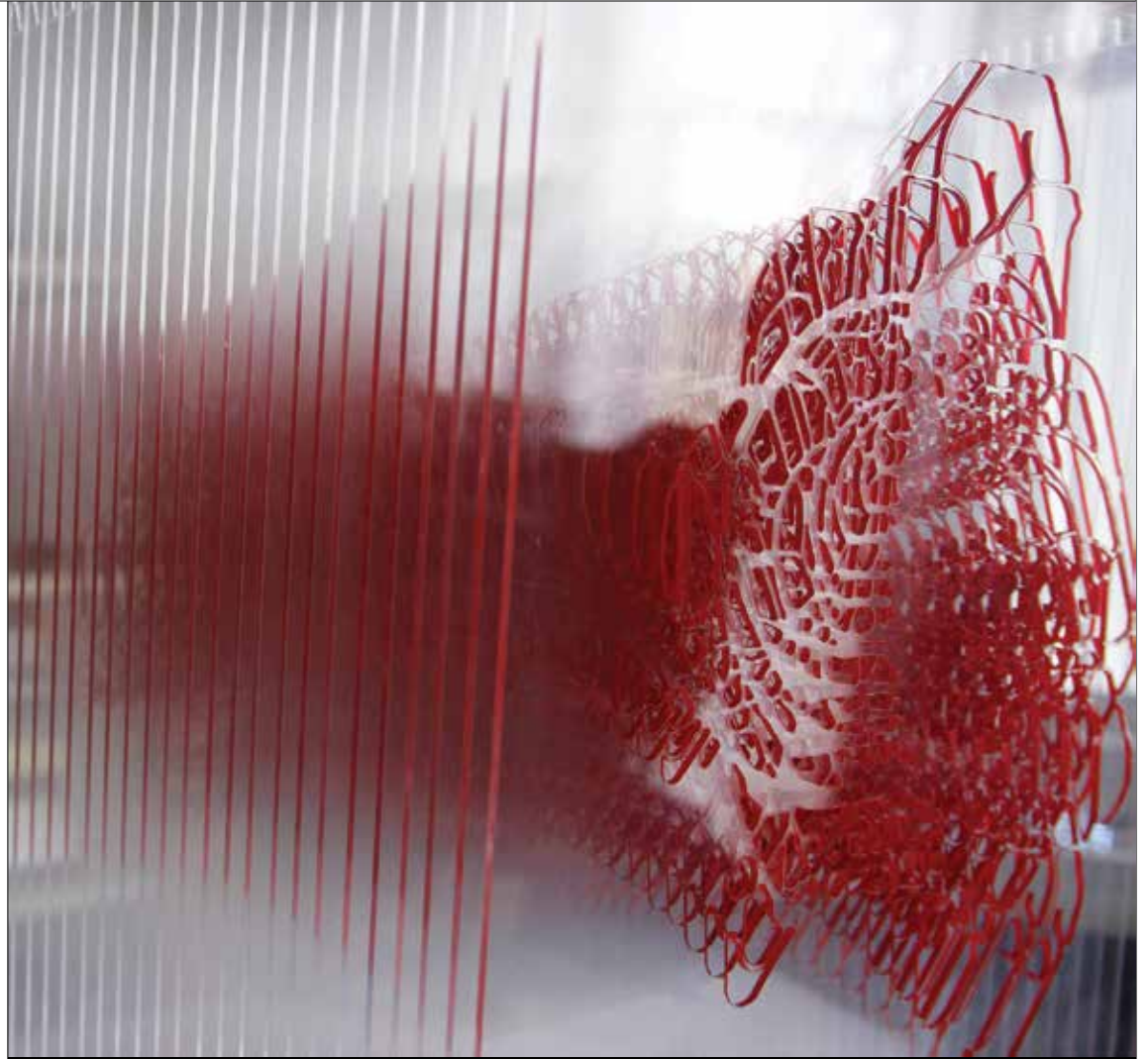


Photo by Danyel De Villiers

**A NEW WAVE:** Miami's art scene has evolved rapidly, propelling local artists to new heights. This 3-D work, "To Be Determined: An Artificial Excavation," is by Felice Grodin and Noel Palacios and occupies space in Grodin's Miami Beach studio.

facility's name was eventually changed to the Miami Art Museum to reflect its goal to build its collection, said Rene Morales, curator at the Perez Art Museum.

Meanwhile, more galleries began adding local color to South Florida, especially in Miami's Coral Gables neighborhood. But most venues left some locals wanting more.

"The works didn't really excite me," said Brook Dorsch, founder of the Emerson Dorsch gallery. "They would be very similar, the same style of painting each month. I always thought that galleries should try to challenge the viewer."

So in 1991, Dorsch opened a gallery in his apartment. Helen Kohen, a longtime Miami Herald art critic, eventually stopped by.

"She basically told me I had a good eye," Dorsch said. "And I think that's what kept me going."

In 1999, Dorsch decided to expand and opened one of the first galleries in Wynwood.

"It was in complete disrepair," he said. "You couldn't step foot into it. And next door was a house that had three rabid pit bulls and two crackheads living in it, basically. I said, 'This is perfect.'"

Around that time, a turning point arrived when Art Basel set its sights on Miami

Beach, a city with empty hotel rooms and a tourist-friendly climate. The first festival took place in 2002. More than 30,000 people attended.

Miami was the second city world-wide to introduce Art Basel, following Basel, Switzerland and preceding Hong Kong. The festival serves to connect galleries with art lovers from around the globe, making Miami's diverse cultural landscape an ideal location.

"Many people in greater Miami didn't know how to spell or pronounce 'Art Basel,'" said Robert Goodman, an Art Basel Miami Beach spokesman. "You plant a tree, and as it grows, flowers sprout around it. And that's sort of what happened with us."

As the local art scene grew after Art Basel, Wynwood went from housing a handful of galleries to Miami's definitive art district.

"Year after year, everything got bigger and bigger," Dorsch said.

Soon after, the Miami Art Museum moved downtown and became the Perez Art Museum in 2013. With the art scene still growing, artists such as Grodin believe that the art world won't turn its gaze away from Miami anytime soon.

"I think it's just scratching the surface of what it can be and what it can do."



Photo by Devoun Cetoute

**JAZZIN' IT UP:** Saxophonist Ed Calle performs an impromptu concert outside the Patricia Louise Frost Music Studios at the University of Miami.

# Miami's main music man

## Performing, teaching are his gifts to city's artistic community

**BY DIANA RIOJAS**

J. P. Taravella High School

Ed Calle's saxophone case has been around.

Its handle has been torn off and reattached. It's beaten from years of gigs.

"I like being thrown into everything," Calle said. "I think that's how I am reflective of Miami. Because Miami itself isn't just one thing."

Calle's versatility has translated to worldwide success. Collaborating across musical genres, he works with artists ranging from Vanessa Williams and Rihanna to Jimmy Buffet and Santana.

Randall W. De Witt, a two-decade fan, believes this skill is what keeps Calle's influence in Miami alive.

"Calle is someone who can range from classical to contemporary music," DeWitt said. "He can excel without losing his voice in other people's work."

After moving from Venezuela to the United States in 1966, Calle's father encouraged him to pursue music. He chose the tenor

saxophone and was awarded a scholarship to the University of Miami, where he got serious about a musical career.

"I never practiced during high school," said Calle, who also serves as chair of the Miami-Dade College Department of Arts and Philosophy. "But once I was in college, I would go from 6:30 in the morning to seven or 11 o'clock at night."

As a focal point in the Miami scene, Calle seeks to contribute to the success of local artists as well as his students.

Grammy-nominated Robert Rodriguez, a South Florida native, has been exposed to Latin music his whole life. But it was only after working with Calle that his career took a pivotal turn.

"He's the unsung hero of Miami," Rodriguez said. "He really got my foot in the door in the music scene. He was generous enough to recommend me to Arturo Sandoval, which helped me collaborate with other great artists."

Calle's classes produce musicians across Miami's diverse musical landscape. He featured 30 former students as ensemble members on his 2015 album "Mamblue."

"It's always a big deal when you get asked to be on an album that won a Latin Grammy," said Brian Quezada, a former student of Calle's and a featured musician on "Mamblue."

"It helped me get a few more extra gigs."

As big-label artists overshadow local musicians, diverse styles such as Afro-Cuban jazz have a tough time winning fans in South Florida. Calle, however, works to keep its diminishing spirit alive.

"There is good music out there, even better than some of the music you hear on the radio," said Peter Stebbins, owner of Shake 108 radio. "It's why radio stations need to incorporate local bands to keep Miami's culture thriving."

Calle is constantly looking to do exactly that. On "360," his most recent album, Calle merged Afro-Cuban Jazz with Nashville influences.

"Afro-Cuban music isn't just Afro-Cuban anymore," he said. "It really has changed a lot, and I am blessed to say that I am a part of that."

As for the local perception, Miami jazz musicians like Hana Dolgin believe the fusion of Latin Jazz is more than beneficial — it's vital.

"Many artists in Miami now have to know different styles," Dolgin said. "If not, they could not survive."

Grammys and the approval of peers are enough for most artists. But for Calle, it's always about breaking new ground.

"I have so many things to do," he said, "yet I feel like I've done nothing."



**IDENTITY  
CRISIS:**  
Beyond  
the Miami  
skyline,  
there's a harsh  
reality about  
image and  
perception.

Photo by  
Danyel  
De Villiers

# Is it really magic?

## Miami fights to keep its image after poll calls it the worst city

**BY DANYEL DE VILLIERS**

Christopher Columbus High School

Sun-filled beaches, unmatched nightlife, breathtaking resorts at every corner and a melting pot of cultures.

Those may be perceptions of Miami, but the city recently found itself listed as the worst city in which to live in the United States.

The list was produced by 24/7 Wall St., which ranked the 50 worst cities by collecting data on 550 cities with populations of 65,000-plus residents based on categories such as demographics and economy.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez agrees with some details in the report, but disagrees with more than a few.

"It's one of the hottest cities to live in, but Miami has been harbored by poverty and other economic issues for a long time," Gimenez said.

24/7 Wall St. is a financial news and opinion company that produces content for major publications and publishes about 30 stories a day on its internet website.

Miami's median home value is \$245,000, while the average income is \$31,917. The national median home value is \$181,200, with an average income of \$53,657. Miami's poverty line has increased from 15 percent in 2007 to a current 26.2 percent.

According to Christine Bermudez, a public information officer for the Department of Community and Economic Development, Miami has an abundance of foreign and out-of-city newcomers who invest in homes in the city, which prompts the rise in home values.

The question remains. Is Miami really that bad?

"If you're making \$31,917 income and you have a couple of kids, there's no way you can buy a house," said Piper Rothan, a Keyes realtor.

The city has seen itself plunge into serious social problems; 1 percent of those in Miami's job industry make millions more than the other 99 percent.

In a recent article by the Miami New Times, Peter Beach was profiled for his photo illustrations showing the gap between the rich and the poor.

"When I saw [the 24/7 Wall St.] article, that's when I said, 'Now's the time to tell my story,'" Beach said.

As he did his photo shoots, Beach continually encountered a homeless man at a picnic table who collected bags of cans for money; this was Beach's enlightenment.

"This is a city with a ton of problems with a thin little happy veneer," said Beach, a Boston native who has lived in the Miami area since 2002. "The second you rip off that veneer, it's an ugly sight."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, data show that of the 441,000 residents in Miami proper, one out of every four individuals are living below the poverty line.

"People who are working for minimum wage or less, I don't know how they do it," said

Rothan, the Keyes realtor. "A lot of people are falling through the cracks."

Despite the substantial poverty rate and staggering home values, organizations in the Miami area offer numerous programs in the hopes of decreasing the number of people who find themselves falling through these cracks.

"Our services provide an opportunity for low income families and individuals to get back on their feet," said Ofelia Martinez, Program Administrator at the Department of Children and Families.

The Department of Children and Families provides a helping hand to individuals and families who find themselves near the poverty line. The organization offers food assistance, temporary cash assistance and Medicare services.

"We have had professionals making close to a six figure salary who have never contacted the Department of Children and Families, now calling us asking for help because they lost that big income salary," Martinez said.

Through the department's efforts and those of many other organizations in the Miami area, the poverty rate of 26.2 percent is being addressed.

"This department has been providing to people below the poverty line for many years and will continue to do so heading into the future," Martinez said.

Mayor Gimenez said Miami-Dade County is investing in a range of fields, mostly technology and clean energy.

By investing in these fields, Gimenez hopes it will lead to new jobs and help people pursue independent lives.

As Miami continues to grow, it seeks to put an end to the criticisms toward the city and improve the quality of life for its residents.

"Do we have a lot of problems? Yes, but the quality of life in Miami cannot be driven by one statistic," Gimenez said. "The goal in Miami is to make people's lives better."

# A kick in the grass



Photo by Matthew Rembold

**SOCCER SUPREME:** Young soccer players commandeer a baseball diamond for practice drills in a Miami park. Not a single baseball player is in sight.

## In South Florida, baseball's reign dims as lights shine on youth soccer leagues

BY KYLE WOOD

Coral Glades High School

A soccer ball made its way across the infield, rolling toward third base. In the shadows of I-95 in downtown Miami, players honed their soccer skills where a baseball team once played.

In South Florida, the national pastime is slowly becoming past tense.

"You walk on a baseball field to find it empty," said Daniel Prenat, executive director of Miami Youth Soccer. "And then you walk on a soccer field to see it full of kids playing."

Prenat has observed a recent shift in local sports popularity. Slowly but surely, soccer is replacing baseball as South Florida's favorite sport.

"Kids are not playing baseball in their own neighborhoods to the degree that they used to," said Gaspar Gonzalez, a guest curator at the HistoryMiami Museum.

Given baseball's regional stronghold, few sports enthusiasts saw this coming. The city has been home to minor league baseball teams, including a first and second version of the Miami Marlins in 1956 and 1962.

South Florida's mild year-round climate made baseball attractive, along with the draw of Spring training and the ease with

which one could set up a baseball field in flat Florida. With the Cuban influx into the area in the early 1960s, they brought with them an additional love of baseball that further boosted the game's popularity.

In 1993, Major League Baseball found its way to Miami. Despite early success, the Marlins never developed the strong fanbase other cities have.

"People said, 'We're gonna sell out every night,' and that hasn't been the case," Gonzalez said. "The crowds have not materialized, and you wonder what it's gonna take to bring people out."

Meanwhile, area youths are relocating from the diamond to the soccer field. And the trend is being felt across the country, too. According to a Sports and Fitness Industry Association study, the number of 6- to 12-year-olds playing soccer in the U.S. rose 100,000 in 2014, the year of the World Cup.

That same study found even greater growth in 2011, when youth soccer participation peaked at more than six million with 600,000 new soccer players, the year after the 2010 World Cup.

Major League Soccer is also growing in popularity. Though bringing in fewer fans than the NFL and NBA, the MLS reported a 12.7 percent increase in attendance from 2014 to 2015, according to Soccer America magazine. Florida, with 114,000 reported soccer players, is the fifth most active area in the country.

"A lot more kids are growing up playing soccer now than ever before in Miami," said Gonzalez. "And there are reasons for that."

Baseball has grown more expensive over the years. Local leagues are being replaced

by travel leagues, which can cost thousands of dollars a year. Also, the cost of equipment is higher in baseball than soccer. Parents usually pay upwards of \$120 just for a baseball glove.

"Cost is a factor, because if you look at all the equipment you need to buy to play baseball and then you look at soccer, there's 22 kids playing with just one ball," Prenat said.

According to the census web site City-Data, more than 70 percent of Miamians identify themselves as Hispanic, the majority of which were born in Central and South America, where soccer is king.

"Soccer has replaced baseball because of the demographics of the area," said Otto Camejo, Miami Springs Little League president. "With the demographic model of Central and South Americans in Miami, they have certainly brought that culture here."

In addition to this nationwide swing, former soccer star David Beckham is on the hunt to bring professional soccer to Miami's Overtown area.

"Miami embraces things that are new," Gonzalez said. "So I think if you did have a pro soccer team down here, you probably would see a spike [in participation]. All of a sudden kids would be picking up soccer balls."

Even families are dealing with divided interests when it comes to sports loyalty. Prenat's wife, who is Cuban, likes baseball. But she raised their son to love soccer.

"She did this because she saw all of the kids playing soccer outside," Prenat said. "In soccer, 22 kids are moving at all times. And in baseball, kids sit around waiting to see if the ball is hit to them."



Photo by Karina Blodnieks

**THE KNEEL:** Muslim prayer services include a bow position known as the Tajlis.

# Finding identity in Islam

## Muslims believe path to understanding goes through education

**BY STELLA IKPATT**

American Heritage School, Plantation

Known for its six flavors of Baklava, Middle East Best Food sits on Miami's Coral Way, where founder Ali Abdel-Aziz has baked and sold traditional Middle Eastern pastries and spices for more than 20 years.

"I love Miami," Abdel-Aziz said. "I call it my hometown."

Striving to pave their identity in one of the most diverse regions in America, South Florida Muslims such as Abdel-Aziz fight discrimination through education and involvement in the community.

"Miami's a melting pot," said Tharwat Monem, who works at the family-owned Oriental Bakery. "There's many cultures here, so we don't feel [out of place]."

The number of Muslim adherents in the Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties has grown from about 13,800 in 2000 to more than 52,000 in 2010, according



**PHASES OF PRAYER:**  
In Muslim services, this is a series of five prayers. This one is called Sajdah.

Photo by Karina Blodnieks

to the website City-Data.

However, many in the Muslim community say it is not enough simply to try and fit in. They must work to inform the public of what Islam really is.

"Our whole message is to educate people to tell them about the true Islam," said Munawar Chaudhry, president of the local chapter of the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam and a member of the Bait ul Nasser mosque. Their "True Islam" campaign emphasizes the rejection of terrorism, loyalty to one's country of residence and universal human rights.

"Whatever we can do to help our community, we do," he said. This includes participating in the local Miami Book Fair International and offering weekly services to the homeless shelter.

Educational attempts also occur beyond the mosques. Randall Kaufman, chair of arts and sciences at the Miami-Dade College Homestead campus, and Coalition of South Florida Muslim Organizations, or COSMOS, worked together to launch Islam Today.

Together, they organized an informational series at Miami-Dade College's Homestead



Photo by Jessica Koernig

**PRAYER ROW:** Regular services at a mosque provide Muslims with a source of faith and inspiration.

campus to bring awareness to the underlying similarities between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim faiths.

Kaufman's drive to spread this message stems from his experience growing up as a Jew and observing the xenophobia and discrimination his own community faced in America. He sees a parallel in the Muslim community and decided to do something about it.

"If we know what has happened in the past, why do it again?" he said.

Abdel-Aziz shares a similar view with Kaufman.

"We are all from Adam and Eve."

Despite the outreach efforts, many Muslims cannot escape the harmful stigma surrounding their community.

"Ever since September 11, it's become harder because it's become harder to open up," said Samad Nassirnia, who frequently attends the Flagler Masjid in Miami.

His mosque used to receive threatening phone calls before they eventually got rid of the phone.

As Abdel-Aziz sat drinking coffee outside his restaurant one morning, a passerby shouted, "Traitor, go back home!" Monem has been profiled by the police because of his name, he said.

"We have to fight on many fronts," Chaudry said.

With stereotypes of the Muslim community more rampant than ever, many are more inspired to educate non-Muslims. Monem believes that his community should "contribute more to society...and appreciate the freedoms that you actually have."

For now, however, Abdel-Aziz will continue to bake and sell Middle Eastern food at his gourmet market.

"I want [us] to be united. That's all."



Photo by Karina Blodnieks

**THE DAILY RITUAL:** If Muslims pray inside a mosque, they are granted a great deal more blessings.



Photo by Jessica Koernig

**STANDING FOR PRAYER:** Muslim services start with the Takbir and move on to the Qiyam.

# Memories by design

## Miami's architectural identity evolved from a variety of influences

**BY MARTINA MAURICI**  
MAST@FIU

Neon lighting advertises the intricately sculpted buildings along Ocean Drive, just 30 minutes north of the arches and painted tiles of Coral Gables.

"I think this area is just a small little melting pot," said James Brown, a worker at the Vagabond Hotel on U.S. 1.

The development of Miami's architecture through the past century showcases the city's diverse background as it has evolved from European influences into its own original Miami style. Like its people, the architecture is a melting pot of influences.

During the 1920s, the Biltmore Hotel brought the Spanish Colonial style to Coral Gables, a trend originally created for churches and homes in Europe.

"The Biltmore is what started Coral Gables, and famous people always come by," said Paula Russi at the Biltmore. "That is what attracts more people."

Inspired by the Giralda Tower in Seville, Spain, the Biltmore drew in the Mafia and Hollywood to the neighborhood. As the first high-end hotel in the community, it attracted both tourists and businesses.

Just half a mile away from the hotel, the Venetian Pool acted as another tourist attraction, introducing the Mediterranean style to the area. George Merrick, founder and designer of Coral Gables, used grand towers and plazas to emulate a typical Mediterranean estate.

The architectural foundation of Coral Gables entwines both the Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial designs, creating part of a distinct Miami vibe.



Photo by Anthony Fernandez

**WELL BILT:** The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, opened in 1926, was based on architecture developed in European cultural styles. The style is Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival.

Art Deco, another prominent and perhaps its most recognizable architectural form, was inspired by the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. It is known for its bright colors and geometric shapes.

Located on South Beach's Collins Avenue, the Webster boutique is a noted example of the Art Deco style. Henry Hohauser, the building's architect, introduced the style to Miami through the neon pink and blue color scheme of the Webster.

Contrasting this loud approach, the Miami Modern style, which quietly existed alongside

Art Deco, brought a more muted look.

Also known as "MiMo," Miami Modern was introduced to Miami Beach in the late 1940s. It only recently surfaced as a popular trend. Based off minimalist ideals, this design uses a plain background to emphasize pops of color, keeping with the colorful and complex designs of Miami Beach.

Constructed in 1953, the Vagabond Motel represents a traditional Miami Modern building with its white walls and light blue accents. But beyond its architectural significance, the building is a historical reminder of segregation.

"When black people weren't allowed to go to any other hotel, they would stay here," Brown said.

However, even as one of the few architectural designs that has originated in Miami, Miami Modern may never take over the more established Art Deco look.

"Miami Modern is another style that they're trying to bring in by changing Art Deco. They [the City of Miami] don't recommend the change. They have set rules only for certain areas to change," said Rayda Almonte, a local architect. "Art Deco is staying in Miami Beach and South Beach."

Téofilo Victoria, an architecture professor at the University of Miami, believes this mix of artistic styles creates a unique design that is directly influenced by Miami's diverse cultures.

"I love Miami and how it has involved so many different cultures, just the design and the styles it contributes to the art," said Luis Silva, a freelance architect.

**VENETIAN REVIVAL:** The Venetian pool, opened in 1924, is now known for being a resort and tourist destination.



Photo by Martina Maurici



# Man, it's hard being a queen

## South Beach nightlife fuels competition for performers in drag

BY KARINA BLODNIKS

Cooper City High School

Tommy Strangie has been wearing the same black pumps for 25 years. In the iconic Miami drag scene, they're about the only things that have stayed the same.

Known throughout South Beach as Shelley Novak, Strangie has been an iconic Miami drag queen since 1992.

"We have a real South American-like, Sabado Gigante kind of colorful, fruit-on-the-head, guy-dressed-as-a-bumble-bee vibe to Florida drag," Strangie said.

Drag shows have been a major part of Miami nightlife since the late 1940s. At that time, New York and Los Angeles were hot spots for drag, but Miami slowly made a name for itself in the drag scene. Today, Miami is experiencing a thriving drag culture. It has evolved throughout the years, but it remains a mainstay in Miami entertainment.

Strangie says Miami has its own drag scene aura unlike any other city. In the early days, the practice was far from accepted, and discrimination was rampant. In the 1950s, Miami-Dade County passed an anti-crossdressing ordinance that made it illegal for males to dress in drag in public.

Eventually, the culture shifted. In the late 1980s, South Beach was relatively cheap, empty and waiting to be discovered. The gay community began to occupy the area, setting up drag bars in their wake.

The real onset of Miami drag, according to Strangie, was when fashion icon Gianni Versace made the drag nightlife visible. Dubbed the Miami renaissance, this period turned South Beach from a casual locale to a drag hub for performers around the world.

Stavros Stavrakis, known in the community as Athena Dion, agrees.

"Miami in the '90s was really it for drag," Dion said. "I think at that time, queens and South Beach went hand-in-hand with Miami's identity."

Venues like Score and Palace have hosted drag queen shows for decades, contributing to the rise of Miami's nightlife.

After Versace's murder in his Miami Beach home in 1997, though, Miami's drag culture began to suffer. Edison Farrow, a nightlife promoter in Miami for 16 years, dealt with this firsthand.

"For a while, drag got lost a little," Farrow said. "It happened when it got expensive to live in South Beach."

Miami's drag scene came back in 2009 when RuPaul's Drag Race first aired on TV. This turned the playful performance of drag into serious business and drew national attention to drag sites around the world.

"In the early days of South Beach, it was almost clownish, off-the-wall drag," Farrow



Photo by Uma Chatterjee

**READY FOR SHOW:** Shelley Novak prepares to leave her apartment for the short walk to Score, a drag bar in South Beach. Novak is the hostess at the club.

said. "Then it turned into pretty, professional drag."

Not all of the community has a positive outlook on the shift. Dion started doing drag in 2011. She posits that drag is not what it used to be. Because it became more streamlined and competitive, it lost its unique edge.

"Social media platforms and shows like RuPaul's Drag Race are trying to create guidelines for drag," Dion said. "It's not right. Drag is a form of expression, and it's different for everyone."

Despite this outlook, Dion says she loves what she does. She calls herself a social drag queen, and says that for her, performing is about connecting with the audience.

"Drag is more than dressing like a woman," Dion said. "It's creating a new person."

Antonio Mendez started dressing in drag in 2015. He's dabbled in South Beach, but has mostly performed in other areas of Miami, paying special attention to art galas. He felt he couldn't bring a certain level of creativity to his performances.

"South Beach drag is not something I could compete with," Mendez said.

Other areas in Miami are beginning to create their own drag scenes. This counter-culture has attracted many aspiring queens.

"It's growing exponentially in a really good way," Mendez said. "It's ratchet, but it's very come-as-you-are with no judgment. We've never turned anyone away. We're not about that."



Photo by Uma Chatterjee

**THE CHANGE BEGINS:** With years of experience, it only takes 30 minutes to turn into Shelley Novak.



**SUMMER IN THE CITY:** In historic Overtown, kids spend their days playing at a local basketball court. Their generation will inherit a neighborhood far different from the one today.

Photo by Kyle Wood

# Losing the swagger in Overtown

## Development, shifts in population threaten to change its character

**BY MATTHEW REMBOLD**  
Christopher Columbus High School

Overtown's last black-owned grocery store, with its half-empty shelves and guard cat, is easy to miss.

Bernard Bradley, 40, inherited Bradley's Grocery from his father and has worked there since he was a kid. Recently, however, he's felt the urge to take his business elsewhere.

"I really don't want to stay anymore," Bradley said.

Miami's Overtown, once called the Harlem of the South, was known for robust music, nightly entertainment and addressing the needs of the community.

"Most of it has been here for 100 years," said self-proclaimed community photographer Jovan Lamb, 38.

But construction of I-95 in the 1960s split the neighborhood and forced businesses to close. Residents moved out to make room for the highway. It would never be the same.

"That was the village, and it basically ripped the town in half," said Lamb, a lifelong Overtown resident. "Over time, I've just been watching buildings come and buildings drop."

Among those buildings have been several new high-rise condominiums and chain stores, which raise the cost of living and ruins the charm of Overtown, Lamb said.

"We've always considered this a bounce-back area for people who are unfortunate, who couldn't live paying \$800 or \$900 dollars in rent," he said. "This was an area where you could come, save your money and then go back into the world and try again. For people who were incarcerated and couldn't get jobs, this was the place."

Billy Hall, a Florida International University doctoral student whose research was based on Overtown, said that refurbishing the area meant new residents would be less likely to shop at old businesses.

"The thing about black-owned businesses is that they are frequently patronized by black people," Hall said. "That area is becoming more Hispanic. Those businesses will be affected. [New residents] are going to want a 7-Eleven, or something more familiar."

"It's not black anymore," Bradley said. "The blacks ran away. We don't care about each other anymore. The only time we stay together is when a tragedy happens."

Jackson Soul Food Restaurant, one of the few black-owned restaurants left, has been a family-owned and operated mainstay since

1946. Lataurus Ingraham, 32, also a native to the area, grew up in Jackson's kitchen. His grandparents, Jessie and Demus Jackson, started the restaurant and passed it down to Lataurus' mother, Shirlene Ingraham. He represents the third generation to work the business.

Ingraham believes the neighborhood has changed in recent years.

"[People] think it's bad," he said. "It's not as bad as it used to be."

Bradley agreed.

"We don't have to fear [petty crime] here," he said, recalling the countless times that he's left his car unlocked with the windows rolled down without the fear of it being stolen.

These days, the most pressing issue for Overtown isn't crime. It's job security and fair wages. There's hope that projects such as the Miami Worldcenter, one of the largest urban development projects in the nation, and international soccer superstar David Beckham's city-approved soccer stadium will create jobs.

But not everyone is convinced.

"It's not really benefiting very much," Hall said. "People [in Overtown] have no wealth, no means to stay in the game as it develops. Benefits won't trickle down without a real structure."

Instead, locals such as Ingraham believe that established businesses will help save Overtown.

"It means a lot to have the business and to pass it on to my kids," he said. "My kids are going to have kids, and I'm trying to keep a tradition alive."

**"It's not black anymore. The blacks ran away."**

**Bernard Bradley**  
owner, Bradley's Grocery

# Putting on the polish

## Vietnamese take big share of South Florida nail salon business

BY MARLOWE STARLING

Miami Palmetto Senior High School

Cong Nguyen's eyes sparkle with hope as he drills, buffs and polishes a client's nails. As a Vietnamese nail salon owner, he sees those nails not as his success, but as security for the next generation.

"I didn't come here for this job. For this job, I stay in my country," Nguyen said. "I came here for my kids and their future, for a better life."

For many Vietnamese families, America is the land of opportunity, and the cultural diversity of South Florida helps them flourish within the nail industry.

Vietnamese-owned nail businesses trace their roots back to Hollywood actress Tippi Hedren, known for her starring role in Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds." After the fall of Saigon in 1975, she volunteered as an international relief coordinator at a refugee camp near Sacramento, California. The Vietnamese women there were interested in Hedren's glossy nails, so she invited her personal manicurist, Dusty Coots Butera, to teach them how to do manicures.

"I rented a bus and sent them to Sacramento to go to beauty school to get their licenses, and off they went. And they all passed," Hedren said in a telephone interview. "I'm very honored that this has happened. It's artful, it's creative, it's financially lucrative, and it's perfect for them. I loved those girls. I absolutely loved them."

Now, 41 years later, Vietnamese nail salons dominate over half of the \$9 million industry nationwide, according to NAILS Magazine and Statista.

As the third most popular destination for Vietnamese immigrants, South Florida has a large share of Vietnamese-owned nail salons.

"South Florida reflects their cultural togetherness and their ability to help each other in this area," said Erika Kotite, editor for NAILS and VietSALON Magazine. "Florida has a huge appetite for nail services based on culture, style and a lot of other factors."

An estimated 12,000 Vietnamese immigrants live in South Florida, according to the Migration Policy Institute. NAILS Magazine reports that 48 percent of nail salon owners nationwide have a spouse and children.

"A lot of times families go to the same areas [and stay for] multiple generations and decide on the nail business," Kotite said. "They help each other and pool their resources and their salons and help their families get established, which is why there is such tremendous growth."

Vietnamese nail salons have made the nail industry more competitive by offering more



Photo by Marlowe Starling

**A FRESH COAT:** My Huynh, a nail specialist, is one of thousands of Vietnamese who emigrated from Vietnam and started careers in the nail salon business.

affordable services.

"They fueled the competition, they forced salons to be competitive, they forced nail salon owners to modify their services and it stratified the market into all these different niches," Kotite said.

Diana and Duc Huynh opened King's Bay Nails in 2007 and have lived in Florida for more than 30 years. Their daughter Anna Huynh and son Hui Huynh were born in Miami.

Anna went to beauty school to become a certified technician during her sophomore year of high school and now enjoys the comfort of working with family and friends.

"After a while you get used to it, and it isn't like a job anymore. It's like a routine," Anna said. "I just get to be myself here."

Magic Nails, located in a Cutler Bay strip mall, is owned by Cong Nguyen and wife Linh, who opened the salon in 2007.

Michelle Nguyen, Cong Nguyen's 14-year-old daughter, was born in Vietnam and moved to Miami in 2006.

"The nail salon business really helps my family become more social, especially since they didn't know the [English] language when they came," Michelle said.

Sixty-seven percent of Vietnamese immigrants in 2014 claimed limited English proficiency, according to the Migration Policy Institute. Among all immigrants, fifty percent claim limited English proficiency.

"[My mom] has met so many nice customers and clients who have helped us overall with learning English," Michelle said. "They're really kind and patient with us."

Michelle's fourth grade teacher, who is a client at the salon, helped Michelle's mother pass her citizenship test by quizzing her during manicures.

"Without working at nail salons, we wouldn't be here," Michelle said. "[My grandmother] said we're very grateful to have something, an occupation, to keep us here."

The first three months after opening were slow due to their difficulty speaking English on the phone.

"I told my wife to try, try [to keep the salon open]. Now it's busy," Cong Nguyen said. "We take care of customers. That's why they come back."

And they do.

Erica Chapell, 25, is a stay-at-home hairdresser and has gone to Magic Nails since middle school. She now brings her 7-year-old daughter.

"She says, 'Take me to Magic Nails, Mommy,'" Chapell said. "Anybody who knows me knows I'm going to Magic Nails."

It's the uplifting atmosphere and dynamic conversation that draws newcomers.

"This is the first time I come to a nail salon that's this happy. This place is exciting," said Redie Testa, a first-time visitor from Virginia Beach. "These people talk, they're friendly, and I love the way the customers joke with them. I've never seen this before."

Hedren is pleased.

"The wonderful thing is that it's been a wonderful way for the women to make a living for their children. Some of their kids are going through college now," she said.

"It's been a godsend."

# Stayin' alive, stayin' alive

## Global musical sounds come to Miami, where they merge and renew

**BY CHRISTIAN LOZANO**

Miami Senior High School

In most cities, unique musical sounds often come and go.

But in Miami, they tend to stick around.

Reggae, salsa, rock, rap, disco and dubstep: the city has created a tradition of merging genres of music and creating a new sound, The Miami Sound.

“Can you imagine a day in your life you didn’t have any music?” said Barry Bernhardt, a band director and professor of music at Florida International University. “If we didn’t have music then our lives would be pretty stale and sterile.”

In the 1940s and 1950s, jazz was the city’s most popular music.

Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and others entertained tourists and locals at the Ball and Chain Tavern, while Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack performed for guests at the Fontainebleau Hotel.

“There was a lot of live entertainment, especially because of the tourism industry,” said Gary Keller, a local musician who teaches at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music.

Many artists moved to the city to satisfy the need for backup musicians in newly opened recording studios.

Miami was the beginning and end of many famous rock ‘n’ roll tours. Artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and Pink Floyd either started or ended their shows in Miami. This exposed and influenced local musicians to fuse those sounds with their own.

“It was a combination of everything,” said Rudy Sarzo, a bassist who has played with Ozzy Osbourne, Whitesnake and Quiet Riot. “In bars, all the local bars would play anything from Motown to The Deep.”



Photo by Christian Lozano

**BAND ON THE RUN:** Barry Bernhardt, FIU band director, says music is essential to happiness.

As rock ‘n’ roll began to fade, disco emerged in the 1960s and took over the popular music scene in the 1970s. Record companies like TK Records and Criteria Records opened in South Florida and began producing and distributing music from local artists.

One of those artists was Hialeah’s KC and the Sunshine Band. The band released hits such as “Get Down Tonight,” “Shake Your Booty” and “That’s the Way I Like It.”

“This was ground zero for the Bee Gees and KC and Sunshine Band,” said Keller, who moved to Miami in 1978 to study jazz at the University of Miami. “They all recorded here. They all made hit records here.”

The 1980s and 1990s were the beginning of Latin-influenced music and hip-hop.

Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine created songs like “Eyes of

Innocence,” “Dr. Beat” and “I Need Your Love” that rode the wave of Miami popularity.

“There’s always been a rich history of music (in Miami),” said Juan Turros, a local musician who plays saxophone in the band Suenalo.

In the 1980s, Miami hip-hop became mainstream and controversial. 2 Live Crew and people like Luther Campbell were so popular, nearly every club and radio station wanted to play their music. However, because the lyrics contained expletives they needed a “Clean” version, Turros said.

Due to the racy lyrics, the government prohibited distribution of their records. Once the Parents Music Resource Center and artists agreed on the Parental Advisory label, distribution began with the warning being printed on the album covers.

Hip-hop continued to impact Miami into the 1990s and 2000s. Miami artists such as “Mr. 305” Pitbull, Rick Ross and Flo Rida fused their versions of the Miami sound with hip-hop.

In recent years, electronic dance music has become the sound of Miami.

“Now we’re seeing a lot more of the club scene, electronic dance music,” Bernhardt said. “We’ve seen a true evolution of the music industry in Miami.”

“Performing with samples and live musicians, that’s become what we do,” said Andrew Yeomanson, aka DJ Le Spam of the Spam All Stars. “All of those influences are filtered through those groups and are expressed in different ways including dubstep.”

“[Miami’s] music has propelled in a certain direction because of the different influences from different places and the fusion of different cultures,” Turros said.

**MUSIC OVER MIND:** The Miami sound is a large collection of various genres.



Photo by Christian Lozano



**HAPPY FEET:** Every Wednesday night, the German-American Social Club hosts a dance that includes plenty of food and beer. Pictured are members of the Auerhahn Schuhplattler dance troupe.

Photo by Uma Chatterjee

# Brewing up some fun

## German-Americans quietly spice up Miami life

**BY JESSICA KOERNIG**

John A. Ferguson Senior High School

Beyond the more familiar Latin influences in South Florida resides a culture that has quietly become one of the major forces in the makeup of Miami's identity.

Outside a social club in a small corner of West Kendall, a red-black-and-gold flag from a not-so Latin country waved high alongside the familiar red, white and blue, symbolizing the merging of two cultures.

"I don't consider Germany my home," said Jan Williams, who was born in Berlin, Germany and is now the president of Miami's German-American Social Club, home to the original and longest running Oktoberfest in Florida. "South Florida is my home."

With more than 100,000 German-Americans living in South Florida, their culture is featured in traditions such as Oktoberfest and Christkindlmarkt. And while they might be known for polka music, bratwurst and world-class beer, companies like Audi, Porsche and Deutsche Bank contribute to the visibility of the area's German heritage.

"There are different cultures in South Florida, so it's important for people to be well-rounded and educated on the German culture," said Penelope Wood, a German native who moved to South Florida when she was 13 years old.

Large German-American social clubs throughout Florida make it their goal to help with that education, sharing their culture and first-Wednesday-of-the-month "Schnitzel Night" with communities along the South Florida coast, a significant region for German

tourism and local residents.

"Years ago when the Germans migrated to South Florida, there were a large number of members in the club," said Jim Cavallaro, vice president of the German-American Social Club in Hollywood. He was stationed with the U.S. Army in Germany for 20 years.

"Nowadays, there aren't that many people migrating here because living in Germany is similar to living in the United States."

Despite this trend, the German-born population in Florida is growing. In 1990, more than 55,321 Germans called Florida home. Today, however, more than 102,500 German-Americans live in Miami-Dade County and the Fort Lauderdale area, according to the web site Zip Atlas.

More than 3,000 Germans come through

Miami-Dade County a month, according to Miami International Airport. German businesses believe South Florida offers excellent conditions for developing companies. These organizations have the opportunity to tap into vibrant Latin American markets.

Williams, the Miami social club president, has big plans for the future of the organization and German community. He strives to help German youth in the community connect with their heritage.

"It would be incredible for the people in our community to take part in our culture and pass it down to the younger generations," said Dylan Giniger, a dancer for the Auerhahn Schuhplattler of Miami group. "Exposing them to our traditions will help them learn more about what Germany and South Florida have to offer."

Williams sees this as an opportunity for the area's German descendants to enjoy the best of both worlds — old and new.

"The culture is changing. We need to embrace the new but remember the old," Williams said.



**FANCY DANCING:** A couple takes the floor at the German-American Social Club's "Schnitzel Night."

Photo by Uma Chatterjee



**WOMEN POWER:** Debbie Korge (center), development director of the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade, meets with local women in the women's movement. On the left is Georgegette Madison, a former guest of the Lotus House, a Miami women's shelter.

Photo by Diana Riojas

# Waves of change for women

## Feminist movement finds new frontier in diverse South Florida

**BY DEVOUN CETOUTE**

Felix Varela High School

South Florida offers something to the feminist movement that few others do.

"Miami, by its very population, is so diverse and comes from so many different cultures and backgrounds, it automatically lends itself to allowing intersectional practices to work," said Sumita Chatterjee, professor of women's and gender studies at the University of Miami.

"Miami, I would say, is the perfect city to allow for intersectional practices to be played out."

Intersectionality examines how different social identities — race, class, gender and sexual orientation, among others — interact with forms of oppression. In South Florida, the feminist movement has evolved from fighting for suffrage into a support network that's accepting of very diverse backgrounds.

The first wave began in the 18th century with women's fight for voting rights. Then, starting roughly in 1960, with Nikki Beare and Roxcy Bolton, the second wave of feminism focused on women's workplace and reproductive rights. From 1990 to today, organizations have joined the current third wave, which pushes to be more inclusive for people of color and LGBT women.

The Women's Fund of Miami-Dade is part of the latest movement aiming to provide an

array of support services for girls and young women. Starting with only \$5,000 in 1993, the Women's Fund has given out \$3.7 million and funded more than 480 programs.

"We really believe that the young women of tomorrow have a lot of wonderful resources that they may not be aware of," Executive Director Marilyn Fizer March said. "They need to step up and understand and be able to carry us into the future."

Women's History Coalition of Miami-Dade County Inc., founded in 1983, also honors members of the feminist community with the Women of Impact award.

"We think it is extremely important that you never forget the history of how hard women have struggled to get as far as they have," said JoAnn Roberts, president of the coalition. "Women can be anything if they have the ambition."

Today, Florida National Organization of Women (Florida NOW) helps women tackle issues centered on affirmative action, lesbian and gay rights, violence against women and economic justice.

"There were lots of women that were stay-at-home moms, and some of these women decided they wanted to run for office and had no support," said Joanne Sterner, 72, a NOW member and Broward chapter president. "So they joined the NOW chapters. Women's issues are different in 2016 than in the 1980s."

Due to the rapid advancement in technology, South Floridians are currently on the brink of a new wave of feminism, observers say. Platforms such as social media, blogs, podcasts, radio and more can inform feminists more efficiently and build a bigger following.

Natalie Kivell, 31, a University of Miami doctoral student in community well-being, hosts a show on social issues for WVUM 90.5.

"[When] I did a show on feminism, with Susy Patterson, one of the first questions we got was, 'Are you fat?'" Kivell said. "I thought it was so interesting because as soon as you talk about anything around inequality with women, there is an assumption of who you are, like that you are angry or are the man-hating feminist stereotype."

Audrey Aradanas, 21, feels more should be done for young women across the state. A former president of Florida International University's National Organization for Women, she plans to create a podcast called Grrrls UnInterrupted to address female issues in South Florida and a blog to collect donations.

"I see my work and what I am doing, and I want [the next generation of women] to know you don't have to put up with the b.s.," Aradanas said. "I really want [them] to understand that they are independent and autonomous. That they have the choice to be whoever they want."

# Where art fell apart

## Wynwood's latest revival disrupts its legendary creativity

BY ALBANY MURIA

Coral Gables Senior High School

Run-down buildings, abandoned warehouses and petty thefts made Wynwood seem like the least likely place to visit, a far cry from the vibrant, bustling art district known today.

"Things in Wynwood were torn down," said Juan Navarro, former employee in his family's business, Navarro's Paint & Body Shop, founded in Wynwood in the late 1990s. "We had to lock everything so it wouldn't get stolen. Gentrification in Wynwood was necessary for safety."

Gentrification, the process of renovating a poor area into a desirable middle-class community, has been undertaken in many low-income, deteriorating neighborhoods across the United States. Although it can substantially improve the safety and living quality of its new residents, it can also cause property values to increase and a community's identity to be forgotten.

It started in the 1950s, when Wynwood was known as "Little San Juan," an affordable, working-class Puerto Rican neighborhood. Two decades later, Wynwood's population expanded into a multi-ethnic community with high crime rates and poverty levels.

During the 1990s, emerging artists and art dealers took advantage of cheap and vacant warehouses to display their work.

"I saw the building and knew it was the building for me," said Bernice Steinbaum, owner of Bernice Steinbaum Gallery. "My kids said it was dangerous, but I wasn't frightened."

In the mid 2000s, real estate investors David Lombardi and Tony Goldman began to transform low-cost warehouses and properties



Photo by Christopher Vazquez

**MASTER MURALS:** The Wynwood Art District is full of colorful murals. This one adorns Gallery 212.

into sophisticated, pricey locations.

But many say such efforts to transform a low-income neighborhood have resulted in the removal of the community's identity, rather than including its residents in the community's future lifestyle.

"It is turning into an area that's a lot about the money and not about the people. Artists moved into a poor area, built it, made it popular and are the first ones forced to move out," Navarro said.

The property value of various houses closer to the art district in Wynwood are also on the rise. Online real estate site Trulia reports median sale prices in Wynwood have risen from \$100,000 in 2000 to more than \$300,000 in 2016.

As the property values continued to rise

and the neighborhood drifted away from its original art culture, long-standing artists also opted out of Wynwood. The neighborhood they once used as an outlet to display their art was transformed into an unattainable, and for some, uncomfortable location.

"There was something wonderful about Wynwood," said Steinbaum. "It wasn't all fancy high rises or expensive restaurants. Artists could afford to live there, and now they can't."

Now, Steinbaum feels that the presence of artists is based more on the ability to pay rent rather than skill level. Many other artists, such as Hec One Love, echoed similar sentiments. Most visitors stroll through Wynwood for the Instagram-worthy pictures but fail to appreciate the artists.

"It's not about the art anymore, it's about the selfie," said Hec One Love. "It tells a lot about the generation."

In 2014, former college students Camila Alvarez of Florida International University and Natalie Edgar of the University of Miami released the documentary "Right to Wynwood." It captured the perspective of lower-income residents on the gentrification of their community and provided an insight into the minds of those property owners.

"It was heartbreaking coming to the realization that all these people had their homes taken away," Edgar said.

Although Wynwood continues to grow as one of the most popular neighborhoods to visit in Miami, it is rapidly evolving from the original artistic intention of the community and leaning towards a money-driven entertainment hub.

"It's probably going to be worse in the long-run," said Hec One Love. "It will be another playground for the privileged."

**GRAFFITI GALORE:** Messages like this cover the walls on many of Wynwood's buildings.



Photo by Uma Chatterjee



Photo by Talia Pfeffer

**A JEWBAN STORY:** Ralph Maya didn't come to Miami for just a free life; he came for a free Jewish life. A Certified Public Accountant, Maya tries to practice his faith just as he would in Cuba.

# Judaism diversified

## South Florida grows to be the hub for foreign-born Hispanic Jews

**BY TALIA PFEFFER**

Gulliver Preparatory School

South Florida's diversity rises each day with masses of Hispanic Jews making Miami home.

According to an article from The Forward, a Jewish population study conducted in Miami-Dade County showed the county has the largest percentage of foreign-born Jews of any Jewish community in the country, making its Jews just as diverse as the region.

In the United States, Jews are a minority, and within the Jewish population, Sephardic Jews make up a minority of the Ashkenazi majority. An article by NBC News reported that Hispanics make up 70 percent of South Florida's population, and more than 550,000 people in the community are Jews, allowing for much crossover.

Henry Green, a professor of Judaic studies at the University of Miami, introduced a Sephardic studies concentration in the curriculum after he noticed most Jews engaged in Jewish education courses have no knowledge of Jews who come from countries other than Eastern Europe.

Jews make up 15-20 percent of the student body at the University of Miami. Some of those students represent countries like Argentina and Venezuela.

In January of 2014, University of Miami's Hillel, which serves as a campus home for Jewish students, launched a Spanish-speaking branch called "Hola Hillel," which focuses on supporting Jewish Latin-American life on campus.

"Jews love to live in communities, so it was essential for the university to create a community to reflect the Latin presence in Miami," said Karem Sangarten, director of finance for Hola Hillel.

In 2002, Sol Perchik, a current University of Miami architecture student from Buenos Aires, Argentina, moved to South Florida. She became involved with Hola Hillel right when she began college.

"The best part of Hola Hillel is being with people who have the same values as I do and enjoy participating in the program's events with me," Perchik said.

Hola Hillel members participate in acts of good deeds to show their faithfulness to their culture and Judaism. Students work together to participate in "Challah For Hunger," which allows Hola Hillel students to donate money from Challah bread sales to a non-profit Jewish cause.

"Hola Hillel is our way of making sure the community of Hispanic Jews keeps thriving in Miami," said Sebastian Faerman, vice president of Hola Hillel.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, Hispanic Jews, or Sephardim, are descendants of Jews expelled from Spain in the 15th century during the Spanish Inquisition. Many fled to various European and Mediterranean countries and the Americas.

The Sephardim had their own literature, culture and language, which was a combination of Spanish and Hebrew. After and during World War II, Jews trekked to South and Latin America to escape the Nazis.

Temple Moses, a Sephardic Synagogue founded in 1968, is the earliest congregation in South Florida to offer conservative services in Ladino, a language that fuses Hebrew and Spanish. Cuban Jews founded the synagogue after they came to Miami in the 1960s when Fidel Castro built his communist regime.

"When I arrived in Miami in 1966, there were no public places that included the customs I was used to practicing in Cuba," said Ralph Maya, Miami resident and Temple Moses member. "The core of our existence as Jews are our beliefs, and that is why it is possible to adapt in almost any Jewish community."

In the 1960s, there was only one Sephardic synagogue. Now, there are 12.

"Due to geo-political events, South Florida has become the cosmopolitan center for Hispanic life, Jewish life, and within Jewish life, Sephardic life," Green said. "Once you have synagogues and institutions speaking in a language other than English, it shows a continuity of heritage and identity."



**BREAD OF LIFE:** Hola Hillel bakes and sells challah each Friday to raise funds for Jewish causes.

Photo by Jessica Koernig



# Miami film in freefall

## Film industry on verge of collapse due to lack of state tax incentives

BY CORBIN BOLIES

Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School

Some people have considered Miami the East Coast California. With the celebrities, high-end stores on Lincoln Road and tropical weather year-round, one might think its film industry is just as strong.

It is not even close.

“At one time, it did have a booming industry,” said Kelly Paige, president of Film Florida, a non-profit entertainment production association. “Tax incentives have changed the landscape.”

This year marked the fourth in a row that the Florida Legislature did not increase funds for the state’s tax incentive program, which reduces fees for film and television projects. This killed the program, forcing studios such as Walt Disney, Paramount and Warner Brothers to film in more incentive-friendly states. This was a troubling sign for a city that was once considered “Hollywood East.”

Miami’s film industry thrived in the 1960s, as movies such as the Elvis Presley-led *Follow That Dream*, Jerry Lewis’ directorial debut *The Bellboy* and shows like *Flipper* and *Gentle Ben* helped create a productive scene.

Retired cinematographer and producer James Pergola, 83, worked on projects in Miami throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

“Producers from California and New York would bring [crew members] down,” Pergola said. “Supply companies would open places here. It was like a film college.”

After a stall in the 1970s, the area became prominent in 1984 with the premiere of the hit NBC series *Miami Vice* and the foundation of the Miami International Film Festival.

“[*Miami Vice*] demonstrated that there was an infrastructure in the city to produce a long-running show,” said Agustin Gonzalez, a professor at Miami-Dade College who specializes in the history of film.

After films like *Bad Boys*, *The Birdcage*, *Marley & Me* and the film adaptation of *Miami Vice*, Florida aimed to compete with states like Georgia and North Carolina that offered competitive tax incentives. In 2011, the state legislature introduced a five-year, \$296 million film tax credit designed to lure productions to the state.

The musical *Rock of Ages*, the Marvel Studios film *Iron Man 3* and the crime film *Pain & Gain* set up shop in the area. Shows such as *Burn Notice* and *Magic City* also shot in the city. Funds, however, have been depleted since 2013, making it hard for projects to set their scenes here.

“The problem with the film industry is that it costs a lot of money,” said chief Miami Herald film critic Rene Rodriguez. “Who knows what we’re missing out on?”



Photo by Corbin Bolies

**BACK IN PRODUCTION:** Viacom International Studios opened its doors in October 2015 in hopes of bolstering South Florida’s movie industry and bringing more productions to the region.

According to a report last year by Film Florida, Miami has missed out on more than \$260 million dollars in lost TV and movie projects since 2013. This is especially troubling for people like Sandy Lighterman, the film commissioner of Miami-Dade County, who is forced to explain the importance of the industry to peers.

“We need to have the conversation about what we’re losing,” said Lighterman, also an industry veteran. “There are a lot of stories to tell in Miami.”

Area film officials are hopeful, though. In a March 31 memo to Miami-Dade County commissioners, Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez said the county is looking to provide local incentives to film and television projects on a case-by-case basis, noting the economic boost the industry adds to the area.

Additionally, the number of film studios in the area has increased. Last year, the

Miami Entertainment Complex was opened. An 88,000-square foot facility, the studio is leased from EUE/Screen Gems Studios by Viacom International Studios, which will produce projects for networks such as Nickelodeon and MTV.

“[Miami] has vast opportunities for all the Viacom networks internationally,” said Michelle Alberty, the studio’s senior vice president of production and development. “There is enough out there to make Miami the place to produce your films or television series.”

Local filmmakers such as Andy Schefter also believe the industry has the potential to be on the level of Los Angeles and New York City.

“Currently, the industry is tax incentive-driven,” Schefter said. “If the industry grows, [Miami] could become the next production center.”

# Defining South Florida's identity

## 2016 Montage focuses on people and issues that shape the culture

**BY CHRISTOPHER VAZQUEZ**

Christopher Columbus High School

Walking into the University of Miami communication school for the first time, Marlowe Starling saw 19 unfamiliar faces. Barely believing she finally made it into the Miami Montage workshop, she took a seat and waited.

"It was a little surreal just because it finally hit me that I was gonna be staying here for three weeks," she said. "It was a very long day. It was a day that felt a week long, but nonetheless I felt comfortable by the end of the day with everybody."

For many, the workshop only becomes more exciting as time passes.

"It was amazing," said Sarah Harder, a former Miami Montage student who has since returned to the workshop as a counselor. "It was terrifying and stressful, and yet it was some of the best fun I ever had. My writing skills and reporting skills really grew during that time."

Now in its 33rd year, the Peace Sullivan/James Ansin High School Workshop in Journalism and New Media invited 20 student journalists to the university, where they honed their skills in writing, reporting, photography and video production.

The program is sponsored by the Dow Jones News Fund, the Miami Foundation, WSVN-Channel 7 general manager James Ansin and retired journalist Peace Sullivan.

The three-week workshop culminates in the publication of the Miami Montage newspaper.

Since the first issue in 1984, the workshop has expanded from a one-week camp to an intensive, three-week long residential program. In 2008, Fred Blevens, professor of journalism at Florida International



Photo by Montage staff

**POINT 'N' SHOOT:** Counselor Tomás Monzón shows workshopers Keilah Angueira and Marlowe Starling how to adjust a camera in preparation for a photo assignment.

University, joined the workshop. University of Miami Associate Professor Sam Terilli, chair of the Department of Journalism and Media Management, joined him in 2011.

After leading a journalism workshop at FIU, a veteran newspaper editor found himself searching for a more advanced environment. Montage 2016 marks his 46th workshop covering three states and universities

"I don't know of any high school around here producing these kinds of stories at this level," he said. "I don't see how you can come out of this workshop and just not know a ton more than you knew when you came in."

Danyel De Villiers, a rising senior attending the workshop, recognized his newly acquired knowledge.

"This program really made me learn how

to communicate and reach out," he said. "You have to call 10 people for one person to say 'yes.' It just gives you that experience to learn so much more than I knew when I got into the program."

This year, workshop participants chose the theme South Florida identity, reporting on the diverse people, communities and industries that shape it.

"I was thrilled by it," Starling said. "[South Florida] was so different before than it is now, and it's still changing. And I think that's a wonderful thing but something that people should know about. I think a lot of locals here aren't too aware of those changes, and they should be."

Blevens was just as excited.

"It's such an iconic city in so many ways," he said. "There are symbols and images of Miami and Miami Beach that are just amazing. So when that started developing at that brainstorming session, I was extremely pleased. It's not an easy subject, but it's a doable one."

Students are also exposed to professional journalism with visits to the Miami New Times and to WSVN-Channel 7, the local Fox affiliate.

"I think it's really valuable because I think it opens some eyes to what really goes on," Blevens said.

While Miami Montage students may one day fill newsrooms like these, Harder believes the workshop will benefit participants outside the world of journalism.

"I hope it shows them what's out there in the world and just the sense of accomplishment that comes with finishing this program," she said. "I hope they remember that, and they find whatever it is in life that will give that feeling to them."

**GETTING THE FACTS:**

Nicole Via y Rada seeks sources for her story on Cuban immigrants, Page 8.



Photo by Montage staff



Photos by Miami Montage students and staff

**MAKING NEWS:** Workshop students learn the routines of real journalism in the field and in UM's media labs.

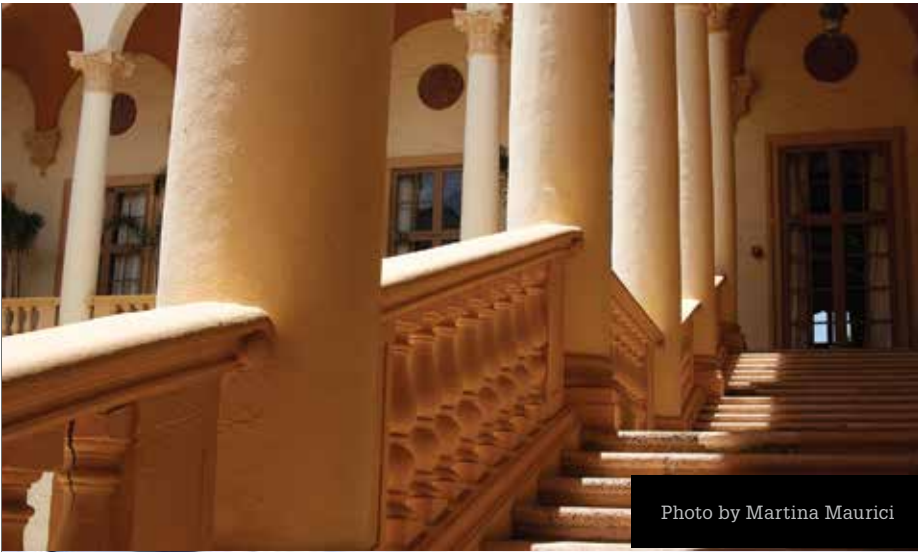


Photo by Martina Maurici



Photo by Jessica Koernig



Photo by Kyle Wood



Photo by Uma Chatterjee



Photo by Kyle Wood