Florida Council of 100 Announces Recipients of Outstanding Floridian Award

TAMPA – The Florida Council of 100, a not for profit group of business leaders representing more than 140 major companies from across Florida, today announced the recipients of the prestigious Outstanding Floridian Award. Longtime educators Dr. Judy Genshaft and Dr. Eduardo Padrón were selected as award winners.

The Outstanding Floridian Award is presented by the Council of 100 to Floridians who reflect true meritorious service that goes above and beyond the call of duty and results in extraordinary achievement. Award recipients have rendered consistent service and contributions to the state and not just for a single achievement. The award is given infrequently to reflect a truly meritorious level of service of those distinguished Floridians being recognized.

Dr. Judy Genshaft served as president of the University of South Florida for 19 years, leading the university to earn national distinction in all key institutional areas and growing the institution into a research and engineering powerhouse. In 2018, Florida's Board of Governors named USF a “Preeminent State Research University,” which means millions of dollars of additional funding each year to continue building USF’s academic power.

“Judy’s outstanding leadership and vision were the impetus for the establishment and construction of the Morsani College of Medicine and Heart Institute in downtown Tampa – meaning thousands of jobs for new residents in Tampa's urban core and helping to attract related corporations to the Tampa Bay region,” said Rhea Law, Of Counsel and former Florida Chair of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney.

Dr. Genshaft’s commitment to USF led to financial support including personal contributions amounting to more than $23 million. She has also been at the forefront of promoting and supporting women both on the campus and in the community. A cofounder of the Women in Leadership and Philanthropy Program, Dr. Genshaft was the first woman to chair the NCAA's Division I Board and has been recognized nationally as an outstanding woman leader. Her dedication to the advancement of women leaders and the betterment of the institution and community where she served set an example for all who follow.

Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón is an American by choice, having arrived in the United States as a teenage refugee in 1961. “Eduardo Padrón served Miami Dade College students for over 50 years, transforming a small school into an eight-campus college with an enrollment of 165,000 students and more than 2 million alumni, with the largest minority enrollment in the U.S. He is a transformational education leader of the human spirit who believes in the power of equal opportunity to unleash talent,” said Kathleen Shanahan, CEO of Turtle & Hughes and former Chief of Staff to Governor Jeb Bush, who worked with Padrón firsthand.
From 1995 to 2019, Dr. Padrón served as President of Miami Dade College, the largest degree-granting institution of higher education in America. Dr. Padrón is credited with elevating Miami Dade College into a position of national prominence among the best and most recognized U.S. colleges and universities. His groundbreaking work at the school has been hailed as a model of innovation in higher education. He is credited with engineering a culture of success that has produced impressive results in student access, retention, graduation, and overall achievement. Miami Dade College enrolls and graduates more minorities than any other institution in the United States, including the largest numbers of Hispanic and African-American students. Under Dr. Padrón’s leadership, Miami Dade College received national recognition for its longstanding involvement with its urban community, its catalytic effect for social and economic change, and the marked difference the college has made in student access and success through pacesetting initiatives. During his illustrious career, Dr. Padrón earned numerous awards. In 2018, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, one of America’s oldest and most prestigious organizations, and in 2016 President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the U.S., for being a prominent national voice for access and inclusion in higher education.

About the Florida Council of 100
Formed in 1961, the Florida Council of 100 is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of business, civic, and academic leaders. It exists to improve the quality of life and economic well-being of all Floridians through the relentless pursuit of better, business-driven public policy. For more information about the Florida Council of 100, visit fc100.org.