

May 19, 1998

Dr. David Lawrence Jr.
Chairman & Publisher
The Miami Herald
One Herald Plaza
Miami, FL 33130

Dear Dr. Lawrence Jr.:

We have had it! We are outraged at what has happened in our beloved Community. Once regarded as the crime capital of America, we are now perceived as its corruption capital. The problem is not just in the much maligned City of Miami, it is everywhere. It touches every race and ethnicity. Mistrust, inefficiency, and lack of confidence in government is hurting our ability to spend on much-needed infrastructure and programs. The recent allegations of tampering with the electoral process became the proverbial straw. We must not sit idly by and watch the sanctity of the electoral process be violated with impunity.

It is obvious to us that this situation is causing great damage to the economic and social well-being of our Community. Our image, long tarnished by drugs and crime, can hardly stand any more battering. To be now labeled a "Banana Republic" is more than our pride and self-esteem can handle.

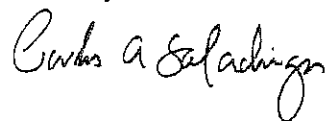
We trust and hope that you share our anger and outrage. We believe there is much we can do as a Community to clean up our act. We need your help. We are asking you to join us for a Community Leadership Summit to be held on June 19th. We will be brainstorming a series of alternatives that we can adopt. We have invited Mr. Terry Brunner, Executive Director of the Better Government Association, a citizens' watchdog organization set up by Chicago civic and business leaders, who like us were just fed up, albeit a few years ago! Mr. Brunner will explain to us what they have accomplished in Chicago and how they have done it.

Mitch Maidique has graciously offered Florida International University's facilities to have this meeting. We plan to start at 8:30 am and leave just after lunch. We will get back to you with specific details on location, preparation material, etc. We have asked Carlos A. Saladrigas to coordinate this effort on our behalf. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call him at 305-460-2380. Also, please confirm your attendance by calling Carlos' assistant, Fanny Moncada at 305-460-2386.

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No doubt it will be an interesting meeting. Your participation is essential. Apathy destroys; we need absolute community support. Won't you please put on your "thinking hat" and join us?

Sincerely,



Chairman & CEO
The Vincam Group, Inc.

On behalf of the undersigned:

Cesar Alvarez
CEO
Greenberg, Traurig

Carlos Arboleya
Vice Chairman – Retired
Barnett Bank of South Fl.

Jose Arriola
Chief Operating Officer
Avanti/Case-Hoyt

Luis Botifoll
Chairman Emeritus
Republic National Bank

Jose Cancela
President
Telemundo, Channel 51

Armando Codina
Chairman
Codina Group, Inc.

Roger Cuevas
Dade County Superintendent
of Schools

Carlos de Cespedes
CEO
Pharmed Group

Carlos de la Cruz, Sr.
Chairman
Eagle Brands, Inc.

Remedios Diaz-Oliver
President
All American Container

Adolfo Henriquez
Executive V.P.
Union Planters Bank

Maria Camila Leiva
Executive V.P.
Miami Free Zone Corp.

Modesto Maidique
President
FIU

Jorge Mas
Chairman & CEO
MasTec, Inc.

Carlos Migoya
President
First Union National Bank

Rene Murai
Attorney at Law
Murai, Wald, Biondo & Moreno

Ramiro Ortiz
President
SunTrust Bank

Rafael Peñalver
Attorney at Law
Peñalver & Peñalver

Jorge Perez
President
The Related Companies

Sergio Pino
President
Century Plumbing

Amancio Suarez
Chairman & Partner
Cosmo

Diego Suarez
President
Inter-American Transport

Rosa Sugrañes
President
Iberia Tiles

Hispanic business leaders call summit to fight corruption

BY FABIOLA SANTIAGO
Herald Staff Writer

Expressing outrage over corruption in Miami-Dade County, a powerful group of business and civic leaders is calling for a community leadership summit on June 19 to "clean up our act."

"We have had it!" begins a letter sent to business leaders by *Mesa Redonda* chairman-elect Carlos A. Saladrigas and 23 other members of the organization, a

POINT WON IN COURT

■ The effort to jail suspended Commissioner Humberto Hernandez is delayed one week, **1B.**

who's who of Cuban Americans.

"We are outraged by what has happened in our beloved community," wrote Saladrigas, chairman and chief executive officer of The

Vincam Group, a human resources company. "Once regarded as the crime capital of America, we are now perceived as its corruption capital."

Mesa Redonda (which literally translates to Round Table) was formed in 1990 by two prominent Cuban Americans — Florida International University President Modesto "Mitch" Maidique

PLEASE SEE CORRUPTION, 11A

Group calls summit on corruption

CORRUPTION, FROM 1A

and Carlos de la Cruz, chairman of Eagle Brands, a distribution company. The pair gathered a group of 10 prominent Hispanics for private monthly meetings to discuss community issues.

To lead the "by-invitation-only" summit, *Mesa Redonda* has invited Terry Brunner, executive director of Chicago's Better Government Association, to talk about how the private sector can be an effective watchdog for government.

Brunner is credited with successfully helping Chicago, civic and business leaders tackle government corruption.

"[They] like us were just fed up," Saladrigas said in the letter.

Brunner will be helping the group of about 50 Miami-Dade business and civic leaders address corruption issues and brainstorm on strategies for solutions.

Maidique has offered FIU's facilities to hold the meeting, scheduled to start at 8:30 a.m. and end after lunch. Although the topic is public corruption, public officials haven't been invited, Maidique said.

"This is a sit-down between the business and civic leadership to say, 'What do we do about it?'" Maidique said.

But if all *Mesa Redonda* members attend — 23 of 25 members signed the invitation letter — some of the business leaders at the summit will have had a brush with public controversy themselves. Jorge Mas Santos' company, Mas-Tec, has allegedly overbilled Miami-Dade County for hundreds of thousands of dollars in paving work, and businessman Sergio Pino, a major political fundraiser, has been involved in controversial contracts with the city of Miami and the county. Both have denied any wrongdoing.

"That's like the pot calling the Kettle black," one *Mesa Redonda* member said. "We know we have some of those members in our group and that is definitely one of our concerns."

It was precisely that — a sense of responsibility to stand up to

H For the full text of the *Mesa Redonda* letter, visit HeraldLink at www.herald.com/extra
www.herald.com

Miami lawyer Rafael Peñalver, another *Mesa Redonda* member, said he would prefer if the summit were open to everyone who wishes to contribute.

"There is nothing to be secretive about," Peñalver said. "This is something that's affecting our community, our image and our trust of government. It should be public."

corruption — that led to the summit initiative, Maidique said.

"During the last 20 years, the Hispanic community in Miami-Dade has been accumulating a great deal of wealth and political influence," Maidique said. "Along with power and wealth, comes responsibility. I see this initiative as an important way in which the [Hispanic] community can be responsible and helpful in making a contribution to the overall community."

"Hallelujah!" said Dario Moreno, a political scientist at FIU and frequent critic of corrupt officials. "If they act on this, follow through and commit themselves, this is a very important event for Miami. It is the downtown business establishment, which deals with government on a day-to-day basis, that has to put the elected officials' seats to the fire. The public can get outraged and vote the scoundrels out, the justice system can arrest and indict people caught red-handed, but it takes the business community to really get active to get meaningful change."

Paul Libert, president of the Northeast Dade Coalition, an umbrella group of 100 condo and homeowner associations, which also has been trying to address public corruption, welcomed the *Mesa Redonda* initiative. But he warned that it must extend beyond Hispanics.

"It's got to be a partnership," Libert said. "This is not a Latin problem or a black problem or a religious problem. We are going to have to bring together all groups. The problem of public corruption is destroying the quality of our lives. We not only need a Latin business group, but we need a black business group, and an Anglo business group."

TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 1998, THE HERALD

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Mesa Redonda members who signed the letter calling for a corruption summit:

Carlos A. Saladrigas, chairman and CEO of The Vincam Group
Cesar Alvarez, CEO of Greenberg, Traurig
Luis Botifoll, chairman emeritus of Republic National Bank
Roger Cuevas, superintendent of Miami-Dade Schools
Remedios Diaz-Oliver, president of All American Container
Modesto Maidique, president of Florida International University
Rene Murai, lawyer at Murai, Wald, Biondo & Moreno
Jorge Perez, president of The Related Companies
Diego Suarez, president of Inter-American Transport
Carlos Arboleya, retired vice chairman of Barnett Bank
Jose Cancela, president of Telemundo television network
Carlos de Cespedes, CEO of the Pharmed Group

Adolfo Henriques, executive vice president of Union Planters Bank
Jorge Mas Santos, chairman & CEO of Mas Tec
Ramiro Ortiz, president of SunTrust Bank
Sergio Pino, president of Century Plumbing
Rose Sugranes, president of Iberia Tiles
Jose Arriola, CEO of Avanti/Case-Hoyt
Armando Codina, chairman of the Codina Group
Carlos de la Cruz Sr., chairman of Eagle Brands
Maria Camila Leiva, executive vice president of Miami Free Zone
Carlos Migoya, president of First Union National Bank
Rafael Peñalver, lawyer at Peñalver & Peñalver
Amancio Suarez, chairman and partner of Cosmo