

Fighting to hold onto what is green, open and unspoiled

BY JOHN CHARLES ROBBINS

As the urban grid of Miami fills in and rises up, bringing towers of condos and offices and acres of billion-dollar retail venues, some community members are busy fighting to hold onto what is green and open and unspoiled.

There are community advocates who “show up” consistently and try to make a difference, fighting for a Miami that’s clean and green.

And when it comes to our Best of Miami issue, these fighters fall under the category of “Turning Green: Folks who work for environmental issues and advancement.”

A standout is **Spencer Crowley**, who was nominated by Brett Bibeau, managing director of the Miami River Commission.

Mr. Crowley is an attorney with Akerman LLP who believes the environment is a high priority.

Mr. Bibeau said: “Spencer has spent over a decade volunteering countless hours as a board member of the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), which thankfully provides millions of dollars in cost shares to the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County for various important projects.”

Some of those projects include the Miami River Maintenance Dredging and Environmental Cleanup Project, the Wagner Creek and Seybold Canal Maintenance Dredging and Environmental Cleanup Project, the



Dara Schoenwald promotes both beach cleanups, environment.

creation of Miami Circle Park, Lummus Landing Park, Maurice A. Ferré Park (formerly Museum Park), and Point Park, the 65% complete public riverwalk, and more.

“In addition, Spencer always goes the extra mile by volunteering additional time to advocate for improving water quality in Biscayne Bay and the Miami River, waterborne transportation, and much more,” said Mr. Bibeau.

Mr. Crowley said, “As our

community begins to implement capital improvements which address climate change and sea level rise, we must keep environmental quality as a high priority.

“Every year FIND contributes millions of dollars to waterfront projects which provide the public with greater access to the waterways and which provide environmental benefit ... Not everyone can live on the water, and so public spaces along the waterfront are invaluable in that they provide our entire community with the opportunity to enjoy one of our most precious natural assets,” he said.

Mr. Crowley has worked with the Governor’s Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, the South Florida Water Management District, and Duke University’s Wetlands Center in the Florida Everglades.

Another person who devotes time and efforts to keep the community clean is **Dara Schoenwald**, who was nominated by attorney Jane Muir.

Ms. Muir said, “Dara Schoenwald is making a difference in our community by coordinating beach cleanups, raising environmental awareness, and promoting environmentally conscious behavior to protect the beaches and the ocean. Her activism is personal and individual, going so far as to convince her friends to give up single-use plastics and to pick up trash while doing recreational activities.”

Ms. Schoenwald is the co-



Spencer Crowley a bay advocate.

founder and executive director of VolunteerCleanup.org, a non-profit organization that engages volunteers in shoreline cleanups to raise awareness about marine debris.

Ms. Schoenwald said, “There is no silver bullet to the plastic ocean crisis. It’s going to take a concerted effort of multiple strategies from consumers, businesses, and government. Everyone has a role to play, and it can start with small changes in your life to reduce plastic waste. Many people doing their small part, collectively can lead to great changes towards protecting our oceans and waterways.”

Through the VolunteerCleanup.org website, they have spawned a grassroots movement around the issue, facilitating hundreds of shoreline cleanups a year (1,049 since inception), logged 80,000 volunteer hours from 8,000 active volunteers who have collectively removed an estimated 209,000 pounds of debris from local shorelines.

Another person noted for concern for the environment and the great outdoors is **Claudia**



Binelo, who was also nominated by Ms. Muir.

“Claudia Binelo, director of public affairs at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center, does an incredible job of introducing our community to the natural world of mangrove hammock. By raising awareness and recruiting participation and partnerships, she is helping to maintain and preserve the beauty of South Florida’s environment,” said Ms. Muir.

The Biscayne Nature Center, on the north end of Crandon Park on Key Biscayne, utilizes alternative technologies such as solar power, water and energy conservation and passive solar design, and recycled materials, as is fitting a center dedicated to harmony with nature.

The nature center has three partners: Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department, and the not-for-profit community support group, The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center Inc.

Among best at strengthening Miami’s international relations

BY REBECCA SAN JUAN

Charlotte Gallogly, president of World Trade Center Miami, identifies four leaders strengthening international relations in the Magic City.

Ms. Gallogly recognizes **Virginia Sanchez**, a government affairs advisor for FedEx Express Latin America and the Caribbean.

“She is outstanding,” said Ms. Gallogly regarding Ms. Sanchez.

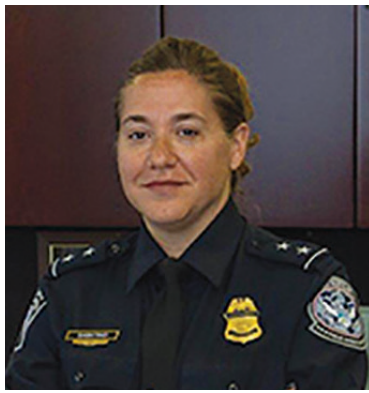
The advisor advocates for legislation affecting the express trade industry between the US and Latin America and the Caribbean, and guides stakeholders invested in the region. She combines years of prior work experience and academic training for her position.

Ms. Sanchez is a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of Miami law school, and holds a certificate from Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School’s Government Senior Managers in Government Program, an opportunity open for senior career professionals. She offers 11 years as vice president of public policy and corporate relations for the global British alcoholic beverages company Diageo.

Ms. Gallogly also nominates Miami-Dade Beacon Council Director of Trade and Logistics and International Economic Development **Stanley Rigaud**. She sees how Mr. Rigaud helps improve Miami’s presence on the global scene as the Beacon Council and World Trade Center Miami collaborate on advancing trade and logistics.



Lenny Feldman puts us at table.



Diane Sabatino solves problems.

Mr. Rigaud identifies a problem and acts to resolve it, Ms. Gallogly said. For example, he noticed years ago a lack of interest in international trade in the local talent pool and now works with high school students, assists interns, and guides those in job training. He also works on the frontlines with companies interested in working from Miami, often providing them with a team of advisors to manage the market.

One of the assets he brings to the field, Ms. Gallogly says, is the capability to work with people across fields – academics, federal

employees, and those in the private sector.

Ms. Gallogly said, “He gets the job done. So many people say, ‘I’ll get to that.’ But he gets to it and he makes things happen. The bottom line about him is that he is focused on the bottom line. That’s why I think the world of him.”

Lenny P. Feldman, member of Sandler, Travis and Rosenberg, P.A., is another achiever Ms. Gallogly recognizes. Ms. Gallogly especially admires his work as the co-chair of the US Customs and Border Protection’s Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee. The committee is comprised of 20 members who advise US Customs and Border Protection, divisions of Homeland Security, and US Department of the Treasury on national trade policy.

Ms. Gallogly said, “The idea is that Miami is represented at the table and some of the most important discussions we have in this country related to trade and logistics.”

Mr. Feldman is the go-to guide for many in the field, Ms. Gallogly says: “We have direct access to the federal regulators and that helps us generate trade, and one of the ways it generates trade is if you’ve got recurring problems at the border or things like that, you have to be able to pick up the phone and call somebody. Lenny is the kind of guy who is at the epicenter and he has the right connections, he knows of the rules and the legalities of the issues.”

US Customs and Border Protec-

tion Director of Field Operations for Miami and Tampa Field Offices **Diane Sabatino** also makes the list. Ms. Gallogly applauds Ms. Sabatino’s ability to solve problems and produce results: “She has a plan and she works the plan and makes things happen. She is innovative; I do not see that naturally as a characteristic for a lot of people that are more bureaucratic.”



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