



April-June 2013

Mayor Pierre's Farewell Message

As Mayor of one of the ten best cities in the United States of America, I have had the distinct honor and pleasure to serve the great residents of the city of North Miami who have entrusted me to work hard for education, social services, and economic empowerment on their behalf. I am glad to bear witness of the positive changes made in the City, and believe that the efforts will continue with the next administration.

It has been my privilege to work alongside intelligent, talented, strong-willed, and inspirational individuals that continue to put their best efforts forward to provide resources and implement programs and services for the benefit of our residents. I thank all of the City's administration and staff for your collaboration and selfless contributions, which have resulted in a more sustainable and safer North Miami.

Although my tenure as Mayor has come to a close, I will continue to be engaged as a proud resident and business owner in this great City. I have experienced first-hand the challenges of leading a city, but through determination and the collective efforts of my colleagues on the dais as well as the City administration, we have converted challenges into opportunities.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Bernadette, my children, family, and close friends for your continuous support, faith and prayers during the past four years. Although this was a path that I chose, it would not have been half as successful and worthwhile without you all by my side.

The late great Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best, "We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to mankind." As a public servant, I found delight in being a part of all the great accomplishments and recognitions of this City and I look forward to the continued progress.

May God continue to bless the City of North Miami.

-Mayor Andre D. Pierre, Esq.



Mayor Pierre's Vision

As an active resident, homeowner, business owner, and professor in the North Miami community for over 20 years, Mayor Pierre had a vision to run for office to improve the lives of the residents in the city of North Miami. He has been involved in homeowner associations, served on the Board of the Greater North Miami Chamber of Commerce, the Planning Commission, and served as Vice-Chair of the Charter Review Board. He not only had the best interest of the city of North Miami in mind, but in his heart.

The city of North Miami is a vibrantly diverse community; home to over 60,000 residents that represent many different cultures. Cultural diversity is deeply rooted in the City, which is why Mayor Pierre believed it to be prudent for North Miami's administration and Police Department to be reflective of the community it serves.

Awards and Recognitions

Throughout Mayor Pierre's tenure, he worked vigorously to have the City recognized for its great work. He searched and labored for opportunities where the City would be recognized for its beauty, community spirit, and ongoing civic engagement. As a result, the City applied for numerous notable awards, allowing for national recognition. In 2010, the city of North Miami was one of ten cities in the United States to be recognized as an **All America City**, the only city in the state of Florida to receive this prestigious honor since 2008. Granted by the National Civic League, the All America City award is known as a lifetime achievement award that honors communities throughout the nation that exemplifies positive change by bringing the community together.



The criteria for this award includes the demonstration that residents are actively engaged, examples of the community staying dedicated to resolving issues through collaborative efforts, inclusiveness, innovative programs, which all make an impact on the residents. Although Mayor Pierre discovered the opportunity to apply and provided support, he credits the residents and the employees for showcasing a positive example of what an All-America City truly is.

Other prestigious honors bestowed upon the city of North Miami during Mayor Pierre's terms include the **City Spirit Award** in 2011, as part of the Florida League of Cities. This program recognizes innovation and excellence, while featuring best practices in municipal government. The City was also awarded the **Playful City USA Award** in 2012 and 2013, for its strong efforts to encourage families to be more active through organized recreation programs or by enjoying passive parks.

In our continuing efforts to be environmentally sound, North Miami was a **finalist** for the **Outstanding Green Government LEEDership Green Award**, which is presented by the United States Green Building Council. North Miami is also one of three municipalities in Miami-Dade County that is certified as a **Green Local Government**, for its commitment to efficient and green practices.

In November 2012, the Institute of Museum and Library Services honored the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) as one of ten winners of the **National Medal for Museum and Library Service**. This is an honor that recognizes outstanding institutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Mayor Pierre and museum director and chief curator, Bonnie Clearwater, were awarded the honor at a ceremony held at the White House.

Last December, the City's entry in the Junior Orange Bowl Parade, which included Mayor Pierre, participants of the MOCA Art Institute Programs and the North Miami Police Department's Police Explorers, were awarded the **Community Pride Award**.

Economic Development



Ribbon Cutting of Development Agreement with Oleta Partners August 2012

One of the major challenges Mayor Pierre faced was dealing with the issues that resulted from the downturn in the economy. His leadership and the commitment of the City Council helped to ensure the City passed a balanced budget during all fiscal years that he served, with minimum impact to essential services.

In the beginning of Mayor Pierre's first term, one of his goals was to increase City involvement in the business community. He believes with business growth, the City is able to attract more residents to fill vacant homes and help beautify our neighborhoods. Over the past four years, over 100 new businesses opened in North Miami, including Navarro Pharmacy, Fiat of North Miami, BankUnited, T.D. Bank, the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA), Deals, Pollo Tropical, the Dezer Collection and Museum, and Whole Foods Market - North Miami.

One of the programs Mayor Pierre strongly advocated for is the City's local preference policy, which provides North Miami businesses with preference options when the City is seeking vendors for projects and services. In addition, the extension of local preference to companies that sub-contract with local North Miami vendors is an example of the initiative which helps to localize job opportunities.

One of the major economic development projects during Mayor Pierre's tenure includes the Biscayne Landing agreement. In August 2012, the city of North Miami entered into a 99 year lease agreement with Oleta Partners, LLC to develop the property formerly

referred to as Biscayne Landing.

The City received an initial payment of \$17.5 million from the developer. Earlier this year, the City Council voted to fund several projects from this initial payment. The projects funded from the Biscayne landing allocations are referred to as Progress 2013 projects, and include repairs and improvements to City Hall and the North Miami Public Library, implementation of housing programs that concentrate on roof repair, replacement of fleet vehicles, implementation of a commercial façade program along NW 7th Avenue, and much more. For a full listing of the projects, along with a status update, visit www.northmiamifl.gov/progress2013.

An Educational Approach

As an adjunct professor at Barry University, Mayor Pierre understands the importance of education and creating opportunities for individuals to pursue their dreams. He refers to children as jewels and our future leaders. Through his guidance, the City entered into an educational compact with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, established the Quality Education Advisory Board to continue the conversation on education on a monthly basis, and established the North Miami



Mayor Pierre distributing back packs in North Miami

Educational Foundation, Inc., which is committed to the providing educational opportunities to North Miami residents. Mayor Pierre also participated in the signing of the Children's Covenant with Miami-Dade County Public Schools in support of public education. In 2011, North Miami sponsored its first Take Stock in Children scholar. The Take Stock in Children program provides mentorship for students through middle and high school, and guarantees a four-year tuition scholarship to any state college or university in Florida. Scholarships are purchased through the Florida Pre-Paid Tuition Program each year and assigned to the student upon graduation.

The city of North Miami is fortunate to have four universities that operate within the city or in close proximity: Florida International University - Biscayne Bay Campus, Johnson & Wales University, Miami-Dade College - North Campus, and Barry University. These institutions also meet monthly as part of the City's University Relations Board to share information and discuss issues as they relate to higher education and the North Miami community.

The City also partnered with Florida International University (FIU) to participate as a sponsor of the First Generation Scholarship Program. The First Generation program was established by the Florida Legislature in 2006 to provide financial assistance to those that are first in their families to attend college. It is the only program of its kind whereby the State matches private donations by 100%. Awards are based on need assessment after other scholarships or grant aid has been applied. For two

consecutive years the city of North Miami donated \$10,000 dollars to fund First Generation Scholarships for North Miami residents attending FIU. Each year the amount was matched, resulting in \$20,000 and affecting the lives 20 college students. Since North Miami piloted this unique partnership between local government, the private sector, a state university, and the state of Florida, other municipalities have embarked on offering the same opportunity to their residents.

Acknowledging the importance of supporting adults seeking to empower themselves through vocational study, the Mayor and Council recently launched a partnership with the North Miami Adult Education Center. The Council agreed to allocate \$50,000 to fund and implement an Adult Education Tuition Program for residents enrolling at the North Miami Adult Education Center. In the first trimester, 134 adults were assisted through this program.

Mayor Pierre continued the annual tradition to host a backpack and school supply drive for students in the North Miami-area schools. Each year over one thousand and five hundred backpacks filled with supplies are distributed. In 2011, this annual initiative grew to include a kick-off event, which included giveaways, free haircuts, health screenings, eye exams, and supplementary assistance for education. The event was a family back to school festival which included food, children's activities and entertainment.

Another program that supports youth and education is the City's summer employment programs, which provides municipal employment for qualified high school and college students through the Youth Opportunity Board and the Summer Teen Employment Program, a City sponsored program which matches up local businesses that agree to host local students to work a paid internship during the summer.

Health & Wellness in North Miami



Mayor Pierre and the Police Explorers at the community Get in Gear Bike Ride

As childhood obesity is a major issue in the United States, Mayor Pierre demonstrated his commitment to health and wellness by implementing the monthly Get in Gear Community Bike Ride in the city of North Miami. As a component of the Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE) initiative, Mayor Pierre and the City Council invited the community to participate in a police escorted bike ride throughout the City. This monthly event encourages residents to be active and promotes healthier lifestyle choices. Businesses that have participated include El Kisoko Latin Café, Jamba

Juice, Island TV, Lexus of North Miami, Randy's Restaurant, Wellness Max Health Center, and Mama Jennies, among others. Another component of the ACHIEVE initiative, is the installation of 63 bicycle racks at public spaces throughout the City and

the "share the road" signage, encouraging safer bike commutes on major thoroughfares throughout the City.

Embracing Cultural Diversity

Since taking office, Mayor Pierre has embraced and promoted cultural diversity through celebrations in North Miami driven by the desire to bridge the cultural gap and promote unity. For the first time in North Miami's history, Black History Month was celebrated through events that included a fashion show, and the honoring pillars in South Florida's black community, as well as past employees that were first blacks to serve in their respective fields in North Miami's government.



**Mayor Pierre and Key to the City recipient
Wyclef Jean**

Each May, the City also highlighted Haitian Heritage Month through music, art dance and cuisine. The festivities traditionally include the celebration of Haitian Flag Day on May 18th. This year, Mayor Pierre and the Haitian Heritage Month committee honored pillars in the Haitian community. Also celebrated with much enthusiasm is Hispanic Heritage Month each Fall, which recognizes generations of contributions made by Hispanic Americans to the United States and promotes the cultures of the Spanish speaking countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America and Caribbean American Heritage Month in June.

Mayor Pierre has also took pride in recognizing community movers and shakers on a regular basis through special presentations at City Hall; past honorees include North Miami resident Judge Karen Mills-Francis; best-selling author Edwidge Danticat; and North Miami Principals Sally Alayon of Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High School-Biscayne Bay Campus and Michael Lewis of North Miami Senior High School. During the past four years, twelve individuals have been inducted into the North Miami's Hall of Fame, including the likes of former Councilman Arthur Sorey, Jr., community pillar Dr. Larry Pierre, and Haitian-born entertainer, Wyclef Jean.

Social Services Initiatives



**Neighborhood Stabilization
Program Ribbon Cutting**

Mayor Pierre encouraged and initiated many programs to improve the quality of life of North Miami residents. Many assistance programs were made possible through his collaborative efforts with non-profit agencies and local organizations.

One such organization is the Haitian Lawyers Association. Collaboratively, the Mayor and HLA have hosted three Citizenship drives and five Temporary Protected Status (TPS) drives. In addition, Mayor Pierre along with members of the City Council have coordinated Foreclosure Prevention Workshops to help homeowners by providing education on foreclosure laws and prevention tips, and actively engaging homeowners with loan modification assistance by negotiating with lenders directly, or by participating in programs to aid with foreclosure prevention.

The Housing division has continued to administer programs to address affordable housing and to rehabilitate the City's aging housing stock. One such program is the federally-funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which has allowed for the rehabilitation of over 30 abandoned and/or foreclosed homes to be sold or rented.

In addition to the NSP program, first-time home buyers are provided financial assistance for the purchase of single family homes, townhouses or condominiums; additionally, the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program provides emergency assistance to renters suffering an economic hardship.

Another financial assistance program includes the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, offered in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which provides free income tax preparation by IRS-certified volunteers fluent in English, Spanish and Creole. The volunteers are also educated on the various tax credits, which aids to inform those who qualify to actually claim such credits.

Humanitarian Efforts

When the devastating earthquake occurred in Haiti in January 2010, Mayor Pierre helped mobilize initiatives to collect recovery funds. Mayor Pierre collaborated with the Honorable David N. Cicilline, Mayor of Providence (R.I.), and the Honorable C. Ray Nagin, former Mayor of New Orleans (LA), to introduce and lead the passing of a resolution in support of Haiti at the United States Conference of Mayors Winter meeting. This was very important to Mayor Pierre not only as a member of the Haitian Diaspora, but also for the large number of residents in North Miami whom are also of Haitian descent. He was also appointed as the co-chair of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Task Force for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The task force was developed to guide legislative efforts on immigration reform. Prior to his appointment, Mayor Pierre was also an active member of the Criminal and Social Justice Committee.



Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Drive in North Miami 2010

Mayor Pierre has continued to support other initiatives to help the earthquake ravaged country through initiatives such as Macy's Heart of Haiti project, which provides financial support for artisans in Haiti.

Earlier this year, Mayor Pierre made a motion to name the North Miami Library program room the "Desiline Victor Voting Wing," in honor of Ms. Desiline Victor, the 102 year old woman who stood in line for six hours on the first day of early voting in October 2012. She was nationally recognized for her patience and determination and was invited to be a guest in the First Lady's box for President Obama's State of the Union address in February. Shortly thereafter, Mayor Pierre participated in a press conference led by State Senator Oscar Braynon, along with several organizations that advocate for voters rights, which was held at the North Miami Public Library. The conference was held to introduce legislation that would give everyone free and easy access to vote. The bill, SB 888, is sponsored by Senator Braynon and is referred to as "Desiline's Free and Fair Democracy Act."

Keeping North Miami Safe



Banner at the F.A.C.T Festival

reports, such as Homicide, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, and Auto Theft, have notably reduced.

Mayor Pierre has been a great supporter of the programs and continuous initiatives that the NMPD implements. In an effort to help reduce crime, the City was awarded grants that totaled \$292,000 for several programs towards crime prevention, traffic safety, victims' assistance and community policing. One of the programs operated under the community services section of the NMPD is Police Explorers. The Police Explorers and the Police Athletic League (PAL) consists of youth ranging in the ages of 15-19, that help assist during city events and provide community service to the residents of North Miami. It affords young adults the opportunity to become familiar with the law enforcement profession, while assisting those who have an interest in following a career path in law enforcement. In addition, each year, a memorial scholarship is awarded to an explorer in honor of officers that have passed away while on duty.

The PAL program is also recognized as a program to help meet the needs of the youth in the North Miami community through different after school athletic and educational programs. The program consists of positive role models, such as police officers. Some of the after school programs include tutoring, and sports, such as boxing, track and field, and basketball.

Another great initiative that Mayor Pierre strongly supported is the annual Families Against Crime Together Festival (F.A.C.T.). This free event is a fun filled all day activity that includes the participation of the Community Services Section and the NMPD staff, where children are enjoy numerous activities and prizes while being educated on safety measures, crime prevention, gang awareness, and the importance of saying no to drugs. Annually the event attracted over 2,000 attendees. As part of one of the Progress 2013 projects, Mayor Pierre and the city Council voted to allocate \$1 million towards a new 6200 sq. ft building for PAL. The groundbreaking, took place on Cagni Park April 24, 2013. The new facility will allow PAL to have a permanent home for its members and carry out the positive goals initiated.

Completed Projects

There are several projects that have been completed as Mayor Pierre's term comes to an end.

- The comprehensive gateway signage plan through the Community Planning and Development Department, which was a project that totaled about \$400,000, funded the design and installation of 15 entry signs at designated points throughout the city of North Miami.
- Several beautification and street maintenance projects have taken place including improvements in landscaping throughout different neighborhoods in the City, which includes Arch Creek and Pioneer Boulevard and several roundabouts.
- The city of North Miami completed a water system model to be the basis for all future improvements needed for the water system, which included upgrades to the Winson Water Treatment Plant at Sunkist Grove.
- One of the Progress 2013 projects, a wifi cloud throughout city hall.
- The completion of the Joe Celestin Community The completion of the Kiwanis Park Project, which was recognized by the Department of Agriculture as one of only two People's Gardens in South Florida.
- Installations of 63 bicycle racks at public spaces, bus stops, and private commercial properties throughout the city.
- The reduction of the Utility Billing for residents.
- Employment opportunities through the Biscayne Landing job fairs.
- The installation of the Desiline Victor Voting Wing Signage at the North Miami Public Library
- The renovation of the Gwen Margolis Community Center.
- The installment of new sidewalks in the downtown corridors.

Upcoming Events

