

1st DRAFT
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
2025 WALK OF FAME SELECTION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025, 1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM
101 NE 3 Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Committee Members Present

Gale Butler, Chair
Genia Ellis
Dr. George Hanbury (arrived 1:39pm)
Robert Lochrie
Ina Lee
Patrick Shavloske

Staff Present

Joshua Carden, Public Art & Cultural Affairs Officer

Also Present:

Tom O'Brien
Bob Swindell
Timmy McGovern
Neyda Otero
Claudia Castillo
Norm Bekoff
Pamela Moskowitz
Mario Caprini
Jaylan Hercules
Karen Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype-Inc

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Carden advised that the Committee's purpose is to select three persons for induction into the Walk of Fame, subject to approval of the City Commission.

II. Call Meeting to Order

Ms. Ellis nominated Ms. Butler as Committee Chair, seconded by Ms. Lee. In a voice vote, all voted in favor.

III. Approval of the February 16, 2024 Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Lochrie, seconded by Ms. Ellis to approve the February 16, 2024, minutes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Selection of Chair for 2025 – previous addressed

V. Presentation of 2025 Walk of Fame Nominations

Mr. Carden facilitated the presentation of the 2025 Walk of Fame nominations. Each nominator was given the opportunity to elaborate on their written submissions, providing further context and details regarding their respective nominees, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of each candidate's qualifications and contributions.

- Faith Ortano presented on behalf of Claudia Castillo, highlighting her entrepreneurial spirit, dedication to the community, and advocacy for diverse groups. Ms. Ortano detailed Ms. Castillo's founding of Color Designers, a decorative arts painting business, in 2001, and her subsequent establishment of the Claudia Castillo Art Studio in 2017, a venue showcasing local, national, and international artists. Ms. Ortano further emphasized Ms. Castillo's leadership within the Wilton Manors Improvement District, her active role on various boards throughout Broward County, and her commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion.
- Timmy McGovern nominated Paul Michael Salarulo, drawing attention to his extensive philanthropic work and dedication to often-overlooked communities, speaking of Mr. Salarulo's involvement with the Special Olympics and his support for paralyzed veterans, noting his personal financial contributions and the profound impact he has had on countless individuals. Mr. McGovern underscored Salarulo's impressive fundraising record, exceeding \$100 million for various charitable causes.
- Bob Swindell presented Kathleen Cannon's nomination, emphasizing her transformative leadership within the United Way of Broward County and her tireless efforts to strengthen the community's safety net. Mr. Swindell highlighted Ms. Cannon's instrumental role in securing a substantial \$20 million donation from MacKenzie Scott, a testament to the United Way's effective work. He further elaborated on Ms. Cannon's leadership in addressing the complex issue of homelessness in downtown Fort Lauderdale, citing her ability to mobilize community leaders and resources to achieve tangible results.
- Tim O'Brien presented the nomination for his late father, Ron O'Brien, a revered figure in the diving community. He spoke eloquently of his father's legacy as a diving coach at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center, where he nurtured generations of athletes, producing Olympians, state champions, and national champions. Mr. O'Brien shared the unique distinction he and his father held as the only father-son duo to serve as U.S. Olympic diving coaches.
- Jalen Hercules presented his own nomination, articulating his record of community service and leadership from a young age. He detailed his extensive volunteer work, exceeding 2,000 hours, and his commitment to making a positive

impact on his community. Mr. Hercules described his annual holiday initiatives, providing thousands of toys and turkeys to needy families and children in Title I schools. He also highlighted his growing influence as a social media advocate for positive change.

- Mario Caprini presented the nomination for Bill Kent, emphasizing his commitment to the International Swimming Hall of Fame and his crucial role in securing its future in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Caprini detailed Mr. Kent's significant financial contributions and his dedication to the Every Child a Swimmer program. He also highlighted Mr. Kent's instrumental role in the development of the Fort Lauderdale Aquarium, a project representing a substantial investment in the City's future.
- Pam Moskowitz presented an endorsement of Bill Feinberg, highlighting his visionary leadership, business acumen, and deep commitment to philanthropy. Ms. Moskowitz detailed Mr. Feinberg's 40-year history with Allie's Kitchen and Bath, emphasizing his dedication to both business success and community betterment. She described Mr. Feinberg's innovative approach to fundraising, utilizing his showroom as a venue for charitable events and underwriting the costs, resulting in over \$1 million raised for various organizations. Ms. Moskowitz also highlighted Mr. Feinberg's leadership within the Chamber of Commerce and his active involvement in numerous community boards.
- Norm Bekoff presented the nomination for his father, Bob Bekoff, the founder of Water Taxi. He recounted his father's entrepreneurial journey, transforming Fort Lauderdale's waterways into a vibrant and accessible transportation network. Mr. Bekoff emphasized the significant impact Water Taxi has had on tourism, showcasing the City's unique waterfront to millions of visitors and locals. He also highlighted his father's active involvement in various marine and downtown development boards, demonstrating his commitment to Fort Lauderdale's growth and prosperity.

VI. 2025 Walk of Fame Selections

Following the presentations, the Committee engaged in a discussion of each nominee's merits and contributions. An initial vote was taken to gauge the level of support for each candidate. Kathleen Cannon and Paul Michael Salarulo emerged as frontrunners, each receiving six votes.

A key point of discussion revolved around the number of inductees to be recommended. While the initial guideline was three, the Committee deliberated on the possibility of exceeding this number. Factors considered included the available funding for the bronze plaques and the desire to recognize a broader range of contributions to the City.

Mr. Carden clarified that exceeding the three-inductee limit could potentially create procurement challenges due to the \$5,000 budget threshold for the plaques.

Ms. Ellis advocated for Richard Gray, emphasizing his pivotal role in shaping Fort Lauderdale's reputation as a welcoming destination for the LGBTQ+ community. She detailed Mr. Gray's pioneering efforts in promoting LGBTQ+ tourism and his courageous advocacy for inclusivity, highlighting the significant economic impact of this sector on the City, estimated at \$1.3 billion.

The Committee also discussed the merits of recognizing individuals posthumously, as well as the importance of prioritizing nominees who currently reside in Fort Lauderdale. This led to further discussion about the historical focus of the Walk of Fame, which initially emphasized contributions to Fort Lauderdale Beach. The evolving nature of the award, encompassing a wider range of contributions and geographic areas within the city, was also acknowledged.

A **motion** was made by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Shavloske, to recommend four nominees for the 2025 Walk of Fame: Kathleen Cannon, Paul Michael Salarulo, Richard Gray, and Bob Bekoff. In a show of hands, the motion was unanimously approved.

VII. Other Matters of Interest or Concern

Beyond the selection of nominees, the Committee addressed several other pertinent matters, including the visibility and readability of the existing Walk of Fame plaques, with concerns raised about the difficulty in reading the inscriptions. Mr. Carden agreed to investigate the issue and consult with Public Works to explore potential solutions, such as pressure washing or other methods to improve the legibility of the plaques.

The Committee also briefly discussed the possibility of recommending some of the nominees for the Citizen of the Year award, recognizing that some individuals might be better suited for that particular recognition. It was suggested that Deborah, the spouse of Leigh Fowler Robinson, be informed about the Citizen of the Year award and encouraged to apply. Mr. Carden agreed to convey this recommendation. There was also a brief discussion about the location of the Walk of Fame and the possibility of consolidating the plaques into a single "Wall of Fame" in the future.

VIII. Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by L. Tayar, Prototype, Inc.]