

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

334 MDC Students, Staff to Receive U.S. Presidential Volunteer Service Awards June 16 *Five Others to Receive the Lifetime Award during Ceremony at MDC's Wolfson Campus*

Miami, Friday, May 28, 2009 – Civic engagement is a cornerstone at Miami Dade College (MDC) with more than 5,000 students participating in academic service-learning projects each year, and thousands more who serve the community through their involvement in student clubs and organizations. Several hundred of these students – approximately 342 from all eight MDC campuses and a 30-year veteran college administrator – will receive the prestigious **U.S. President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA)** during a special ceremony hosted by College President Dr. Eduardo J. Padrón on **June 16, 2009 at MDC's Wolfson Campus** in downtown Miami.

This is the third year the College has hosted the PVSA ceremony. This year's keynote speaker will be David Lawrence, former *Miami Herald* publisher and current president of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation in Miami.

"These students have demonstrated a level of service commitment that is truly remarkable," Padrón said. "Their determination to improve the lives of others and make this a better community for all is beyond extraordinary. This recognition from our nation's president is well-deserved and I'm extremely thankful for their contributions."

The PVSA recognizes individuals and groups who have gone beyond the call with regard to the number of service hours during a 12 month period. Individuals must have served a minimum of 100 hours to be eligible for this award.

Over the years, four of the five PVSA Lifetime Achievement Award honorees Ivan Alvarez, Suzanne Jennings, Julian Pinheiro, and Vincent Timiraos, each contributed more than 4,000 community service hours while maintaining a full academic course load and other responsibilities.

The fifth honoree is Shirley Ferguson, a 30-year veteran college administrator who works in the student services division at MDC's Kendall Campus. Like the other lifetime honorees, Ferguson has contributed thousands of volunteer hours over the years through her work with a variety of organizations such as the Greater Miami Youth Symphony, Jack and Jill of America, and the American Cancer Society. "These are all projects that I made time to do. A lot of people say they don't have the time to volunteer. The way I see it, the work is not about me because there's always someone who has a greater need."

For their work, each of the five honorees will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, which includes a personalized certificate and letter from President Barack Obama, a lapel pin, and another letter from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. Among the remaining 329 honorees, 77 will receive a gold award for 500 or more hours of service; 55 will receive a silver award for 250-499 hours and 197 students will receive a bronze award for volunteering 100 to 249 hours.

In addition to the PVSA individual acknowledgements, the event will also recognize four MDC student groups for their service commitment this past year. Among them: Abilities Awareness Recognition Council; Wolfson Campus Student Government Association; Hialeah Campus Student Government Association; and the Future Educators of America.

WHAT: President's Volunteer Service Award Ceremony

WHEN: Tuesday, June 16, 2009
6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Miami Dade College, Wolfson Campus, Chapman Conference Center, Room 3210, 300 N.E. Second Ave., downtown Miami

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