July/September 2016

## **Robert Parker Foundation** Honoring his memory...Cementing his legacy



The late Robert Parker and his wife Veronica.

Vol. 31, No. 3

There was a common theme throughout the many tributes paid to former Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Director Robert Parker, following his untimely passing in July, 2015.

"A fine man who gave great service to this community," said Mayor Carlos Gimenez

"His service, commitment and dedication to this community will be greatly missed," said then MDPD Director J.D. Patterson.

A statement issued by his wife, Veronica, on behalf of the family echoed that theme. It said in part..."What little relief we feel, comes from remembering that he spent his life in service to his community and from realizing that we are not alone, that we are surrounded and supported by the people he loved and cherished most."

Mrs. Parker and her family have since moved to honor his memory in a way that reflects his love for, and commitment to the community. With support from the Miami Foundation and from the Dade County

Police Benevolent Association, the family has established the Robert Parker Foundation. The foundation also has the support of two of the region's premier sports teams; the Miami Heat and the Miami Marlins.

The idea came about in the immediate days after his death, Mrs. Parker explained.

"People were coming to the house telling us about the various ways he helped them." Several people, including many she had never met, told her about favors, big and small, that he had done for them. These people wanted to know how they could now help. Thus the foundation idea was formed.

The initial mission is to raise funds for scholarships to help young people make it through the public school education process, all the way to college. Ultimately, however, the plan is for the foundation to branch out into other areas of assistance. "Whether it's helping to renovate somebody's house, or helping a family with groceries, it's about helping people," she says, "because that is what he was all about "

Donations to the Robert Parker Foundation can be made online at: www.gofundme.com/ RobertParker

Contributions can also be made by check to The Miami Foundation, with Robert Parker Foundation in the subject line, and mailed to 40 NW 3rd Street, Suite 305, Miami, FL 33128, attention: Julie Bindbeutel. The contact telephone number is: 305-357-2082.

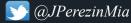
Robert Parker was the first African-American Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department. He retired in 2009 after a 33-year career with the MDPD.



"Communication between leaders and the people they are charged with leading is fundamental to the success of any organization."

## Director's Message Juan J. Perez

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Communication between leaders and the people they are charged with leading is fundamental to the success of any organization. This is especially true of an organization such as ours, which is charged with the safety of one of the most dynamic and diverse communities in the United States.

As I moved up the ranks of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), I have seen the importance of that communication both to and from those I lead. It is against that background that I welcome this opportunity to speak to you, and to also hear from you.

For many years this newsletter has served as a valuable source of information on the activities of the men and women of the MDPD. The recent redesign, has expanded its reach beyond our immediate MDPD family as we share the publication with our vibrant social media community. The responses on all sides have been very positive.

In this, my inaugural contribution, I wish first of all, to honor the brave men and women who lost their lives in the attacks on September 11, 2001. We must never forget their sacrifices!

### 21st Century Policing

These are difficult times for law enforcement officers and the MDPD, the largest police department in the southeastern United States, is moving to meet the ever growing challenges of 21st Century Policing through managerial changes, new hires, ongoing training, equipment acquisitions, utilizing new technologies, and building partnerships with community based organizations.

I recently had the pleasure of promoting a new batch

of supervisors and middle managers, including sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. That move was followed by the appointment of the largest and most diverse group of executive command staff in recent memory, including 12 police majors, 4 division chiefs, and 2 assistant directors. Those appointments completed my executive team. In January 2016 we expanded our ranks by 95 new officers, the largest graduating group in the history of the MDPD. And by the time you read this issue of the Alert, we will have broken that record, graduating a class of 139 officers.

In terms of equipment acquisition, the roll out of our Body Worn Cameras program is our most exciting development.

At the same time we are expanding the use of information technologies, with the expansion of our social media team, the introduction of our Community on Patrol (COP) app, and the 'Week in Review' broadcast on social media, being three of the more important developments.

I urge you to find out more about these efforts by visiting our MDPD website and the various related social media channels

The challenges notwithstanding, I am optimistic the MDPD will continue to live up to our core values of Integrity, Respect, Service, and Fairness, and be the model law enforcement organization in the Nation, by blending strategic planning with community concerns.

I also look forward to continuing this dialogue with you and hope that you enjoy this issue of the ALERT!



# All give some. Some give all. Ceremony Honors Fallen Law Enforcement Officers



PBA President John Rivera: "It was their duty to serve. It is ours to remember."

In the United States, a law enforcement officer is killed every 53 hours. Ambush-style killings have increased some 300 percent since last year. Firearms related officer fatalities have spiked 78 percent this year.

These jaw-dropping statistics, provided by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, were highlighted by John Rivera, President of the Dade County Police Benevolent Association (PBA), on Wednesday, September 7, at a ceremony to launch the 2016 Fallen Officer Tribute.

The ceremony, held in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center (SPCC) in downtown Miami, was attended by both Command Staff and rank and file members of several Miami-Dade County law enforcement agencies, family members of slain officers, and members of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners. Also in attendance was former Commissioner Natasha Seijas, who in 2010 proposed the resolution which declared September as Fallen Officer Tribute Month.

Law enforcement officers are being killed "purely because they wear the uniform" PBA President Rivera said, "sometimes by the very people they are trying to protect. Florida is still one of the top states for officer fatalities."

"What kind of country have we become?" he asked rhetorically. "What does this say about us as a community that so many officers are being killed in the line of duty?"

"Their sacrifice humbles me," PBA President Rivera declared, assuring family members of fallen officers that the sacrifice of their loved ones would never be forgotten. "It was their duty to serve. It is ours to remember," he said, echoing the theme of an exhibition which has been mounted in the SPCC lobby.

The exhibition, which will remain on display for the entire month, features a mannequin for each fallen officer wearing a shirt with the officer's name and date of death.



# MDPD Director tells his team... Use challenges as opportunity

The Director of the Miami-Dade Police Department Juan J. Perez says law enforcement officers across the country are facing some of the toughest times ever faced by those sworn to protect and serve.

He has urged the men and women of the MDPD "not to back down" in the face of these challenges, but to respond by using them as opportunities to build bridges with the community they serve. "The community needs us and we need the community," he said. "We will be asked to sacrifice," he continued "and you must give of yourselves generously to the community."

"The future of this agency is in your hands. Together we will move the agency forward."

Director Perez made these remarks on September 2, 2016, at a formal promotional ceremony for members of the MDPD Command Staff. There were two promotions to the position of Assistant Director, four to Police Chief, and 12 to Police Major.

He said these promotions were unprecedented in both scale



Members of the MDPD Command Staff at the September 2, 2016, Promotional Ceremony.



Director Juan J. Perez speaking at the September 2, 2016, Command Staff Promotional Ceremony.

and diversity. Referring to the Command Staff as a "talented and competent team" he called on them to lead the men and women of the MDPD "to higher heights."

The ceremony, held at Florida International University, was attended by scores of family members, colleagues, and friends of the promoted officers. The Director used the opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifices that officers' families make, and to thank them.

PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Stephanie Daniels and Thomas P. Hanlon

PROMOTED TO POLICE CHIEF: Richard Amion, Ariel Artime, Andrianne Byrd, and Mirtha Ramos.

PROMOTED TO POLICE MAJOR:

Samuel Bronson Christopher Carothers Michael Dieppa Jose A. Fernandez Alfredo G-Larrinaga Eric Garcia Andrew Glass Vanessa Holden Raymond Melcon George A. Perez Franklin Roig Gadyaces Serralta

### **Transitions:**

## Farewell to Giraldo 'Gerry' Bermudez and Jesus Emilio Aldao

The Florida law enforcement family, including the Miami-Dade Police Department, said a final farewell earlier this year to Giraldo 'Gerry' Bermudez, 51, a veteran of both the MDPD and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). He died Wednesday, July 20, 2016, after a year-long battle with cancer.

Born in Cuba in 1965, Gerry was raised in Miami where he obtained both his secondary and tertiary education, graduating from Florida International University with honors.

He joined the Miami-Dade Police Department in 1986 where he worked in uniform patrol, narcotics, and in the Organized Crime Bureau. He was assigned by MDPD to a Federal Bureau of Investigation High Intensity Drug Area Task Force. This assignment introduced him to Federal law enforcement and in 1995 he left MDPD for the FBI, where he would have a distinguished 21-year career.

Gerry Bermudez is survived by his wife, Jennifer, and four daughters Christina, Katherine, Sophia, and Emily.

### Sgt. Jesus Emilio Aldao

Jesus Emilio Aldao, 41, a sergeant in the Sexual Crimes Investigative Unit of the Special Victims Bureau died suddenly on Tuesday, September 6, 2016.

Jesus joined the MDPD in May 2003. His initial assignment was at the Hammocks District where he eventually became a detective and a Field Training Officer. He went from there to the Special Victims Bureau (SVB), then to the Midwest District in March 2008, and then back to SVB.

He was promoted to the rank of sergeant in May 2013. Funeral services for Sgt. Aldao took place on Friday September 9, 2016.

# I have the greatest Job in the World... says MDPD Homicide Detective Juan Segovia



Melissa Calderon poses with Homicide Detective Juan Segovia. She calls him "Uncle Juan." Juan Segovia always wanted to be a police officer. He remembers that as far back as high school, he was intrigued with the idea of "helping people by putting bad guys away"

Because of a hiatus in hiring when he graduated from high school, Segovia's dream of becoming a cop had to be put on hold for five years. He spent that period in an ancillary profession; Case Manager in the Juvenile Court System, where he worked with "at risk youth." His job involved trying to fashion a path for young people who'd been arrested, that kept them out of jail by allowing them to undertake counseling and community service, while providing restitution to their victims.

And then his opportunity came in 1997. MDPD was hiring and he applied. He graduated from the Police Academy the following year. His first assignment was patrol duties at the Northside District, where he says he received excellent on the job training.

## I have the greatest Job in the World...

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But his ambition was to be a detective. That opportunity came in 2002. There was an opening for a detective in the Northside District General Investigations Unit. He applied and was selected. And in April 2006 he transitioned to his dream job; Homicide detective at MDPD Headquarters in Doral.

It's not an easy job, Segovia admits without hesitation. "It takes a toll on you. You don't eat well. Sometimes you don't sleep. It takes a toll on your personal life. You're away from home a lot. You miss a lot of special events and family gatherings; birthdays, Christmas, New Year, Thanksgiving." His first year in Homicide his squad picked up a case in Northside District on Christmas morning. "Homicides don't take a break for the holidays," he says ruefully. "If you don't have a passion for it, you shouldn't do this job."

And Segovia says he has that passion. "To me, it's a calling. I truly believe that God intended for me to do this job. I wouldn't do any other job."

"It's a lot of sacrifice," he says, but he thinks the rewards more than balance the sacrifices.

In one of the many photographs he has on his phone, he's standing with a smiling teenage girl dressed in high school graduation attire and proudly displaying a diploma. It's from one of his most celebrated cases and is symbolic of the "rewards" he gets from his job.

Her name is Melissa. She's the daughter of a murder victim and she wasn't always so favorably disposed towards him. Her mother, Raquel Maria Calderon, had disappeared and was presumed dead. Segovia had identified her father, Jesus Maqueira Calderon, as the main suspect.

It was what homicide detectives call "a no body case." These are exceedingly difficult to solve and prosecutors are very wary about taking them to court.

Distressed by the family situation, Melissa had decided to drop out of school. Segovia stepped in and did something he admits he shouldn't have done. If she stayed in school, he promised her, he would find her mother. She stayed in school and he found her mother. First he and his colleagues

built a case against the missing woman's ex-husband, Jesus Calderon; one strong enough for prosecutors to take to court and eventually secure a conviction. And eventually they located Raquel Calderon's remains, allowing her family to give her a proper burial. Now he is "Uncle Juan" to Melissa and her siblings, all of whom he says are doing well.

The Calderon murder is one of two "no body cases" Segovia has successfully investigated. He is currently pursuing another, keeping a promise he made to a colleague detective who is now retired.

These efforts have not gone unrecognized. Juan Segovia has accumulated 50 individual commendations. He has twice (2013 and 2015) been awarded the 'Arthur E. Felton Investigative Excellence Award' by the Police Benevolent Association. In those years he was also named MDPD's Investigator of the Year, and last year he was awarded the Homicide Bureau's 'Victor Pidermann Award.'

The individual awards notwithstanding, Segovia emphasizes that investigating crime, especially homicides, is a team undertaking. He learns from his colleagues and hopes that they learn from him. And he tries to pass on what he has learned, teaching about investigating "no body cases" at the Miami-Dade Public Safety Training Institute, teaching classes at the Medical Examiner's Office, and serving as an instructor in the MDPD's training program for police officers from other countries in the region.

The issues of learning and teaching also come across when you ask him where he goes from here. He's concerned about continuing to hone his skills as an investigator. "You learn from every case," he says. "You learn from every scene. You learn from every interview. If you don't continue to develop those skills, you'll fall behind."

And when he's not investigating or teaching?

"Football," he says, smiling with anticipation that the season is about to start. "I'm a huge Chicago Bears fan. The perfect evening for me is to have a nice dinner, maybe watch a movie, and maybe smoke a cigar with my friends. That's what takes the pressure off."



# MDPD's Maria Santamaria leads a faith-based effort to COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING, ONE PERSON AT A TIME



Maria Santamaria at work at MDPD Headquarters in Doral. On her personal time Maria leads the faith-based Anti-Human Trafficking Ministry at Calvary Kendall, a non-denominational Christian church.

Type the phrase "human trafficking" into any search engine and you'll be inundated with hundreds of links to law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, as well as newspaper and magazine articles about what some now refer to as "modern day slavery."

Do the same thing in YouTube and out will pop thumbnail links to television news stories and features, as well as video documentaries and testimonials.

Most of these will highlight the names of famous people, like movie stars Ashley Judd and Demi Moore, New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristoff or his wife, filmmaker Sheryl WuDunn, and agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

It's unlikely you will see the name Maria Santamaria or Calvary Kendall, a non-denominational Christian church in Miami. However, Maria Santamaria and members of the congregation at Calvary Kendall have, since 2012, been at the forefront of local efforts against this scourge.

It started when Calvary Kendall, in collaboration with the European-based anti-human trafficking organization, A1 Campaign, staged a conference in Miami, involving representatives from more than 200 local churches, to discuss human trafficking.

Maria was shocked at what she heard. Girls, some barely into their teen years, many of them runaways, were being kidnapped, held in virtual slavery, forced into drug use and coerced into prostitution. Others were forced to work in "sweat-shop" type labor. They saw little of the money they earned and were often beaten and raped repeatedly to keep them in line. What shocked Maria even more was that something she assumed happened only in "third world countries," was happening in the United States and that there were several cases right here in Florida. In fact, the first victim she encountered was living in her own neighborhood in the Hammocks.

"It was as if the blindfolds came off," she said. "I thought there must be some way I can help." So when Calvary Kendall decided to establish the Anti-Human Trafficking Ministry, and Maria was asked to lead it, she didn't hesitate.

She started by doing research, meeting with people from partner organizations and holding discussions with law enforcement personnel. That latter task was made easier by the fact that she is a veteran administrator with the Miami-Dade Police Department and therefore knew and had relatively easy access to detectives dealing with the issue.

Maria, currently a Secretary in the North Operations Division, where she reports to newly promoted Chief Mirtha Ramos, started her MDPD career in 1993 as a Clerk/Typist at the Hammocks District. She was promoted to Secretary in the District and from there to Secretary/Lead Worker in the Special Patrol Bureau. Her next career move was to the Police Operations Bureau where she was the Administrative Secretary and from there to the Intracoastal District. Since then she has plied her considerable secretarial and administrative skills in the Economic Crimes Bureau, the Information Technology Services Bureau, the Public Information and Education Bureau and most recently, the Kendall District, before the move to the North Operations Division.

These positions came with increasing administrative responsibilities. Also, she has a reputation of being among

### Combat human trafficking, one person at a time

Continued from page 7

the first to arrive at work and the last to leave. So where does she find the time? Maria points to the support of her family and the team that comprises Kendall Calvary's Anti-Human Trafficking Ministry, which has grown from two people, to 14 (including two male mentors) in less than four years.

In that time they have mentored 27 victims of human trafficking (including three men) from several countries including Spain, Mexico, England, Nicaragua, Hungary, Serbia and Brazil.

The initial idea was to provide a safe house for victims who'd been rescued. But she and her colleagues in the Ministry realized that this was not enough. And then a law enforcement official suggested that the victims could benefit from "faith-based mentoring" thus that component was added.

A mentoring assignment usually begins with Maria being alerted by somebody from a law enforcement agency, that the agency has a new victim who needs help.

"I always tell them don't give me details. Just tell me how old the person is, where she or he is from and what kind of trafficking," Maria says, noting that trafficking takes various forms, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and domestic servitude. She then meets with the victim, usually a young girl. She has to be careful what she says, as she tries to build a relationship with the victim. "All of the girls have this shame," she says. "They're embarrassed. They're shy. They don't know what I'm thinking of them. They don't know if I'm judging them."

Usually, the initial conversation goes something like this: "Hi, I'm Maria. I'm not from law enforcement. I'm not from any government agency. I'm from Calvary Kendall Church. I'd like to pray for you and I'd like to take you to church with me, if you'd like." She tells the girls:

"I know you've been the victim of a horrible crime. I don't know the details. It's up to you to tell me, if and when you feel comfortable."

"Whatever we can help the girl with, we do. We take them to church. We take them grocery shopping. We take them to the doctor."

As an employee of a law enforcement agency, albeit a civilian, Maria Santamaria sees and knows of the awful things people do to each other. You would imagine then, that when she leaves work, she wants to spend her free time with more pleasant undertakings. "For me it's a faith thing," she says. "It's something that I cannot turn away from. You see the brokenness of these girls. People think that when a girl has been rescued, that is the end of it. She's not fine. The ordeal is not over. So she's rested and she's fed. Now what? She's from a world of drugs. A world of being raped multiple times. A world where there's mental health issues. A world where there's trauma. That's when the reality sets...when the shame sets in."

She readily admits that the work takes a physical and emotional toll. "We had a girl who died from Hepatitis C on Christmas Day."

At the same time there are the rewards. "There are the miracles," she says. "When you see a girl getting up, and laughing and giggling. She tells you she wants to go to school. When you see the dreams that she lost coming back. When you start seeing that, you realize that is why you do this. I'm not doing this for me. I'm walking through life with her."

And how much longer does Maria see herself doing this? "I don't see myself not doing this. I don't have a vision for a house. I have a vision for a village for these girls. When? I have no idea."

### **Awards And Commendations**

The officers and civilian employees listed below were the recipients of various awards and commendations in May, June, and July 2016.

**May 2016** 

### Distinguished Officer Of The Month/Exceptional Service/Lifesaving Award

Sergeant Mauricio Smith	Special Patrol Bureau
Officer Joaquin Garcia	Special Patrol Bureau
Officer Oscar Aguilera	±

### **Awards And Commendations**

Continued from page 7

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Unit of the month/certificate of commendation

Civilian Of The Month/Employee Excellence Award

Life Saving Award

**June 2016** 

Distinguished Officer Of The Month/Lifesaving Award

Officer Juan Gonzalez Jr. ..... West District

Unit Of The Month/Certificate Of Commendation

Automated Fingerprint Identification System Unit: ...... Forensic Services Bureau

Civilian Of The Month/Exceptional Service Award

Lifesaving Award

**July 2016** 

Distinguished Officer Of The Month/Lifesaving Award

Unit Of The Month/Certificate Of Commendation

Civilian Of The Month/Employee Excellence/Lifesaving Award

Employee Excellence Award

# Recent Retirements

## Congratulations and farewell to the following MDPD personnel who retired between July 29, 2016, and November 30, 2016: (Listed in alphabetical order)

The Miami-Dade Police Department has in recent months said farewell to a number of officers and civilian employees who retired after periods of service ranging from 38 to six years. We wish them all long life and happy retirement.

Chief Hernan Organvidez	30 yrs.	Officer Orestes Sanchez	19 yrs.
Major Jennifer Montgomery	27 yrs.	Officer Tim Smith	27 yrs.
Lieutenant Luis Fuste	32 yrs.	Officer Carol Sykes	30 yrs.
Lieutenant Juan Hernandez	32 yrs.	Officer Frederick Thomas	30 yrs.
Sergeant Patricia Bimonte	27 yrs.	Police Officer Laurel Wade	30 yrs.
Sergeant Terrence Gontko	30 yrs.	Police Officer Freddie Williams	31 yrs.
Sergeant Thomasena Mitchell	30 yrs.	Police Records Technician, Irene Bradshaw	36 yrs.
Sergeant Marco Pascual		Police Complaint Supervisor, Phylltrynna Dean.	29 yrs.
Sergeant Darrell Rasmussen	28 yrs.	Data Entry Specialist, Teresa Fara	38 yrs.
Sergeant Sharon Reid	28 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Ruth Foster	15 yrs.
Sergeant Malachi Smith	17 yrs.	Maintenance Mechanic, Alberto Gomez;	35 yrs.
Officer Sergio Amador	22 yrs.	School Crossing Guard Dolores Gordon	14 yrs.
Officer Lotze Armand	25 yrs.	Police Crime Analysis Specialist,	
Officer William Flores	30 yrs.	Idalmi Hidalgo-Gato	36 yrs.
Officer Glen Givens	23 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Mercedes Molina	9 yrs.
Officer Linda Hoffman	28 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Luz Rios	6 yrs.
Officer Orlarry Jackson	22 yrs.	Police Complaint Officer, Robert Rubenstein	34 yrs.
Officer Dale Johnson	23 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Michael Ryan	13 yrs.
Officer Derrick Kelly	30 yrs.	Police Records Technician, Rose Scarlett	30 yrs.
Officer Robert Kugler	26 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Lillie Shanks	17 yrs.
Officer Jenne Maccagli	26 yrs.	School Crossing Guard Carolyn Smiley	11 yrs.
Officer Scott McEachin		Criminalist, Stephen Snipes	35 yrs.
Officer Gilberto Morales, Jr.	30 yrs.	Police Records Technician, Mildred Stewart	35 yrs.
Officer Barbara Nelson	24 yrs.	School Crossing Guard, Marisol Vazquez	9 yrs.
Officer Antonio Nunez	29 yrs.	Administrative Officer, Oscar Vega	26 yrs.
Officer Eddy Prieto	26 yrs.	Fingerprint Analyst, Kenneth Wyatt	
Officer Luis Robainas	25 vrs.		

EDITORS NOTE: School Crossing Guard, Lillie Shanks, passed away on August 15, 2016. The MDPD offers heart-felt condolences to her family.



### MDPD Blood Donors 'Giving the Gift of Life'

The Miami-Dade Police Department thanks the 17 officers (including one reserve officer and one trainee), and nine civilian employees who donated blood at the 'Blood Drives' held at MDPD Headquarters on August 18, 2016 and at the Public Safety Training Institute on August 25, 2016.

> Major Hector Llevat Officer Mercedes Sabina Officer David Torres Captain Alejandro Acosta

Sergeant Robert Berris Reserve Officer Charles Colon Police Trainee Emanuel Walton Sergeant Randolph Caballero Sergeant Donna Colon Police Crime Analyst James Arnold

Sergeant Michael Freshko Police Intelligence Analyst Barbara Bonachea Officer Ivette Aguilar Computer Services Manager Emilio Canasi Officer Daniel Aiken Police Records Technician 1 Rashondra McCall

Officer Alain Cruz Data Entry Specialist 2 Oneida Ortega Officer Marvin Davis Data Entry Specialist 1 Ana Solis

Officer Michelle Hechavarria Administrative Officer 3 Heather Thomas

Officer Christopher Hodges Clerk 2 Lucia Valles

Officer William Lopez Office Support Specialist 2 Miriam Zamanillo

The department especially thanks the five non-MDPD donors: Guy Dure, Wilner Gila, Andrew Marrero, Anastasia McNeil, and Eduardo Rivero.

The next blood drive be held on Thursday, October 20, 2016 at MDPD Headquarters in Doral.

#### **THANK YOU**

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