

## 8 Gold Medal judges weighed competitors' prior awards

BY MARILYN BOWDEN

The challenge facing judges for Miami Today's Gold Medal Awards competition is unusual in that the contestants are already all winners, their accomplishments singled out for acclaim by their professional peers.

Eight prominent members of Miami's business and professional community were asked to judge these prize-winning achievements on another level: relevance and importance to the community at large.

This year's judges were:

■ Mario J. Artecona, executive director, Miami Business Forum.

■ Tere Blanca, president & CEO, Blanca Commercial Real Estate and chair of the Beacon Council.

■ Joyce Elam, dean of the School of Business Administration at Florida International University.

■ Carlos R. Fernandez-Guzman, senior executive vice president in the Neighborhood Banking Group at BankUnited and chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

■ Harve Mogul, president and CEO of the United Way of Miami-Dade.

■ Joe Natoli, senior vice president for business and finance and chief financial officer, University of Miami.

■ William D. Talbert III, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

■ J. Antonio Villamil, dean of the St. Thomas University School of Business.

Each independently graded applicants on three criteria: the importance of the achievements for which they received professional recognition, the importance of the agency or organization that recognized them and



Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Alyce Robertson; and United Home Care Services' Blanca Ceballos and Mercy Masvidal.

the long-term impact of their achievement on the community.

The results were tallied to determine winners of gold, silver and bronze medals in two categories – individuals and organizations.

"There seemed to be a smaller yet more eclectic batch of applicants this year," said Mr. Artecona, a veteran of many past Gold Medal contests. "Each application showcases a little piece of Miami. It's fascinating seeing how many pieces it takes to keep us ticking."

Mr. Fernandez-Guzman said he found selecting this year's winners particularly challenging.

"Honorees should know that the nominations were truly phenomenal examples of excellence," he said. "It was not an easy process to select from such an accomplished group. Finalists and winners should be

immensely proud to have risen to the top of such an outstanding group of nominees."

Mr. Mogul agreed with that assessment.

"The group was solid," he said, "and the competition was even stiffer than usual. There was more community service involved, and I always look for that."

Mr. Natoli pointed out the heightened relevance of the Gold Medal Awards in these times.

"In times of economic turmoil, there is a particular need for individuals and organizations to step up and help others and focus on excellence," he said. "This year's nominations for the Gold Medal Awards have done just that. Miami is fortunate to have such selfless community leaders, and I commend Miami Today for recognizing their excellence."



Award presenter Alan Ojeda, president of the Rilea Group, Gold Medal Awards judge Tere Blanca, chair of the Beacon Council and president and CEO of Blanca Commercial Real Estate, and her husband F. Javier Juncadella, the owner of City Construction Group Inc.