



## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

# ADDRESS AT AN EVENING WITH THE CUBAN HERITAGE COLLECTION

Presented by President Julio Frenk  
at the University of Miami's Robert and Judi Prokop Newman Alumni Center  
on March 1, 2016

Thank you, Dean Eckman and good evening everyone.

Felicia and I are honored to receive such a warm welcome from friends and supporters of the Cuban Heritage Collection.

I want to thank dinner co-chairs Aida Levitan and Aldo Leiva.

I am delighted that so many of you were able to join us this evening.

I am deeply honored to serve as the sixth president of the University of Miami and to join my efforts to those of my esteemed predecessors who have guided this institution with such devotion and inspiration for the last 90 years.

This evening we highlight one of our points of pride - the Cuban Heritage Collection.

Last fall I engaged in a 100-day listening exercise across all three of our campuses.

The Otto G. Richter Library was one of the highlights of my immersive education about our signature programs and services. During my visit, I discovered the magnificent treasury that is the Cuban Heritage Collection.

In fact, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I had a personal connection to the Collection. While admiring the wonderful and rare materials in the Collection, the staff shared a spoken poetry CD of the notable Cuban poet, Fina Garcia Marruz. The CD was produced by one of my sisters, Luz Maria Frenk, when she worked at Fondo de Cultura Economica in Mexico.

That discovery illustrates the connectivity of the Cuban Heritage Collection. The Collection is a beautiful tapestry that weaves together both the individual and collective lives of the people of Cuba and their descendants. It reveals a remarkable story of struggle and triumph, courage and achievement, art and culture, while documenting the ever-changing narrative that continues on and off the island. This tapestry is far reaching, blanketing countries across the globe while remaining anchored by its extraordinary Cuban heritage. The more I learn about the Cuban Heritage Collection, the more inspired and excited I feel about its future.

Tonight's event is centered on furthering that mission, to propel the Cuban Heritage Collection into a new era of excellence with the establishment of a \$1 million endowment from our dear friends at The Goizueta Foundation.

But even as we look to the future, this evening also provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate our past by recognizing the visionary and pioneering individuals who helped to establish the Cuban Heritage Collection more than 20 years ago and who positioned it to grow into the largest resource of Cuban archives and materials outside of the island itself.

I am delighted that we have several founding Amigos board members with us tonight:

- o University of Miami Trustee, Jose P. Bared
- o Ignacio Carrera-Justiz
- o Carlos P. Quintela and
- o Jose F. Valdivia, Jr.

Will all members of the Amigos please stand with them and be recognized? I salute you all for your leadership and dedication.

I want to add my voice to the recognition of Esperanza Bravo de Varona.

At my inauguration last month, I shared four aspirations for our future: that we be the Hemispheric University, the Excellent University, the Relevant University, and the Exemplary.

The work of the Amigos and the Cuban Heritage Collection aligns perfectly with all four aspirations by capitalizing on our unique geographic endowment, creating and preserving knowledge, sharing our resources and expertise, and building a greater sense of community.

We will continue to look to the leadership of Dean Eckman, the Amigos, and Cuban Heritage Collection staff as we move forward in advancing and expanding the Collection in the years ahead.

Working together, with the generous support of friends and donors like you, I have no doubt that the Collection will remain a prominent resource for researchers from around the world who are interested in Cuban history, the Cuban experience outside the island, and the impact of Cuban Americans in South Florida and beyond.

Thank you all again for being here tonight and for giving Felicia and me such a warm welcome.