President Obama Appoints Adrienne Arsht Center Chair Ricky Arriola to Committee on Arts & Humanities

Miami businessman and arts leader joins blue ribbon panel of actors, philanthropists, writers, and artists.

Nov. 10, 2009 - PRLog -- MIAMI, FL – President Barack Obama has handpicked Miami businessman and arts leader Ricky Arriola to serve on his Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the nation’s preeminent body focused on arts and humanities education, cultural diplomacy, and economic revitalization through the arts and humanities. A Miami native, Mr. Arriola currently serves as chair of Miami’s Performing Arts Center Trust, an independent body of business and civic leaders that oversees the nonprofit Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. He is also President and CEO of Inktel Direct, a national business process outsourcing company based in Miami.

The Committee serves as a liaison between The White House and federal cultural agencies, as well as civic, corporate, foundation, and private funders that seek to further the nation’s investment in the arts and humanities. The 26-person panel is a veritable “who’s who” of the nation’s cultural landscape, including actors Sarah Jessica Parker, Forrest Whitaker, Alfre Woodard and Edward Norton, musician Yo Yo Ma, fashion luminary Anna Wintour, and philanthropist Teresa Heinz, among others. First Lady Michelle Obama serves as the Committee’s Honorary Chair.

“I am confident that these talented individuals will be valued additions to our administration and will offer wise counsel in their respective roles,” said President Obama, in a statement. “I look forward to working with them in the coming months and years.”

As chair of Miami’s 41-member Performing Arts Center Trust board of directors, Mr. Arriola has been a driving force in the Adrienne Arsht Center’s emergence as one of the nation’s leading performing arts organizations. Today, the Center serves as a model public-private partnership, having balanced its budget for the second-consecutive year, paid off its last remaining bank debt seven years early, and elevated its role as a catalyst for economic development in Miami’s burgeoning urban core.

“Ricky Arriola is one of the Adrienne Arsht Center’s most valuable assets,” said M. John Richard, President and CEO of the Adrienne Arsht Center. “As chairman of our board, Ricky has demonstrated an innate ability to at once set a clear vision for our organization while rolling-up his sleeves and making a direct impact in Miami’s cultural community. I have no doubt that Ricky will apply the same degrees of leadership and passion as a member of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities.”

Mr. Arriola’s appointment reflects South Florida’s evolution as one of the nation’s most dynamic arts communities. Home to cultural institutions such as the Adrienne Arsht Center, Miami Art Museum, and Museum of Contemporary Art; festivals such as Art Basel and the Miami International Book Fair; and performance groups such as the Miami City Ballet, Florida Grand Opera and the New World Symphony, Miami has earned a spot on the global arts map.

While many communities struggle to fund cultural events and organizations in light of economic volatility, Miami’s commitment to the arts remains strong. The City’s base of individual and corporate donors
continues to support the arts, and the public sector has provided funding for cultural organizations and capital projects, including a 29-acre waterfront park that will include new homes for the Miami Art Museum and the Miami Science Museum.

The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities has served every president since 1982. Achievements include the origination of the Presidential Medals in the arts and humanities; groundbreaking cultural delegations to China and Mexico; and the creation of signature programs, such as “Save America’s Treasures,” the American Film Institute’s “Project: 20/20,” and the “Coming Up Taller” awards, which recognize exemplary after school arts and humanities programs for the nation’s youth.

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