Some leaders motivate community by examples they set

By Marilyn Bowden

From the classroom to the political arena, men and women motivate the community toward excellence by the examples they set.

David Lawrence Jr., former publisher of the Miami Herald, was cited by several of his peers for his work as president of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation. The foundation strives to make available high-quality health care, education and nurturing for children up to age 5.

“He has gone out and tried to tackle some of the difficult problems of education and the disenfranchised of the community,” said Edgar Jones, senior director of Florida operations for the Rockefeller Group.

Ron Shuffield, president of Esslinger Wooten Maxwell, said Mr. Lawrence devotes as much time and energy to his new career as he did to the previous one.

“I have watched him work tirelessly for the past few years,” he said, “getting the support of our governmental leaders and leading the effort to have citizens tax themselves to provide programs for early-childhood education.

“Not many people would commit the additional years of their time to give back to the community as he has done.”

Improved education, said Mr. Shuffield, motivates the whole community. He also cited a trio of educators who have brought the 30-year-old Florida International University recognition and respect.

“Modesto Maidique has been president of FIU for more than half its life,” Mr. Shuffield said. “He has built a university from very humble beginnings and is certainly providing an opportunity for past and present students not only to improve their own lives but ultimately the lives of the whole community.”

Among the programs introduced under Mr. Maidique’s tenure are a law school, an athletic program and the Jerome Bain Real Estate Institute.

Mr. Maidique, Joyce Elam, dean of FIU’s Business School, and Mark Rosenberg, provost and executive vice president, “work like a tag team,” Mr. Shuffield said. “They are all talented, capable people who have given tirelessly of their time to raise an awareness of FIU that didn’t exist before they got there.

Anyone who holds a diploma from FIU owes a debt of gratitude to these folks.”

Jose Canelo, former chairman of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and a candidate for Miami-Dade County mayor, “has been involved in a lot of things that have made a difference for Miami-Dade County,” said Sergio Pino, president of Century Builders, who has held a fundraising event for Mr. Canelo’s selection effort. “I have known him for 20 years and seen that he cares a lot. He has paid his dues. He has been involved in many organizations where he has truly made a difference.

“I also know of his involvement in dealing with issues that people don’t talk about, including being a part of the solution in recent problems involving the Public Health Trust and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.”

Edgar Jones paid tribute to former community leaders Bill Cullom and Alvah Chapman.

Mr. Cullom, who recently retired after 23 years as president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, “was the conscience of the community,” Mr. Jones said. “He pulled different aspects of the community together to deal with some very tough problems. During his tenure, the Beacon Council, the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Homeless Partnership Trust and One Community-One Goal all grew out of the chamber.”

Mr. Chapman’s leadership has been felt by this community in many different ways,” he said. “His efforts in the homeless area, a problem in this community for many years, and his determination in tackling many others issues during his life will long be remembered. These were without question significant leaders. There will be a big void left by them.”

Jose Canelo: Longtime broadcast executive is now running for mayor of Miami-Dade County.