



GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU AND PARTNERS RAISE RECORD \$160,000 FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE HOSPITALITY SCHOLARSHIPS AT 17th ANNUAL H.O.T. CHALLENGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

More than 200 civic and visitor industry partners joined the **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB)** at its **17th Annual H.O.T. Challenge Golf Tournament** on May 9th at the **Doral Golf Resort & Spa**, raising a record \$160,000 for the **Visitor Industry Council's**

The **VIC**, established in 1991 by the **GMCVB**, was designed to increase and expand the participation of individuals of African heritage in Miami-Dade County's visitor industry. To date the non-profit organization has raised well over \$2.5 million in cash and in-kind services for scholarships, internships and job placements for local students of African Heritage. Since the program's inception, a total of 177 scholarships have been awarded.

"Our scholarship program changes the lives of so many students who might not have had the chance to advance without a financial boost," said Visitor Industry Council Chairperson, **Larry A. Rice, Ed. D.**, dean of Academic Affairs at **Johnson & Wales University**. "With increased resources, we can help more deserving students find meaningful career paths and have a sense of real ownership in Miami's most important industry."

"Key to the growth of Miami's #1 industry is the quality and diversity of the people joining the workforce," said **GMCVB** Board Chair **Gene Prescott**, chairman and CEO of **Seaway Hotels Corporation**, which owns **The Biltmore Hotel Miami**, the **David Williams** and the all suites **Alexander Hotel** in **Miami Beach**. "Through the **VIC** program, we're able to educate and mentor the next generation of Miami's visitor industry leaders."

The **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB)** is a not-for-profit sales and marketing organization whose mission is to attract visitors to **Greater Miami** and the **Beaches** for leisure, business

and conventions. For a vacation guide travel agents can visit their website at www.MiamiandBeaches.com or call (888) 76-Miami (US/Canada only) or (305) 447-7777. To reach the **GMCVB** offices dial (305) 539-3000. Meeting planners may call (800) 933-8448 (US/Canada only) or (305) 539-3071 or visit www.MiamiMeetings.com.

Pictured left to right at the presentation of a check for \$160,000 raised by the **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau** at its **17th Annual H.O.T. Challenge Golf Tournament** to benefit the **Visitor Industry Council (VIC)** are **Alvin West**, senior vice president, **Finance & Administration**, **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau**; **Georgia Bedeau**, **VIC** intern and student enrolled in the **Travel & Tourism** program at **Florida International University**; and **Graylyn Swilley**, executive director of the **VIC**.



(VIC) African Heritage Scholarship Fund.

The fund supports scholarships for students of African heritage pursuing a career in hospitality management at **FIU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management**, **Miami-Dade College** and **Johnson & Wales University**.

Contributing to the record revenues at this year's tournament was the **GMCVB's** popular online auction, which allowed supporters to view more than 65 auction offerings for more than a month in advance, with bid items ranging from cruises and hotel stays to celebrity athlete memorabilia and jewelry. "Everyone had a great time for a great cause," said **William D. Talbert, III, CDME**, **GMCVB** president & CEO. "The online auction was a huge hit again this year, making it easy and convenient to bid and giving great exposure to our sponsors."