



Contact:

Lindsay Shilling

lshilling@brunetgarcia.com

**NOTABLE CUBAN-AMERICAN AUTHOR, GUSTAVO PÉREZ-FIRMAT,
TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL ACHIEVING THE DREAM SCHOLARSHIP EVENT**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., — The First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (FCHCC) and the Mayors Hispanic American Advisory Board (MHAAB) announce Gustavo Pérez -Firmat as keynote speaker of the “Achieving the Dream” scholarship luncheon. Pérez -Firmat is an award-winning Cuban-American poet, fiction writer and scholar and often referred to as the “master of linguistic play” because of his outstanding literary achievements.

The FCCHC and MHAB are teaming up to award sixteen \$2,000 scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students of Hispanic descent in the First Coast counties of Duval, Nassau, St. Johns, Baker and Clay. The award recipients will be honored at the “Achieving the Dream” luncheon, Friday, October 23, 2009, at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront.

“We are honored to have a speaker with such expertise and phenomenal literary and educational achievements.” said Jose A. Rodriguez-Lozano, Director of Education. “Gustavo’s experience of immigrating the United States, assimilating into a new culture and succeeding is inspirational to the Hispanic students we are honoring.”

Known as the “terminator of cultural certainties,” Pérez -Firmat ’s book, *Life on the Hyphen* was awarded the Eugene M. Kayden University Press National Book Award in 1994 for his study of Cuban-American culture. During his twenty-one year tenure at Duke University, he was awarded Scholar/Teacher of the Year in 1995. Pérez -Firmat was included among “100 Americans to watch for the next century” by *Newsweek* in 1997 and *Hispanic Business Magazine* selected him as one of the “100 most influential Hispanics.” Currently, he is a Professor of Humanities at Columbia University.

Pérez -Firmat was born in Cuba and raised in Miami. He attended Miami-Dade community college and the University of Miami where he earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees and later went on to earn his Ph.D in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan. Currently, Pérez -Firmat divides his time between New York City and Chapel Hill, North Carolina where he resides with his wife Mary Anne. He is the father of two grown children, David and Miriam.

-more-

About the First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

The First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (FCHCC) was created to encourage and promote sound, ethical and successful business practices in the Hispanic community and to further Hispanic heritage and culture through educational endeavors. The mission of the FCHCC is to assist all Hispanics in achieving success.

About the Mayor's Hispanic American Advisory Board

The Mayor's Hispanic American Advisory Board consists of members appointed by the Mayor to effectively recognize the concerns and desires of the Hispanic community in Jacksonville. The purpose of the Board is to provide a means by which the city may obtain information, guidance and ongoing comprehensive studies relating to its citizens of Hispanic descent. The board has faithfully served the Mayor, the City and her citizens since July 1998.

###