



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **CONTACT:**

Shelby Taylor, Communications Director  
Bob Graham Center for Public Service  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
University of Florida  
(p) 352-273-1086  
(f) 352-846-1576  
[www.bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu](http://www.bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu)

April 11, 2016

### **UF's Bob Graham Center to honor Orlando businessman Harris Rosen, Gov. Rick Scott appointee Chester Spellman; Special guest Carl Hiaasen to speak**

Orlando entrepreneur and humanitarian Harris Rosen has been named the 2016 Citizen of the Year by the University of Florida's Bob Graham Center. Jacksonville native and Gov. Rick Scott appointee Chester Spellman receives the nod for the center's 2016 Young Floridian award. In its fourth year, the citizenship awards recognize individuals who have made substantial contributions to the state of Florida both professionally and civically.

"Our goal with these awards is to emphasize that true success is not only measured by one's educational and professional achievement, but also by the ways we contribute to the well-being of our society," said David Colburn, Ph.D., Bob Graham Center director and provost and senior vice president emeritus of the University of Florida.

The awards will be presented at the Bob Graham Center Annual Gathering on May 19 at the InterContinental Tampa in Tampa, FL. Special guest Carl Hiaasen, journalist, columnist and novelist, will join the center at the gathering as a special addition in honor of the Graham Center's 10 Year Anniversary celebration and Bob Graham's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Longtime Tampa Bay news anchor Brendan McLaughlin will serve as the master of ceremonies for the event.

### **Harris Rosen, Citizen of the Year**

Harris Rosen is founder and president of the Rosen Hotels & Resorts in Orlando, Florida. Over the course of the last thirty years, Rosen's company has grown from 256 rooms to more than 6,300 in the Orlando area. Throughout his career, Rosen has believed that his mission is not just to conduct business in the community, but also to invest in it. He has spent millions envisioning and implementing new ways to help the less fortunate in Central Florida. Toward that end, in 1993, he launched the Tangelo Park Pilot Program with the mission of providing hope for at-risk children and their parents in the low-income community. Since its inception, the Tangelo Park program has provided more than 200 college scholarships, and high school dropout rates have gone from 25 percent in 1993 to just 6 percent in 2004.

Rosen has also donated more than \$22 million to the University of Central Florida for the creation of a world-class school of hospitality management, and he has become involved in such diverse projects as "Water for Haiti," raising funds to purchase specialized water filtration devices in order to provide fresh drinking water to one million people in Haiti and "The Bronze Statue Program" at Bethune-Cookman College. Most recently, Rosen pledged \$3.5 million to build a Southwest Orlando Jewish Community Campus in Dr. Phillips. The campus will bear the name of Mr. Rosen's parents — Jack and Lee Rosen.

### **Chester Spellman, Young Floridian**

Chester Spellman is the chief executive officer of Volunteer Florida, appointed in April 2012 by Gov. Rick Scott. At Volunteer Florida, Spellman oversees \$31 million in funds supporting AmeriCorps and volunteer programs to meet critical needs in Florida's communities. Spellman also leads the statewide coordination of volunteers and donations in a disaster for the Florida Division of Emergency Management. Additionally, Spellman serves as the executive director of the Volunteer Florida Foundation, the nonprofit charity that supports Volunteer Florida initiatives. Spellman also serves in a number of community leadership roles, including on the statewide leadership team for the James Madison Institute Leaders Fellowship and as the founder and dean of the Awesome Foundation in Tallahassee. He is the chair-elect of Connect Florida, a program of Leadership Florida. He is on the board of directors of the Florida Gubernatorial Fellows Program and on the national board of America's Service Commissions. Spellman is a member of the American Enterprise Institute Leadership Network and serves as a mentor in Tallahassee with Take Stock in Children.

###