

## MIAMI CHAPTER HISTORY (1986 – 2018)

In December 1985, Charles George, then Director of Human Resources Administration for the Metro-Dade Transportation Administration, attended the annual meeting of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) in Los Angeles, California. He was so strongly impressed that upon his return, he initiated steps to organize a local chapter. In December 1985, Harold Williams, COMTO Vice President, visited Miami and met with a group of individuals interested in establishing a local chapter. COMTO Greater Miami Chapter was established in January, 1986 by Charles George with thirteen (13) members. By February, the membership had increased to thirty one (31) members and officers were elected. The first elected officers were as follows: Charles George, President, Carmen Hamm Davis, Vice President, Karen Forshee, Secretary, Eugene Morrison, Treasurer, and Sylvester Johnson, Parliamentarian. By September 1986, the membership had grown to fifty one (51) active members who were dedicated toward improving the advancement of minorities in the transportation field.

In September, 1986, the first Scholarship Banquet was held honoring Dr. Barbara Carey, Commissioner of Metro Dade County. The name was later changed to the South Florida Chapter and in 1995, it was changed from the South Florida Chapter to the Miami Chapter. The Chapter holds bi-annual elections and has had eleven (11) presidents: Charles George, Walter Johnson, Eugene Morrison, Frank T. Martin, Marvin Hinton, Roosevelt Bradley, Melissa Rolle-Scott, Fitz McLymont, Seraphin Bernard, Kenneth Jones and the current President, Aaron Weeks.

In 1988, the Chapter hosted the COMTO National Mid-Year Conference. In November 1995, the Chapter was selected to host the Region III Community Outreach (COME OUT) Public Outreach Project funded by the Federal Transit Administration. The meeting was designed to engage participants in a discussion regarding how COMTO can encourage the transportation disadvantaged to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

Since November 1995, COMTO Miami Chapter achieved a meritorious accomplishment, expanding from 12 to 100 members. In 1996 and 1998, the Miami Chapter received the "Chapter of the Year" award for its dedication and commitment to the purpose and goals of COMTO. In October 1997, the Chapter hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship Banquet which served to honor outstanding community leaders and to provide funds for college students in the transportation field. In \_\_\_\_, the chapter established a scholarship trust fund.

In 1999, the Chapter hosted the Southeastern Regional Transportation Braintrust and celebrated its 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary honoring all past presidents. In 2001, the Chapter hosted what was then the largest COMTO National Training Meeting & Conference ever with over 900 participants. The chapter also hosted the 2007 COMTO National Training Meeting, which was also very successful with record attendance. In both 2001 and 2008, the Chapter was again recognized as the "Chapter of the Year".

The atmosphere of a hot meal at local minority owned restaurants, Brown Bag Lunch Leadership Talks, Networking Mixers, Basketball and Bowling Tournaments has been some of the methods used to provide and promote networking opportunities for the members. Guest speakers have included federal Administrators, US and Florida State Representatives, County Commissioners and other distinguished guests. The Miami Chapter has supported and participated in various community events, assisting in the dissemination of transportation information.

The Chapter has hosted a series of workshops and seminars to provide training for the upward mobility of minorities in transportation. These workshops focused on topics such as Interviewing Skills, Resume Development, Career Enhancement, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Grant Writing, and "Air, Land & Sea: Partners in Transportation Intermodal Forum. The chapter has worked with MDCP Schools to assist parents in preparing students for the FCAT, provided book bags and scholarships to local students, sponsored community programs and outreach, and supported COMTO National scholarships.