

April 6, 2018

Dear Friends of Prologue,

On behalf of our Board, I am very happy to announce that, before we bring this spectacular 25th season of The Prologue Society to a close, one more special event has been added to the lineup!

On Friday, May 11, we will be hosting a cocktail event at Riviera Country Club from 6:30-8:30pm, where our featured guest speakers will be local author **Les Standiford, in conversation with** South Florida mover-and-shaker **Stuart Blumberg**, about Les' brand new book about *The Adrienne Arsht Center, Center of Dreams: Building a World-Class Performing Arts Complex in Miami*.

We hope that you will immediately register for this event, as it is sure to be well-attended, and we have every intention of opening registration to friends of Brickell Avenue Literary Society and the Arsht Center.

**It's best to call me if you plan to mail in or bring your event fee, so that you're sure to have a seat at the event! (Please leave me a voice mail message, if I miss your call.)**

Best,

Debbie Hirshson  
Program Coordinator  
786-529-0990

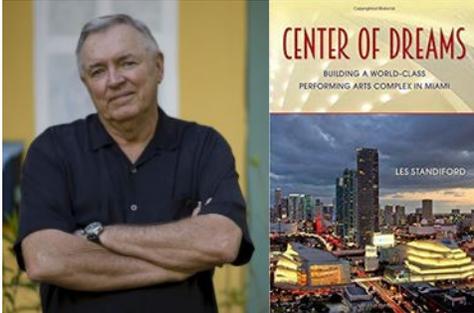
Enclosures

# An evening with Les Standiford (Center of Dreams)

in conversation with Stuart Blumberg

Riviera Country Club | 1155 Blue Road, Coral Gables

Friday, May 11, 2018 from 6:30-8:30pm



## *Center of Dreams: Building a World-Class Performing Arts Complex in Miami*

Discover how one spectacular building project revolutionized Miami, how one man's moxie helped turn a fractious tropical city into a cultural capital of the Americas. In *Center of Dreams*, *New York Times* bestselling author Les Standiford tells the inspiring story of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

The vision for this building, which would become the most ambitious cultural arts complex since the Kennedy Center, began in an unlikely place and time. Miami in the 1970s was divided by social and ethnic tensions. The city comprised a growing population of immigrants from the Cuban revolution, a well-established African American community, Florida “crackers,” and a continual influx of tourists and retirees. Critics said a cultural center would never be possible in a place of such extreme diversity.

But Parker Thomson, a lawyer and Boston transplant, knew his adopted city could become a world-leading community in the twenty-first century. He believed a performing arts center was critical to this vision. Everyone said his dream was impossible, he would never succeed, it couldn't be done. Not in Miami. But Thomson persevered against political opposition, economic roadblocks, and engineering problems. It took thirty years to overcome the odds and the obstacles, but he finally made the dream a reality. With Thomson's efforts, along with help from cultural leaders, iconic design work by architect Cesar Pelli, and support from philanthropist Adrienne Arsht, the center opened its doors in 2006 with a star-studded gala.

Today the Arsht Center is a cutting-edge venue of style and art, a landmark beloved by the city's residents, and a magnet for tourists from all over the world. Presenting performances that celebrate the richness of Miami's diverse population, it showcases emerging local artists and attracts international stars. Resident companies include the New World Symphony, the Florida Grand Opera, and the Miami City Ballet. Its improbable story is a testament to the influence of cultural advocacy, the importance of government support for the arts, and the power of the arts to repair and sustain communities.

**Les Standiford** is the author of twenty-one books, including the critically acclaimed works of non-fiction, *Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad that Crossed an Ocean*—a History Channel Top Ten Pick & the One Read choice of more than a dozen public library systems; *Meet You in Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick and the Bitter Partnership that Transformed America*, and *Washington Burning: How a Frenchman's Vision for Our Nation's Capital Survived Congress, the Founding Fathers, and the Invading British Army*—both publisher's nominees for the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Awards; *The Man Who Invented Christmas: How Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" Rescued His Career and Revived our Holiday Spirits* (a *New York Times* Editors Choice); *Bringing Adam Home: The Abduction that Changed America* (a *New York*

*Times* best-seller); and most recently, *Water to the Angels: William Mulholland, His Monumental Aqueduct, and the Rise of Los Angeles*, a featured alternate of the History Book Club.

He is also the author of ten novels, including the acclaimed John Deal mystery series as well as the stand-alone thrillers *Black Mountain* and *Spill* (adapted as a feature film).

He has received the Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award, the Frank O'Connor Award for Short Fiction, and Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is Founding Director of the Creative Writing Program at Florida International University in Miami and was appointed holder of the Peter Meinke Chair in Creative Writing at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg for the Spring of 2016.

Les and his wife Kimberly, a psychotherapist and artist, are the parents of three children, Jeremy, Hannah, and Alexander. They live in Pinecrest, Florida, in a home built of native Florida pine and maintained by the spirit of John Deal.

Publisher: University Press of Florida

*Photo credit: Garry Kravit*



**Stuart Blumberg** has spent decades in service to the Miami and Miami Beach communities—he served for 20 years as founder and president/CEO of the Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association; he was Director Emeritus of the Adrienne Arsht Performing Arts Center, and he was a member of its board for 17 years from 1991-2008; and he held the following notable positions throughout South Florida: Vice Chairman, Tourist Development Council, Miami-Dade County; Chairman, Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce; Chairman, Miami Beach Convention Center Advisory Board; Co-Founder, Academy of Hospitality and Tourism; and Adjunct Professor, Chaplin School of Hospitality at FIU.

*Photo courtesy of Stuart Blumberg*

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: Sunday, May 6, 2018**