

## **NEWS**

### **For Immediate Release**



### **College Park's Leading Ladies Play Key Role in Establishing the City**

*Cookie Smoak and Mercedes Miller bring passion and experience to the community*

College Park, Ga. (October 14, 2014) – As a result of major corporate projects and outstanding marketing efforts that yield impressive and persistent economic growth, the city of College Park continues to rapidly establish itself as one of the South's premiere destinations for meetings, conventions and tourism. While nearby Atlanta has a reputation for accommodating a slew of offices belonging to powerhouse females in charge of booming organizations and businesses, Meet College Park, Georgia (Meet CPGA) president Cookie Smoak and executive director of the Georgia International Convention Center Mercedes Miller are proving to make a name for themselves as two of the city of College Park's leading ladies.

Both natives to the area, Smoak and Miller possess a longtime love for the city and a passion for the community that naturally blossomed into successful careers. Smoak brings 36 years of sales and marketing experience to her role as president of Meet College Park. Before leading the destination marketing organization, Smoak served as the director of convention services for the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB). During her tenure there, Smoak was responsible for all convention services personnel and was the liaison between sales, membership, meeting planners and the public sector. Her work with the ACVB ensured group satisfaction, account retention and promoted financial return to the City of Atlanta. Previously, Smoak held superior positions for the Orlando Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as Delta Airlines.

With over 24 years of experience, Mercedes Miller – like Smoak – is a true veteran of the hospitality industry. With remarkable experience in various positions within the industry, Miller now serves as the executive director for the second largest convention center in the state of Georgia: the Georgia International Convention Center.

In addition to decades of professional experience to bring to their respective roles, Smoak and Miller extend their passion for the city of College Park beyond the typical work day by being involved with the community. Both women sit on the Board of Directors for the Atlanta Airport Chamber of Commerce and are on the Marketing Committee for the Atlanta Aerotropolis Alliance. Miller also serves on the Board of Directors for the Motherless Daughters Foundation, a mentoring program whose mission is to support young ladies ages 9-15 so that they can become empowered to embrace every aspect of adolescent life and motivate them to succeed in spite of challenging circumstances. Additionally, she is a member of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM), the Professional Conference Management Association (PCMA), and Meeting Planners International (MPI). Miller has also been honored as one of Atlanta's most interesting personalities and a leader in her community with her repeated inclusion of *Who's Who in Black Atlanta*.

While these influential women have flourished in similar professional worlds, Smoak and Miller share a personal background that undoubtedly contributes to the independence, persistence and bravery visible in all of their endeavors. Both women were single mothers throughout the course of their professional progress, dedicated to balancing both career and home life. "We both have a motto of getting it done and keeping it moving," says Cookie Smoak regarding their shared energy and drive. "We don't let obstacles get in our way for success."

The destination marketing, hospitality and tourism markets are fiercely competitive, and despite challenges that strong, successful women face in the workforce, Smoak and Miller have been pioneers in enhancing the vision of making College Park the most accessible, customer-focused destination for conventions, meetings and visitors.

### **About Meet College Park, Georgia**

Meet College Park, Georgia (Meet CPGA), is the city of College Park's convention & visitors bureau. The mission of Meet CPGA is to generate economic development for the city of College Park by effectively marketing the community as a preferred tourism, convention and meeting destination. For more information, please visit [www.MeetCPGA.com](http://www.MeetCPGA.com).

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