



For Immediate Release

For additional information, contact:

Kevin Wiatrowski
Regional Media Relations
Office: (813) 218-3894/Cell: (813) 395-4043
Twitter: @kwiatrowskiVTB
kwiatrowski@VisitTampaBay.com

Visit Tampa Bay honors seven as Hometown Heroes
Their work to bring events to Tampa Bay added \$32 million to the local economy

TAMPA (Oct. 23, 2014) – Visit Tampa Bay honored seven Hillsborough County residents on Thursday for their work bringing major convention business to Tampa Bay in 2014.

All seven were honored with Visit Tampa Bay’s Hometown Hero award during the organization’s Annual Meeting at the A La Carte Event Pavilion.

The honorees included:

- Hillsborough County Commissioner Al Higginbotham and Dr. Kiran Patel for their work to bring the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend & Awards to Tampa Bay in April.
- Hillsborough County Commissioner Les Miller; former Tampa City Councilwoman Gwen Miller, Judge Eric Myers and Michael Dozier for helping to bring the 2014 Imperial Session of the Prince Hall Shriners to Tampa Bay in August.
- University of South Florida professor of electrical engineering Larry Dunleavy for helping to bring IEEE International Microwave Symposium to Tampa Bay in May.
- Dr. Paulette C. Walker, president of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority, for bringing her sisters to Tampa Bay for their Southern Regional Conference in June.

Together, the four events filled more than 41,000 room nights in Hillsborough County hotels and added more than \$32 million to the local economy. The largest of the four was IIFA, a traveling showcase for Indian Cinema that chose Tampa Bay for its first visit to the United States.

They contributed to a record year for tourism in Hillsborough County, which ended fiscal year 2014 with nearly \$375 million in local spending by visitors and a record \$23.7 million in county bed taxes.

“By bringing their groups to Tampa Bay, each of these individuals had a direct impact on the lives of thousands of their fellow Hillsborough County residents,” said Santiago Corrada, president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay. “Their work helped make 2014 a record year in tourism for Tampa Bay. We want more people to follow the example set by this year’s honorees and work with us to bring new conventions to town or keep existing ones here in the years to come. Anyone can be a Hometown Hero.”

ABOUT VISIT TAMPA BAY

Visit Tampa Bay leads the effort of economic development through tourism. The mission of Visit Tampa Bay is to create vibrant economic growth for the Tampa Bay area by selling and promoting the Tampa Bay destination. The independent not-for-profit organization represents more than 700 businesses throughout the area and works to ignite interest for Visiting Tampa Bay.

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