

# Coconut Grove Village Council 2013 Candidates

1. Emily Brittingham
2. Kate Callahan
3. Louise Caro (statement not provided)
4. Steven Dloogoff
5. Ruth Ewing
6. Raymond August Fort
7. Javier Gonzales
8. Gabriel Iglesias
9. Thaddeus Scott
10. Seth Sklarey
11. Tricia Sullivan
12. Linda Williams

Below are the bios that were provided by the candidates. Election Day is November 5<sup>th</sup>; early voting starts October 21<sup>st</sup>.



**Emily Brittingham** - I first came to Coconut Grove on a last adventure before moving back to Georgia. Earlier in the week I had put in my two weeks' notice to both my landlord and the construction company I was working with. After living on Miami Beach for the past year, I had decided the pace, people, neighborhoods and lifestyle just wasn't for me.

Before leaving, I went for one last goodbye with a friend in Coconut Grove – a part of town I was completely unfamiliar with. After biking through quaint neighborhoods, enjoying a one of kind collection of shops, landmarks and restaurants, I immediately knew I had made the wrong decision to leave Miami. Luckily I was able to rescind my job resignation, and the following week was living on Virginia Street. To this day, everything I love about Coconut Grove continues to inspire a passion in me like few places I've experienced before. I've seen changes here, both minor and major, some I wish had gone differently and others I knew were necessary for the betterment of our town.

While I've only lived here for three years, I think my time spent in other places, combined with a successful career in construction, gives me a unique perspective that can help this committee. Professionally, I'm able to understand the things that need to happen for our city to keep improving. Emotionally, I understand what sets Coconut Grove apart from so many other places and why I will always ensure that its charm stays intact.



**Kate Callahan** - I would like to assist my community to realize the following projects:

1. Develop a Restaurant that is the exact footprint as Scotty's is now - ON THE WATER - Or revitalize Scotty's
2. Get Rid of the Trolley Garage Project in West Grove Village
3. Discover and Clean up All the Old Smokey sites
4. Get a Waterfront project that does not have a 50 year lease and is basically free from Retail development. (Really who can pay those rents).
5. Revitalize retail endeavors in the Center Grove



**Steven Dloogoff** - I was born and lived most of my life in Omaha, NE. where my wife and I raised our own two daughters and a foster son, who had lead a troubled life as a youth. All three are now married and are leading good and productive lives. I was a member of Temple Israel in Omaha, and a member of the Board of Trustees. I also served as the Youth Group Advisor and Chairman of the Cemetery Committee. I'm currently a member of Temple Israel in Miami. I have worked in the retail industry, owning and managing a chain of clothing stores and was Director of Operations for a group of 80 retail party-good stores. I'm currently Vice President of Kool Pak, Inc. a supplier for the ad specialty industry. I have lived in Coconut Grove for 25 years, living in my current home for the past 15 years where I currently serve as the President of Stirrup Grove Home Owners Association. I feel my business and personal experience would enable me to be a useful and productive member of the Coconut Grove Village Council.



**Ruth Ewing** - D.V.M. graduated from the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine in 1994 and moved to the West Grove.

I have chosen to run for a seat on the Village Council because I want to be more engaged in the future of our community. Before deciding to run, I asked myself, "What can I do to make my community better? How can I make a positive change for my family, neighbors, and friends?" I decided I want to be an advocate for my neighborhood and not simply watch as others make decisions that continue to cause my neighborhood to change in ways that no longer reflect my Bahamian Heritage. When elected, I vow to make a difference.

I promise to vigorously sacrifice my time and energy to ensure that West Grove and the wider Coconut Grove has as bright a future as possible as it stands at this precipice of change. We cannot let pure economic forces shape our future, but we must also endeavor to embrace the proud immigrant legacy of our community. I understand and appreciate economics and their critical role in community health, yet I still believe deep in my heart that economics alone cannot be the only determinant that serves as a driving force to our success. We must also be mindful of the humanity that is needed for the spiritual and communal health of our community. We cannot ignore our past, to do so our future would be devoid of the very essence that makes us unique. Vote for me, I want to help guide the West Grove and Coconut Grove to a future that reflects not only our economic strength, but also our diverse cultural richness as we become a unique and vibrant force to be admired and cherished in southwest Florida.



**Raymond August Fort** - I am running to be a member of the Coconut Grove Village Council because I am devoted to the community I live in, work in, and have spent most of my life. I grew up in Coconut Grove and have lived here all my life, except for stints in Ithaca, NY, Rome, Italy, and New York City. I went to school at Plymouth Preschool and Ransom Everglades, and later studied architecture and city planning at Cornell and Columbia Universities. I am part of the new generation of Miamians: people who were born and raised here; we went away to college and graduated school, and have moved back to make this place great. After I moved back, I started living and working in Coconut Grove. On most days, I walk or ride my bike to work at Arquitectonica, which is a mile a half down Main Highway from where I live.

I suspect that we all agree that Coconut Grove has the potential to be a magnificent, walkable, tropical village. But we are not here yet. A lively village center is a mix of residences, businesses, parks, public spaces, schools, workplaces, and streets that can accommodate all the modes of traffic – pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, and public transit. Our neighborhood should be a tree-shaded place friendly to residents, kids, and visitors.

At the moment, Downtown Coconut Grove lacks key elements that could make it a truly walkable neighborhood serving Coconut Grove residents and all Miamians. As residents, we should not necessarily have to leave the Grove for daily errands and weekend recreation. While changes are needed in Coconut Grove, it is extremely important to preserve the character and charm of the neighborhood. I care about my hometown, and want to make a difference by becoming a member of the Coconut Grove Village Council



**Gabriel Iglesias** - Choosing to be an entrepreneur was not difficult. My parents and grandparents set an example. In the words of Fortune's Brett Nelson, "Entrepreneurs, in the purest sense, are those who identify a need—any need—and fill it." My areas of expertise are communication, online marketing, and emerging technologies. I am interested in joining the Coconut Grove Village Council so that I can help fill our community's needs in these areas that are of great importance to our success.

Equally important, especially in an era that can sometimes feel like it is full of conflict, the "Golden Rule" is at the core of my personal philosophy. I believe that we owe it to our community and each other to be able discuss ideas and perhaps disagree, while maintaining a high level of civility and professionalism. My goal is to encourage dialogue, build consensus, and help make progress inevitable. I want to be transparent, the time and effort I invest in Coconut Grove are undoubtedly driven by self-interest.

You see, I am engaged to Jane Muir, the love of my life, and a lifelong Grove resident. We love this village, its lifestyle, and unique environment. This is where we want to build our future, eventually raise our children, and spend the rest of our lives. By helping to bring peace, progress, and prosperity to Coconut Grove, I am investing in a stronger and safer future for my family, my neighbors, and the community I call home. I would encourage you to visit [www.Gabriel-Iglesias.com](http://www.Gabriel-Iglesias.com) for more information. Thank you for endorsing my candidacy.



**Linda D. William** - Miami, born and reared in Coconut Grove: attended local public schools to including; George Washington Carver Elementary, Francis S. Tucker Elementary, Carver Junior High. Graduated from Coral Gables Senior High (1971). Active member of broad range of community affairs and contribute volunteer efforts on various panels to include: Homeowners and Tenants Association (Secretary) Coconut Grove Negro Women's Club, Inc. (Secretary); Community Action Human Services Dept. (CAHSD), Coconut Grove Community Action Advisory Committee (Secretary). I have a passion for rendering service and my efforts reflect my concerns for this community whereby I advocate for open communication, inclusion of all entities to discuss and resolve issues that affect the economic and business growth of the community as well as individual interests. I am a former business owner (secretarial business) and continue to assist community members, churches, organizations, etc. with clerical and secretarial support providing help with various documents: letters, contracts, resumes, business plans, special programs, etc. Past professions include secretarial positions at Pancoast Architects, ManuLife Insurance Co., Figaro Travel, Everglades School for Girls (prior to merger with Ransom); and law firm of Harold Long Jr., Esq. I truly enjoy creative writing as well as generating formats that convey the intent of the people I service. I am happily married (30 years) and have one son. I am a member of The Bethel Church and secretary at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church where I recently received the "Citizen of the Year Award" for community service. It is my ambition to continue working with enthusiasm along with others to improve and enhance economic and business growth that will provide opportunity for uplift and/or increase the livelihood of those who have worked so diligently before me.



**Javier Gonzalez**

Hello,

If you know me, you know I'm never at a loss for words but as I started writing this intro I felt that I would let my clients speak on my behalf.

This past year as part of an advertising campaign, I asked them to describe me in one word, this is what they said:

Accessible, Knowledgeable, Committed, Resourceful, Dedicated, Creative, Genuine, Experienced, Grounded, Confident and Plenty of "Grovey" plus "Ivegotaguyforthat"

This is what I will bring to your Council, I ask for your vote.

In, and around the Grove since 1965...



**Seth Sklarey** - South Grove resident for 47 years was previously elected to the Coconut Grove Village Council. Seth is a retired Realtor, roofing and general contractor and served as the roofing and structural building inspector for the City of Miami in Coconut Grove. Graduate of Tulane University and attended the University Of Miami Law School. Former deputy clerk of the Circuit Court of Dade County and was clerk for Judge James Lawrence King. Seth is a homeowner in South Grove; his twin girls attended Coconut Grove Elementary. His daughter Karen was a City of Miami firefighter and retired as assistant fire chief. His son David is a firefighter lieutenant, and his son John was a nuclear physicist and IBEW electrician before his untimely demise. Seth has been active in Coconut Grove to preserve the tree canopy and has planted more than 1,000 trees in the Grove. Most recently Seth fought for better crime control in the Grove.

Seth is the elected Committeeman for Coconut Grove on the County Executive Committee where he has served for more than 30 years. He is the elected Secretary of the South Florida AFL-CIO and the political coordinator for the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. Seth is active with the Community Coalition and is currently campaigning AGAINST the Grove Harbor plan to build a shopping center and parking garage at Dinner Key. Seth is also insisting that the City of Miami clean up the pollution and toxic waste caused by the Old Smokey and the polluted soil at Blache and Merrie Christmas Parks. Seth Sklarey is opposed to the Trolley Garage being built in Coconut Grove and feels that this industrial use is incompatible with the residents and will add to the existing pollution.



**Thaddeus Scott** - It is my strong belief that community will not change without first changing the minds of the people by molding positive change. The years have taken its toll on my endurance and perseverance yet I prevail. My strength has been tested, I am more focused because of good thoughts and my ideals were molded by people who took an interest in my life. It is now my chance to give back. My beloved Coconut Grove is my heart.

Known as Geno, I am a 58-year old African American male, married to Sonia Robinson Scott. I am the father of two daughters, grandfather of five, and great grandfather of one. My family migrated 56 years ago from South Carolina to Coconut Grove, Florida; and, I am a product and graduate of the Miami Dade County Public Schools system.

I desire to serve on the Coconut Grove Village Council to represent all of our residents. I want everyone to take ownership and pride in being a Grovite. The foundation of Coconut Grove was built by "visionaries" who believed in hard work, respect for each other, and outreach as a social outlet to embrace all people; therefore, we must become more proactive to change. Ethics is paramount. People believe in me. They believe in the "content of my character." My credentials may not include advance degrees, but my credentials do include compassion for others, a desire to serve, a listening ear, a vision, endurance, and perseverance. As a property manager, I touch the lives of people every day of my life. If elected as a Coconut Grove Village Council Member, I will continue working to make a difference in our Community.



**Tricia Sullivan** - I want to be a member of the village council because I love our community. I want to make the Grove safe and my involvement in the neighborhood started at the block level, when I began coordinating a crime watch group to keep neighbors up to date about break-ins, attempts, and encourage general information sharing. I informed my neighbors of the importance of watching out for each other, calling when something looks suspicious and that communication is the key.

I am an animal lover and want to improve our parks, dog parks and playgrounds. I am involved in pet rescue, an advocate of the Pet's Trust, educating on the importance of reducing the pet population and I volunteer as a foster for Miami Dade Animal Services. I have unofficially become the spokesperson for the Kennedy Dog Park. When I'm told there is an issue I am quick to contact the appropriate department so they can fix the problem and I follow up if the issue is not addressed. The Grove is a unique neighborhood, and I believe that many of you are like myself, and consciously chose this community because you like what it offers, and have a vested interest in seeing it do the best that it can, without losing what makes it so uniquely "Grove-y".

I want to promote our stores and restaurants and make people aware of what the Grove has to offer and help revitalize it. I am naturally organized, passionate, determined, have experience with fixing problems from my years of work as a corporate facilities manager & will fight for what our community needs. Above all, I love the Grove. I would like a chance to serve our neighborhood, and hope I can convince you to help me do so.