

ACAI NEWS RELEASE

ACAI Associates, 2937 W. Cypress Creek Road, Suite 200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sandra Smerkers, LEED AP
954-484-4000, ext. 38
ssmerkers@acaiworld.com

Circle of Friends Member Spotlight

The interview below appeared in the first *Circle of Friends* E-Newsletter (November 2007). *Circle of Friends* provides pertinent information to supporters of the Alvin Sherman Library, Research and Information Technology Center, a joint-use facility between Nova Southeastern University and the Broward County Board of County Commissioners.

Friends Member Spotlight, Adolfo Cotilla, AIA



Where did you grow up?

I was born in Cuba and grew up Miami. My parents moved our family to the Republic of Panama in 1961 and then to South Florida in 1964. I spent most of my childhood and teenage years in Miami, where I experienced a city in transition. At the time, I was one of only three Hispanic-surnamed kids in my elementary school, where English was the only language. The Miami of my youth was a city becoming a melting pot that has become an international business community.

How long have you lived in South Florida?

Pretty much my whole life. I went "north," but only as far as Gainesville, to get my degrees from the University of Florida as an Architect and where I became a General Contractor. I gravitated back to this wonderful area as soon as I could. My roots are in South Florida, we raised our children here, and my business has embraced this amazing community.

What are your fondest childhood memories of a library?

Growing up in an environment of educators, I remember spending a lot of time in libraries – something which at first, honestly, was not a favorite pastime. Over time, I discovered that libraries weren't just a place where I was required to do my homework. I learned that libraries housed more than books. Libraries opened up for me a world of discovery beyond the written word – music, movies, exhibits, field trips and talks (and now DVDs, CDs, etc.).

What book or author has made a difference or impact on your life?

I am a big fan of Ernest Hemingway. He writes in English the way people speak and how they think in Spanish. His depiction of our Spanish background and ethnicity is amazing. My favorite Hemingway novel is *For Whom The Bell Tolls*.

What is your favorite book and why?

That's a tough question! There are too many to choose from! From an architecture standpoint, probably *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance* by Peter Murray or *Le Corbusier* by Maurice Besset. From an emotional, how-to-live standpoint, the *Bible*. I also devour business books such as Jim Collins' *Good To Great* and Jack Welch's *Winning*. And a part of my heart will always go back to the times that I read Doctor Seuss and Disney books to my girls when they were much younger ... and so was I!

Did You Know?

Learn more about Adolfo's recommended reading list by clicking on <http://www.booksite.com/texis/scripts/bookletter/showlist.html?>

(more)

What book do you believe everyone should read?

1491 by Charles Mann. It's a fascinating and addictive tour through the pre-Columbian Americas and exposes just how fragile mankind is.

How has reading influenced your life?

With all of its complexities and perplexities, life is far more interesting when you're learning new things, and one of the best ways to do that is be a voracious reader. And, of course, the more interesting your life is, the happier it is! Books and learning go hand in hand. Anyone who keeps learning and keeps reading remains young and vibrant. I really believe that. Learning makes a man fit company for himself and just maybe tolerable company for others!

What books are on your bookshelf?

Too many to name, but those that come to mind are *Tough Choices* (by Carly Fiorina), *Good to Great* (by Jim Collins), *Winning* (by Jack Welch), *The Age of Turbulence* (by Alan Greenspan), *Selling the Invisible* (by Harry Beckwith). And more architecture and design books than you could image!

What are you currently reading?

I'm currently reading *Santiago Calatrava – The Complete Works*, by Alexander Tzonis. It's a book about a Spanish Architect also trained as an Engineer – an amazing bridge designer, Calatrava is currently building the subway terminal at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan. I'm also reading a book on the life of Antoni Gaudí, another Spanish Architect and Artiste genius who understood the organic relationships among art, structures and Architecture. He was famous for his unique style and highly individualistic designs, and could be regarded as Calatrava's predecessor.

As a Circle of Friends member, what do you believe is one of the greatest challenges faced by libraries today?

Maintaining strong print-based collections while integrating new technologies and formats is a significant challenge for libraries. Of course, as with most everything else, it comes down to funding. Funding for all public-sector organizations is tight, and libraries are certainly no exception. Meanwhile, the costs of providing library service continue to increase, particularly in the areas of collections, technology, human resources, building construction, and infrastructure maintenance. Limited funding restricts a library's ability to respond in a timely manner to emerging needs and priorities from their communities and constituencies, and that is not a good thing. Libraries are one of the prime heartbeats of an energized, hands-on community, so we need to find the funding to allow our libraries to continue to provide the positive services and economic value that they do to our communities. We also need to recognize the make-up of the communities served and work hard to address the diversities at hand in each setting. Those issues are true whether we're talking about libraries in downtown urban areas, rural communities or university environments.

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ACAI is an award-winning, full-service architecture firm with offices in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties. Founded in 1985, ACAI's project-tested architects, engineers and construction professionals consistently deliver innovative, functional, sustainable and cost-effective design solutions. A minority-business enterprise, ACAI has built a longstanding reputation for excellence in the planning and design of universities, schools, local and state government buildings, healthcare facilities, industrial and commercial businesses, and private and public corporations. To learn more, contact Sandra Smerkers, LEED AP, ACAI's director of marketing, at 954-484-4000, ext. 38, or ssmerkers@acaiworld.com.

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