

Miami Herald

Robert McCabe: A Miami legacy builder

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Dr. Bob McCabe was indeed one of the principal builders of modern Miami, as former Herald publisher David Lawrence Jr. proclaimed after McCabe's death Christmas eve. The Herald rightly published a magnificent obituary on the front page on Dec. 25, and many of our outstanding civic leaders eulogized Bob's many accomplishments.

Dr. Eduardo Padron, the current outstanding Miami Dade College president, hit the nail on the head when he quoted McCabe as saying, "What this institution stands for is the belief of the value of every human being."

Bob McCabe's greatest contribution to the Miami he so loved, and to higher education in the United States, was the innovative and universal concept that every citizen should seek and receive, at a reasonable cost, excellent higher education, "especially in our community," remembered his also exceptional wife, Arva Parks.

The guarantee of a basic education (K-12), is assumed as a right by every American. What McCabe believed in and implemented in Miami Dade, was that in our modern, globalized, competitive world, we need to go beyond basic education. To accomplish this important goal, "remedial" education is needed. In other words, there should be an opening for university level education for everyone who could not afford the University of Miami and could not get into the available private and state universities in Florida.

McCabe's passion for remedial education has made a difference for hundreds of the thousands of Floridians who followed his vision that a college education be available to all.

Not only has MDC opened opportunities for hundreds of thousands, it became the largest and most successful community college — and now, four-year college in some fields — in the nation.

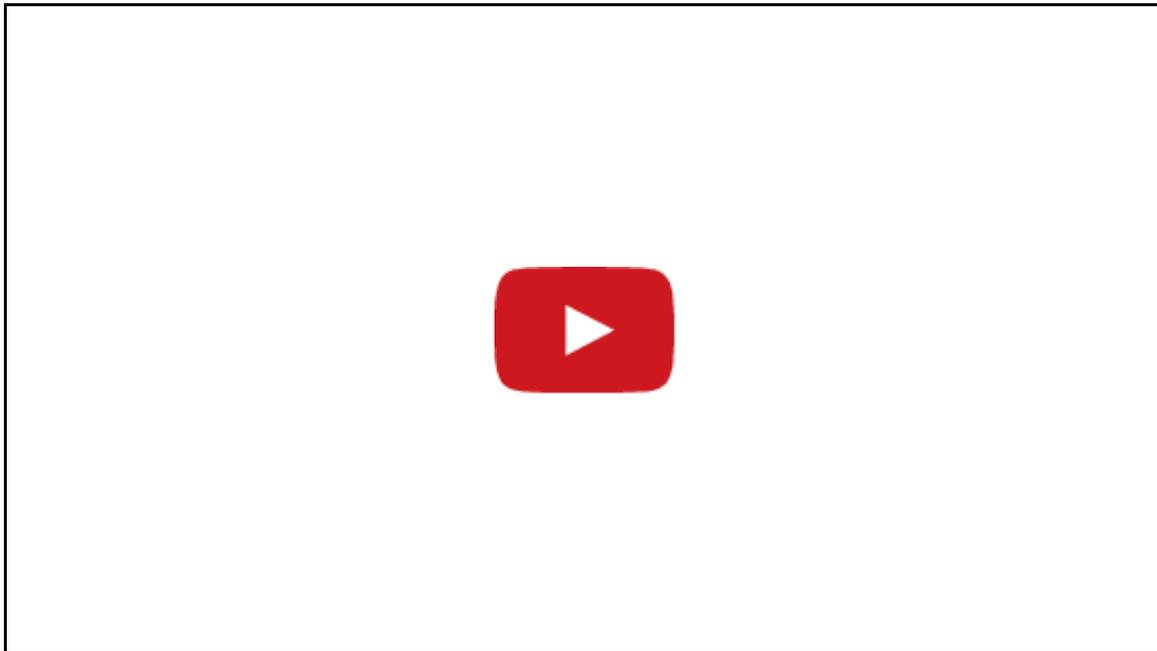
His contributions included opening successful campuses in the West Kendall area and Homestead, but also the spectacularly successful New World School of the Arts, the Wolfson Media History Center and many others. But, “school readiness” remains his most important legacy. Today 80 percent of the over 165,000 people attending one of the seven MDC campuses are minority and over 75 percent of the entering freshmen have to take remedial classes. What a contribution to Miami and to our country!

Thank you, Bob McCabe, for leaving us a Miami Dade College legacy.

MAURICE FERRE, MIAMI

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