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Swearing-In Ceremony Held for New and Current Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) Commissioners

MIAMI, FL (September 13, 2022) – At an oath of service ceremony administered by the Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Nushin Sayfie, newly appointed COE Commissioner Keith W. Rizzardi, and current COE Commissioner Nelson C. Bellido were sworn into their positions on the board.

Commissioner Rizzardi was appointed to fill the St. Thomas University appointment on the COE board replacing the former St. Thomas University Law School Dean, Tamara Lawson who left the Commission after accepting a position as Dean of the University of Washington School of Law in Seattle.

“Ethics and open government policies serve a critical role in maintaining public trust,” maintains Professor Rizzardi. “I look forward to working with both the citizens and their public officials, and I am honored to serve as part of the Ethics Commission.”

Keith W. Rizzardi joined the St. Thomas Law faculty in 2011 after years of government service as a trial attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice Environmental and Natural Resources Division and as a managing attorney for the South Florida Water Management District. An accomplished litigator, he has argued cases before the Florida Supreme Court and in Federal district and circuit courts from coast to coast. He also has served as Chairman of the U.S. Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee.

As an active member of the Florida Bar, and a Board-Certified Specialist in State & Federal Administrative Practice, Commissioner Rizzardi twice chaired The Florida Bar Government Lawyer Section and served on the bar’s ethics and professionalism committees. His scholarship in legal ethics and lawyer regulation qualified him as an expert witness in a malpractice matter. He volunteers as an ombudsman for the U.S. Department of Defense, helping military service members and their civilian companies to resolve employment related disputes.

Commissioner Rizzardi is a graduate of the University of Virginia (B.A. 1991), University of Florida (J.D. 1994) and Florida Atlantic University (M.P.A. 1998).

Commissioner Bellido was first appointed to the Ethics Commission by then Chief Judge of the Eleventh Circuit, Joel Brown, in July 2010. Commissioner Bellido is a managing partner in a Miami-based law firm, a former adjunct professor of Business Law at Florida Memorial College and worked with the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office from 1993 to 1997. He is a past Director of the Cuban American Bar Association, past president and director of the League of Prosecutors and has been serving on the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition Inc.’s board of directors since 2007.

“It is a true honor to continue to serve as the Chief Judge’s appointment to the Ethics Commission,” stated Commissioner Bellido. “There is no higher honor than to serve others and I am humbled to continue to serve the residents of Miami-Dade County on the Ethics Commission. I am thankful to serve alongside other well-qualified and professional commissioners and congratulate the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust’s leadership and staff for the service that they perform upholding the Ethics Code and ensuring the integrity of electoral process and the governmental decision-making process.”

Commissioner Bellido received his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law and earned an undergraduate degree in Political Science and History with emphasis on Latin American History from Duke University.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of training, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.