

Barry University

Ruby Night

**MEET THE 2026
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
HONOREES**



2026 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONOREES



DENISE BEAMER, ESQ. '09
Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law
Circuit Court Judge
Ninth Judicial Circuit Court
of Florida



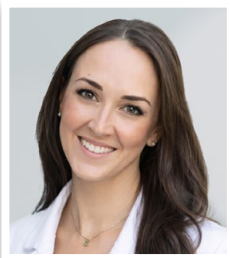
LAURA HODGES BETHGE, MS '98
College of Arts and Sciences
President
Celebrity Cruises



BARBARA FONTE, MS '06
School of Business / College of
Nursing and Health Sciences
Senior VP and
Chief Impact Officer
Jackson Health System



DR. JUAN GONZALEZ '09,
DNP '13, MSN '13
School of Nursing
Professor of Clinical
and Director of the
Adult-Gerontology Acute Care
Nurse Practitioner Program
University of Miami



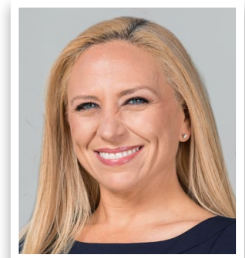
DR. STEPHANIE KANE, DPM '17
School of Podiatric Medicine
Owner & Foot and Ankle Surgeon
Signature Foot and Ankle



ROLANDO L. MEDINA, JR. '97
School of Business
Chairman and CEO
ALC Home Health and
Amerihealth Medical Group



FATHER RYAN SAUNDERS '13
College of Arts and Sciences
Pastor
Saint David Catholic Parish



DR. JENNIFER L. WILLIAMS,
MSW '98, PHD '16
School of Mental Health
and Social Work
Associate Professor
Barry University

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Denise Beamer, Esq. '09

Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law

Circuit Court Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida

The Honorable Denise Kim Beamer serves as a judge on Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, which encompasses Orange and Osceola Counties. Appointed by Governor Rick Scott in 2018, she has served in both criminal and civil divisions and was appointed Associate Administrative Circuit Judge for the Civil Division in Orange County.

Judge Beamer earned her Juris Doctor from Barry University's Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law in 2009, following a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Mass Communications from the University of Florida. She began her legal career as an Assistant State Attorney in the 11th Judicial Circuit before becoming a Senior Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Florida Attorney General's Office.

As a member of Barry University's Board of Trustees, Judge Beamer remains closely connected to her alma mater. She has generously supported the law school by donating to an existing scholarship fund, helping to expand opportunities for future legal professionals.

Her professional affiliations include the Orange County Bar Association, the Greater Orlando Asian American Bar Association, the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers, the Federalist Society, and the Tiger Bay Club of Central Florida. She is also a proud member of the Gator Guard, Class of 2003.

Judge Beamer's experience as a jurist, public servant, and committed alumna reflects her deep dedication to justice, education, and the future of the legal profession.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Laura Hodges Bethge, MS '98

College of Arts and Sciences

President, Celebrity Cruises

Laura Hodges Bethge is president of Celebrity Cruises, an award-winning premium cruise line known for its sophisticated design and elevated hospitality, and one of three best-in-class cruise brands owned by vacation industry leader Royal Caribbean Group (NYSE: RCL), which also includes Royal Caribbean and Silversea. Prior to that, she served as the Group's executive vice president of shared services operations, responsible for safety, security and environment, risk management, travel services, supply chain and crew movement teams.

In early 2025, Hodges revealed plans for Celebrity Cruises to enter the river cruise business with the launch of Celebrity River Cruises in 2027, marking an exciting and significant expansion of the brand's offerings.

Laura's long history with Royal Caribbean Group began in 2000 leading the fleet accessibility program followed by positions in hotel and marine operations, sales, marketing, and investor relations. She was also based in Shanghai where she oversaw commercial operations for this strategic market as Vice President of Market Development. Notably, she was also Senior Vice President of Product Development for Royal Caribbean, the largest global cruise line, where she led teams conceptualizing the line's groundbreaking ships, onboard experiences, and private destinations, including the first island in Royal Caribbean's Perfect Day Island Collection — Perfect Day at CocoCay.

In the South Florida community (her hometown), Hodges Bethge is on the board of Easterseals, a nonprofit dedicated to enriching the lives of people and families with disabilities. She also supports efforts aiding the Police Officer Assistance Trust (POAT), a nonprofit organization that assists officers and their families in times of need. She received the American Caribbean Maritime Foundation Anchor Award last year for her support of Caribbean maritime education and community development and was named one of the 2025 Most Influential Women in Travel by TravelPulse.

Hodges Bethge holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and an MBA in international business and finance from Florida International University, as well as a Master of Science in Higher Education Administration from Barry University.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Barbara Fonte, MS '06

School of Business / College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Senior Vice President and Chief Impact Officer, Jackson Health System

Barbara Fonte is a distinguished healthcare executive with over two decades of leadership driving strategic growth, financial sustainability, and community health integration. As the Senior Vice President and Chief Impact Officer for Jackson Health System, Miami-Dade County's premier public academic health system, Fonte spearheads initiatives that bridge high-level operational strategy with measurable community wellness.

A fierce advocate, convener, and thought leader, Fonte uses her platform to champion vulnerable populations and elevate regional well-being. Throughout her career, she has been a pivotal force in transitioning from volume-based to value-based care, leading critical advocacy efforts that address mental health and homelessness at the intersection of clinical care and the social drivers of health. Reflecting her commitment to local empowerment, she established an annual scholarship at her high school alma mater in honor of Shannon Melendi, who like Fonte, served as senior class president, to invest in future leaders.

Beyond her executive role, Fonte serves as Board Chair for the Health Foundation of South Florida, guiding regional investments to advance health equity. She holds an MBA from the Miami Herbert Business School, an MHA from Barry University, a bachelor's degree from Florida International University, and is a Carol Emmott Fellow. Above all, Fonte is driven by family; she is a proud wife, mother, and bonus mother to four accomplished children.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



**Dr. Juan Gonzalez '09, MSN '13,
DNP '13, PHD '24**

School of Nursing

**Professor of Clinical and Director of the Adult-Gerontology
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program, University of Miami**

Dr. Juan M. Gonzalez, DNP, PhD, APRN, AGACNP-BC, FNP-BC, ENP-C, CEN, CNE, FNAP, FAANP, FAAN, is Professor of Clinical and Director of the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program at the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies. With two decades of emergency and acute care experience, he continues to practice as an emergency nurse practitioner while educating future advanced practice nurses. He obtained his BSN, MSN, DNP, and PhD from Barry University and completed a post-graduate Family Nurse Practitioner certificate at the University of Miami.

Dr. Gonzalez is nationally recognized for his contributions to emergency nursing, graduate nursing education, point-of-care ultrasound, and social determinants of health research. He has authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and scholarly works and has presented nationally and internationally on emergency and acute care topics. His scholarship focuses on improving emergency department care delivery, advancing nurse practitioner education, and addressing barriers that impact vulnerable patient populations.

A Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the American Academy of Nursing, and the National Academies of Practice. Dr. Gonzalez has received multiple teaching and leadership awards throughout his career and remains deeply committed to mentorship, service, and preparing the next generation of nurse practitioner leaders.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Dr. Stephanie Kane, DPM '17

School of Podiatric Medicine

Owner & Foot and Ankle Surgeon, Signature Foot and Ankle

Dr. Stephanie Kane is a distinguished alumna, podiatrist, and entrepreneur who exemplifies clinical excellence, leadership, and compassionate care. A graduate of the University of Miami and Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine, she completed her surgical residency at Bethesda Hospital, in Boynton Beach FL, where she served as Chief Resident and developed advanced expertise in reconstructive surgery, limb salvage, and sports medicine.

In 2022, after serving in private practice, Dr. Kane founded Signature Foot & Ankle in Loxahatchee, Florida, where she built a thriving practice centered on treating every patient as an individual. As a dedicated mother of three, she has balanced the demands of entrepreneurship and family life while maintaining an unwavering commitment to personalized, high-quality care.

Dr. Kane is an active leader in her profession, currently serving as President of the Palm Beach County Podiatric Medical Association and contributing to state and national initiatives through the American Podiatric Medical Association and the American Heart Association. She is also deeply involved in mentoring residents and young physicians, helping to shape the next generation of healthcare leaders.

Her career is marked by academic achievement, research contributions, and community service, including outreach programs promoting foot health and care for underserved populations. Dr. Kane's journey reflects resilience, innovation, and a passion for making a meaningful impact.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Rolando L. Medina, Jr. '97

School of Business

Chairman and CEO of ALC Home Health and Amerihealth Medical Group

Rolando L. Medina, Jr., MBA is a distinguished entrepreneur, healthcare executive, investor, and community leader whose career has been defined by service, innovation, and excellence. For more than 25 years, he has built and guided successful ventures across healthcare, federal contracting, consulting, financial services, and real estate, creating opportunities for others while making a meaningful difference in the lives of those he serves.

As Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of ALC Home Health and Amerihealth Medical Group, healthcare organizations that have served patients with distinction for more than two decades, and as Managing Member of AIA Behavioral Health, recognized as the Best ABA Company for three consecutive years, Mr. Medina has built a reputation for leadership rooted in compassion, integrity, and trust. Under his direction, these organizations have expanded access to healthcare, advanced professional development, and enhanced the lives of countless individuals and families.

A proud Barry University alumnus, Mr. Medina earned dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Accounting and Criminology, graduating Cum Laude on a full athletic basketball scholarship. He later earned his MBA, Summa Cum Laude, from Nova Southeastern University.

Widely respected for his entrepreneurial vision and dedication to serving others, Mr. Medina's impact is reflected in the lives he has positively influenced, the careers he has helped shape, and the communities he continues to strengthen.

Barry University

2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree



Father Ryan Saunders '13

College of Arts and Sciences

Pastor, Saint David Catholic Parish

Reverend D. Ryan Saunders, M.Div., MSCM, is a Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Miami, ordained on June 27, 2020, by Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski at the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Miami. Born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on December 17, 1983, Father Saunders is a product of Catholic education in South Florida, attending Saint Anthony Catholic School and Cardinal Gibbons High School before earning a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a minor in Public Relations from Barry University.

Before entering seminary, Father Saunders served the Archdiocese of Miami in liturgical leadership roles, including Director of Liturgy and Special Events at the Cathedral of Saint Mary and Associate Director in the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life. He also spent several years in public service, serving as Deputy Campaign Manager for a Broward County Commission race, and Chief of Staff to Commissioner Chip LaMarca, now a State Representative.

In the Fall of 2013, he entered priestly formation for the Archdiocese of Miami, studying at Saint John Vianney College Seminary and Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, where he earned a Master of Divinity. Following ordination, he served as Parochial Vicar at the Church of the Epiphany and later as Priest Secretary to Archbishop Wenski.

Father Saunders currently serves as Pastor of Saint David Catholic Parish and School in Davie, Florida, having been appointed Parochial Administrator in 2024 and installed as Pastor in 2025. He also serves as Secretary of the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Miami and represents the Southwest Broward Deanery. In addition, he serves as Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of LaSalle Educational Center in Homestead, Florida, where he chairs the Academic and Mission Committee and helps advance the institution's Catholic mission of serving those in most need.

Committed to excellence in Church leadership, Father Saunders earned a Master of Science in Church Management from Villanova University. Father Saunders brings to his ministry a unique combination of ecclesial leadership, pastoral experience, public service, education, and organizational management. His diverse background, coupled with a deep commitment to the mission of the Church, enables him to serve as a compassionate pastor, effective administrator, trusted advisor, and dedicated steward of the Gospel.

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2026 Distinguished Alumni Honoree

Dr. Jennifer L. Williams, MSW '98, PhD '16

School of Mental Health and Social Work

Associate Professor, Barry University



Dr. Jennifer Williams is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and a trauma-focused psychotherapist whose work centers on neurobiology, trauma, and the mind-body connection. She is passionate about helping people rewire their nervous systems, release trauma, and heal at the root by blending science, story, and spirit. A two-time Barry alumna, she earned her MSW in 1998 and her PhD in 2016. While pursuing her MSW, she met her husband, a fellow Barry graduate.

Over more than 28 years in clinical practice and 23 years in academia, including 10 years as BSW Program Director, Dr. Williams has dedicated her career to weaving together rigorous scholarship, embodied healing, and compassionate service. Long before mind—body approaches were mainstream, she explored them for her own health; when her husband was later diagnosed with leukemia, these practices became a lifeline and a calling, deepening her commitment to validating integrative approaches through science and teaching.

She completed advanced training in mind—body medicine at Harvard and interpersonal neurobiology at UCLA, informing innovative MSW and DSW courses she created in neurobiology and trauma-informed interventions. She is the author of the textbook *Pathways to Safety: Integrating Neurobiology into Trauma-Informed Clinical Practice*, co-creator of the post-master's Mindfulness in Therapeutic Practice certificate and the Trauma Responsive Webinar Series, and the architect of a lifelong learning series and "A Literary Gathering for Intellectual Diversity," all designed to expand perspectives and foster meaningful dialogue.

Her grant-funded research on mindfulness-based interventions in a Title I school has been presented internationally, and her community work has been recognized through awards including Broward County Public Schools Volunteer of the Year and NASW Broward Social Work Educator of the Year. Through teaching, mentorship, and community-engaged scholarship, Dr. Williams strives to live Barry's core commitments to knowledge and truth, inclusive community, social justice, and collaborative service.