

George T. Neary, II '70
Alumni Award of Merit

In one of the many pictures of George Neary that live on the internet he is beaming his familiar smile and wearing a tee-shirt that proclaims: "I'm Famous in Miami." It's true! But first he was famous at Saint Anselm. For it was here on this campus over five decades ago that George began cultivating the gifts of a dynamic, imaginative, caring, consensus-building leader that he has placed in the service of others for his entire life: as a teacher in Joplin, Missouri, as a Peace Corps volunteer in the West Indies, as a Peace Corps administrator in shaping media campaigns, and as a promoter of international exchange programs through Operation Crossroads Africa and American Friends Service. For the past quarter century this 1970 history major has been an integral part of the historical preservation, tourism, and community-building successes of the city of Miami. His service as Executive Director of the Miami Beach Design Preservation League helped establish Miami Beach's reputation as the epicenter of Art Deco culture and as an art-centered community. As Associate Vice President of Cultural Tourism in Miami-Dade County since 1998, George has become known affectionately as Miami's Culture Czar and become nationally recognized as a leader in the field of historic preservation. He has served as a trustee, board member, and leader for innumerable cultural and historical organizations and as an advisor for The National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C. His efforts have been recognized with numerous accolades and awards. True to his Anselmian roots, George also continues to teach, sharing his extensive knowledge of arts, culture and historic preservation as an adjunct professor at Miami Dade College. For his entire life in public service George has been a strong defender of human rights. He serves on the Miami Beach Gay Pride Committee, is a consultant for the Miami-Beach Mayor's LGBT Business Enhancement Committee, holds membership in the Black Archives and is a founding board member of the Greater Miami Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Because George has lived a life in service of the past, the present, and the future, and because he has literally transformed the city in which he lives and to which millions of people come to visit each year, and because through it all he has remained a loyal supporter of his alma mater, the Saint Anselm Alumni Association is honored to add to George's fame by awarding him the 2018 Alumni of Merit Award.