

## MIA's Historic Milestone: 50+ Million Passengers



Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava (at podium) announces MIA's record-breaking year with, from left: Miami-Dade Fire Chief at MIA Omar Ricardo, Miami-Dade County Chief Operations Officer Jimmy Morales, County Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez (District 11), MDAD's Director and CEO Ralph Cutié, and County Commissioner Juan Carlos Bermudez (District 12).

Miami International Airport (MIA) kicked off the new year with a new passenger record and title: the busiest airport in Florida. In 2022, MIA served [more than 50.6 million passengers](#), shattering its record of 45.9 million set in 2019 by nearly 10 percent and surpassing Orlando International Airport's (MCO) 2022 total of [50.1million travelers](#) last year by half a million.

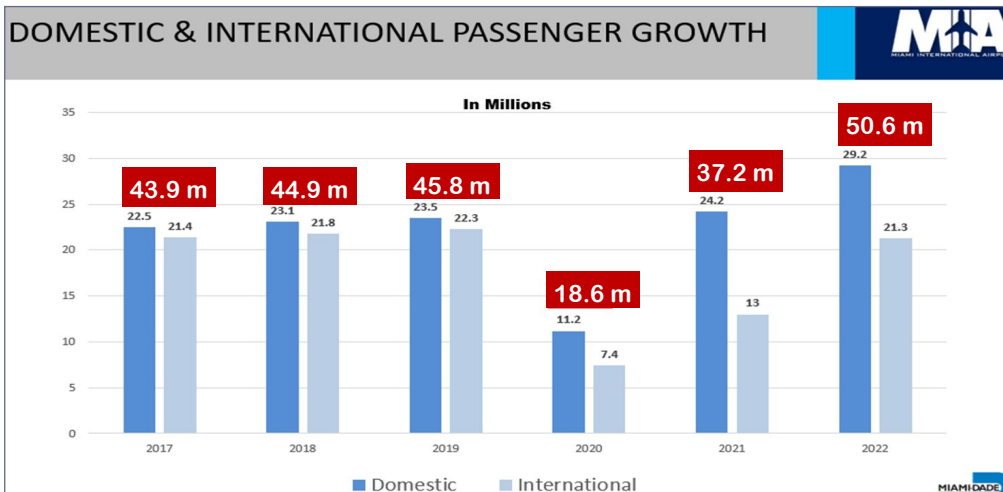
MIA welcomed a record 29.3 million domestic travelers last year compared to 23.5 million in 2019 while also serving 21.3 million international passengers in 2022, which was one million less than in 2019 but 8.3 million more than in 2021. Compared to the airport's total of 37.3 million passengers in 2021, when the aviation industry

was still recovering from the pandemic, MIA served 13.3 million more passengers in 2022 for a giant leap of 35 percent year over year.

In 2022, MIA also matched its record of 2.7 million tons of freight set in 2021, by handling 2.2 million tons of international freight and 500,000 tons of domestic shipments. MIA's record-breaking year follows its highest rankings ever among airports in the U.S. and worldwide in 2022, according to [Airports Council International's annual report](#):

- #1 U.S. airport for international passengers and international freight
- #4 U.S. airport for total freight
- #10 U.S. airport for total passengers
- #9 global airport for international freight and total flight operations
- #10 global airport for total freight
- #11 global airport for international passengers
- #12 global airport for total passengers

[Click here](#) to view the entire press release by MDAD's Communications Division.



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**FEBRUARY 2023**

Division Director's Message



**U. Desmond Alufohai**  
Director

Protocol & International Affairs Division  
Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD)

We celebrate Miami International Airport's historic passenger record of more than 50.6 million for FY 2022, shattering its previous record of nearly 46 million passengers in 2019. Find out why February, the shortest month in the modern [Gregorian calendar](#), consists of 28 days and 29 on a leap year, while all other months have 30 or more days.

During National Black History Month, we celebrate the legacy of Black Americans whose power to lead, to overcome, and to expand the meaning and practice of American democracy has helped our Nation become a more fair and just society. This country was established upon the profound but simple idea that all people are created equal and should be treated equally throughout their lives. We showcase the Honorable Lawson E. Thomas, Miami-Dade County's first black Judge.

Please join us to welcome the following people to our community: Mr. Rene Riedi, Honorary Consul General of Switzerland in Miami; Mr. Charles Chi-Yu Chou, DG of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Miami; Mr. Rodrick T. Miller, President & CEO, Miami-Dade Beacon Council and Ms. Nyamusi "Nya" Igambi, Regional Director of the U.S. Commercial Service's Southern Network.

We salute all the nations celebrating their independence or national day. As always, please be safe!

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# DIPLOMATIC & CONSULAR RELATIONS

## Meet the New Honorary Consul General of Switzerland in Miami



**Mr. Rene Riedi** is an **Executive Advisor for Central America & LatAm at Dufry** since September 2020. He is responsible for the strategic development of new markets and retail channels, partner- and landlord relations and external affairs. Prior to that, he served as the CEO of Division 4 at Dufry with full responsibility over Latin America and the Caribbean, including markets such as Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

From 2002 up to his relocation to the United States, he was the Chief Operating Officer, Eurasia & Asia for all retail activities in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, CIS, and Asia/Pacific. In that role, he established a regional head office in the U.A.E.; launched a divestment program with sale/spin-off of non-profitable and non-strategic businesses; refinanced operations; participated successfully in different public tenders; developed operations in Russia, Serbia, Cambodia, Singapore, Hong Kong, India; and People's Republic of China, and participated in the Group's "Going Public" project in 2005.

From September 1, 1993 and up to his transfer to the Middle East in 2002, Mr. Riedi was employed at the headquarters in Basel (Switzerland) where he worked in various management positions. Mr. Riedi was a Member of the Group Executive Committee between 2000 and 2020.

Prior to his employment with Dufry, Mr. Riedi worked between 1987 and 1993 in various marketing positions at Unilever (Switzerland) AG. He holds a degree in Business Administration from the School of Economics and Business Administration in Zurich.

### Extracurricular activities:

- Chairman of the Board of Directors of International Association of Airport Duty Free Stores (IAADFS), since 2019
- Member of the Board of Directors of Duty-Free World Council (DFWC), since 2019
- Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce, Florida Chapter, since 2020
- Member of the Standing Committee of Economic & Commercial of ACI-LAC (Airport Council International Latin America) ACI-LAC, since 2021

## Meet the New Director-General of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Miami



**Mr. Charles Chi-Yu Chou** is the new **Director-General of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO)** in Miami. Prior to his current position, he served as the Deputy Director General, Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

He also served in the following capacities:

- ◆ Chairperson of Congressional Liaison Office, Bureau of Consular Affairs, MOFA (2020-2021)
- ◆ Assistant Director-General, Department of West Asian and African Affairs, MOFA (2020)
- ◆ Director of Political Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Malaysia (2015-2020)
- ◆ Deputy Director of Political Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Malaysia (2013-2015)
- ◆ Section Chief, Department of West Asian and African Affairs, MOFA (2012-2013)
- ◆ Section Chief, Department of African Affairs, MOFA (2010-2012)
- ◆ Second Secretary, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York (2007-2010)
- ◆ Third Secretary, Congressional Liaison Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US (2004-2007)
- ◆ Desk Officer, Department of North American Affairs, MOFA (2001-2004)

### Education:

- Senior Executive Fellow Program, Harvard University (May 2012)
- Diplomat Training Program, Australia National University (July 2000 – June 2001)
- Doctoral Program, Graduate Institute of American Studies, Tamkang University (1997)
- MA, Graduate Institute of American Studies, Tamkang University (1995)

## BRIEFS & NOTES

### Meet the New President & CEO of the Miami-Dade Beacon Council



**Rodrick T. Miller** is the new **President & Chief Executive Officer, Miami-Dade Beacon Council**. Mr. Miller has emerged as one of the nation's foremost economic development leaders respected globally for his ability to maneuver in complex political and business environments, and craft strategies and structure deals to provide long-term value to communities and investors. His skills as a salesman, negotiator, policy expert, and corporate strategist have been refined in over 10 countries. Over the course of his career, he has brought more than \$6B in private investment and 50,000 new jobs to communities where he has worked.

He is focused on attracting and retaining companies that create high-value jobs and actively invest in the community. He champions Miami's unique advantages as a diverse, global business destination, collaborating with key stakeholders in both the private and public sectors to leverage the strengths of the market's target industries, deliver workforce solutions, and create opportunities that drive long-term economic prosperity and inclusive growth for both residents and businesses.

Experienced in leading economic recovery efforts in challenged markets across the country, Mr. Miller has launched or turned public-private development agencies around in New Orleans, Detroit and, most recently, Puerto Rico, where he served as Chief Executive Officer of Invest Puerto Rico. He led these efforts during and after some of the most challenging times these communities faced – bankruptcy, natural disasters, and entrenched economic decline. Prior to those positions, Mr. Miller served as the Executive Vice President of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Vice President of International Economic Development for the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) and held several other positions in the public and private sectors. He began his career in the private sector in management consulting and infrastructure finance.

Mr. Miller is also the Founder and CEO of Ascendant Global, a boutique economic development firm focused on providing bold growth solutions to help economies sustain themselves, gaining jobs and private investment. Ascendant Global has led diverse economic initiatives for a range of clients including Living Cities, the Kellogg Foundation, The Fund for our Economic Future, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Mr. Miller holds a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a Bachelor of Science in International Business from St. Augustine's College. He also gained a Graduate Diploma in Finance from the Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM) in Mexico as a Fulbright Fellow. A scholar practitioner, he has been a featured speaker to organizations such as Google, AIG, and the World Bank, and has lectured at Harvard University, Arizona State University, The University of Michigan, and the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is fluent in Spanish and proficient in Portuguese.

Mr. Miller is currently a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University's Taubman Center for State and Local Government where he is building a community of practice to rethink how economic development should be more inclusive and sustainable, training the next generation of economic development leaders, and researching diverse economic development topics including inclusive economic growth, incentives, and the Build Back Better program. He is a board member of the New Growth Innovation Network, the Harvard Kennedy School Alumni Board, New Corp (CDFI), and St. Augustine's University. He is a former board member of the International Economic Development Council and completed a term membership with the Council on Foreign Relations. He has advised various federal agencies on economic policy - the Federal Reserve Board, Economic Development Administration, and the White House.

Mr. Miller has received numerous accolades including Young Economic Developer of the Year (2013), Michigan Man of Excellence (2016), the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Harvard Kennedy School Black Student Union (2018), and various others. He enjoys playing the piano, reading, and spending time with his family.

### Meet the New Regional Director of the United States Commercial Service - Southern Network



**Nyamusi K. Igambi** is the **Regional Director** of the **U.S. Commercial Service's Southern Network** where she leads a team of international trade professionals dedicated to assisting U.S. exporters in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Most recently, she was the director of the U.S. Commercial Service offices in Houston and Kansas City, MO. Within the U.S. Commercial Service, she has been a key contributor to several Commerce Department initiatives and programs including minority and women-owned business outreach, U.S. renewable energy exports, Doing Business in Africa, and Power Africa. She has organized business development trade missions to Belgium, Chile, Colombia, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, and Spain. In addition, she has completed temporary duty assignments in U.S. Commercial Service offices in Chile, Mexico, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Prior to joining the U.S. Commercial Service, Ms. "Nya" Igambi worked for the Texas Department of Economic Development in Mexico City and Austin promoting international trade, tourism, and economic development. She has been awarded two Rotary Foundation scholarships to Argentina and Australia. She has also been recognized as a Quarterly Star by the International Trade Administration. Ms. Igambi started her lifelong commitment to community and public service at an early age. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Incorporated and has held various positions as a member of the Houston Junior Chamber of Commerce (Houston Jaycees). She enjoys volunteering with various non-profits such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Way, and Giving Hope and Help. Ms. Igambi received a B.A. in journalism and M.A. in Romance Languages from Texas Tech University.



## BRIEFS & NOTES



President Joe Biden issued the following Proclamation on National Black History Month, 2023. “During National Black History Month, we celebrate the legacy of Black Americans whose power to lead, to overcome, and to expand the meaning and practice of American democracy has helped our Nation become a more fair and just society. This country was established upon the profound but simple idea that all people are created equal and should be treated equally throughout their lives.” [Click here](#) to read the entire Proclamation.

### Honoring Miami-Dade County’s First Black Judge



The Honorable Lawson E. Thomas  
Corporate Painting by L. A. Cline  
Master Pastel Artist

[The Honorable Judge Lawson E. Thomas](#), born January 28, 1898, was a tireless fighter for human rights. Judge Thomas (1898-1989) was the only African American graduate from the University of Michigan’s Law School in 1923. At the graduation dinner he sat alone because none of the other graduates would sit with him. The Dean of the school noticed Thomas was alone and sat down with him. Judge Thomas never forgot his “Grand Gesture”.

Judge Thomas was the son of an Ocala Florida schoolteacher, and his father was a mechanic. Judge Thomas graduated from Florida A&M University in 1919 and received his law degree in 1923. He practiced law in Detroit and Jacksonville before moving to Miami in 1935. He was the first black judge in the South since [Reconstruction](#) and one of the early leaders of the civil rights movement and represented plaintiffs in lawsuits requiring the registration of African American voters in Duval County. He fought for the uniformity of the school year length in Broward County, the equalization of teacher’ salaries and the inclusion of African Americans in jury panels throughout the state.

He was a frequent collaborator with [Thurgood Marshall](#) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) during the long fight to roll back segregation and banish [Jim Crow](#). Judge Lawson took the bench after being appointed by the city of Miami commission in May 1950. He was nominated by Robert. L Floyd, a City of Miami commissioner, to be a municipal judge at the Negro Municipal court. He retired from the bench in 1961 and returned to private practice. Judge Thomas died on September 14, 1989, at the age of ninety-one (91). In 2000, he was posthumously honored with the naming of [Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center](#) in Downtown Miami.

### Why February has the Fewest Number of Days in the Modern Calendar



February, the shortest month in the modern [Gregorian calendar](#), consists of 28 days and 29 on a leap year. Each month in the modern calendar consists of at least 28 days. That number would be a nicely rounded to 30 were it not for [February](#). While every month besides the second in the calendar contains at least 30 days, February falls short with 28 (and 29 on a leap year). So why is the most widely used calendar in the world so inconsistent in the lengths of its months? And why is February stuck with the fewest number of days? Perhaps, it may be due to [Roman superstition](#).

February’s 28 days date back to the second king of Rome, [Numa Pompilius](#). Before he became king, Rome’s [lunar calendar](#) was just 10 months long. It began in March and ended in December. At the time, Romulus, the first king of Rome, and his people found the time between December and March to be unimportant because it had nothing to do with the Harvest. When Numa Pompilius took reign, he decided to make the calendar

more accurate by lining it up with the year’s 12 lunar cycles.

The new 355-day year needed two additional months to make up for the lost time. So, he added January and February to the end of the calendar. Because Romans believed even numbers to be unlucky, each month had an odd number of days, which alternated between 29 and 31. But, in order to reach 355 days, one month had to be an even number. February was chosen to be the unlucky month with 28 days. According to Slate, this choice may be since Romans honored the dead and performed rites of purification in February. In fact, the word *februare* means "to purify" in the dialect of the ancient Sabine tribe.

After a few years of using the Numa Pompilius’ new 355-day calendar, the seasons and months began to fall out of sync. To realign the two, the Romans added a 27-day leap month as needed. If Mercedonius was used, it began on February 24. Because the leap month was inconsistent, this too had its obvious flaws. In 45 B.C., Julius Caesar commissioned an expert to create a sun-based calendar like the one the Egyptians used. The [Julian Calendar](#) added a little more than 10 days to each year, making each month either 30 or 31 days long, except for February. To account for the entire 365.25 day-long year, one day was added to February every four years, now known as a “leap year.” During most years, this left February with just 28 days.

## INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (FEBRUARY)

**February 4, 1948 – Sri Lanka:** British Ceylon gained independence from Great Britain on February 4, 1948. When it became a republic on May 22, 1972, it was renamed the Republic of Sri Lanka.

**February 7, 1974 – Grenada:** After becoming a self-governing state in association with the United Kingdom in 1967, Grenada became an independent nation on February 7, 1974.

**February 11, 1929 – Holy See (Vatican City):** On this date, the Holy See signed three treaties with Italy that acknowledged its full sovereignty and established its territorial extent. Currently, its National Day is celebrated on March 13, the election day of Pope Francis.

**February 13, 1913 – Tibet:** After Tibetan troops had driven out the soldiers of the collapsing Manchu (Qing) Dynasty, the 13th Dalai Lama proclaimed independence from China on February 13, 1913. The Chinese never accepted this proclamation, and in 1949, it reoccupied the Himalayan region. Tibet is currently an autonomous area within the People's Republic of China but continues to fight for its independence.

**February 15, 1804 – Serbia:** Although Serbia gained independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro on 5 June 2006, its National Day, known as Statehood Day is celebrated on 15 February. It marks two historical events, the beginning of the First Serbian Uprising in 1804 and the adoption of the First Serbian Constitution in 1835.

**February 16, 1918 – Lithuania:** On February 16, 1918 Lithuania gained independence from Soviet Russia and Germany; a day known as Restoration of the State Day. Lithuanians celebrate a second national day: March 11, Restoration of Independence Day, marking the day in 1990 when Lithuania declared independence from the Soviet Union.

**February 17, 2008 – Kosovo:** On this date, the Kosovo Assembly unanimously voted to declare independence from Serbia.

**February 18, 1965 – Republic of The Gambia:** The Gambia, the smallest country within mainland Africa and a British Crown colony and protectorate, gained independence from Great Britain on February 18, 1965. It remained a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth until it became a republic on April 24, 1970.

**February 22, 1979 – St. Lucia:** After being contested between the French and British throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, St. Lucia became a British Crown colony in 1814. On February 22, 1979, it gained full independence, choosing to remain within the Commonwealth as a parliamentary democracy.

**February 23 – Japan:** Since Emperor Naruhito ascended to the Chrysanthemum Throne on May 1, 2019, Japan has celebrated February 23 as its National Day to honor the Emperor who was born on February 23, 1960.

**February 24, 1918 – Estonia:** Estonia celebrates two independence days: Independence Day on February 24; the day they declared independence from Soviet Russia in 1918, and Restoration of Independence Day, on 20 August; the day they declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

**February 25, 1963 – Kuwait:** Under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, Kuwait gained independence from Britain on June 19, 1961. Starting in 1963, National Day celebrations were moved to February 25 to avoid the prevailing summer heat. The date was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Sheikh's coronation in 1950.

**February 27, 1844 – Dominican Republic:** On this date, Dominicans seized the fortress of Puerta del Conde and drove the Haitian army out of Santo Domingo. Since this day marked a turning point in the nation's history, it is celebrated annually as its Independence Day.

### ABOUT US

The core mission of MDAD's Protocol and International Affairs Division is -

*To facilitate the movement of official guests, delegations, dignitaries and VIPs through MIA and support the airport's international programs and initiatives.*

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