

“A life that touched so many... echoes still. What a beautiful life we celebrate now. What an example of how to live and how to love.”

# EDITOR'S LETTER

## Here's to Life in Heavenly Florida!



**D**riving through the exclusive gated security past stunning high-rise condominiums on the island called Grove Isle, I finally arrived at 2am at my destination for our Winter Getaway photo shoot! Why so late? Don't ask! Let's just say that all of the passengers on my flight from Pittsburgh to Ft. Lauderdale were given a roundtrip ticket for our inconvenience. Even after my long, grueling trek of getting to Grove Isle Resort & Spa, I was in awe as I opened the door to my suite. As tired as I was, I couldn't move for several minutes. Hanging on the incredible four poster wrought iron bed were the most magnificent dresses by couture designer Rene Ruiz! On the coffee table in front of my flat screen television was a bouquet of white and pink roses and two beautiful cards addressed to me. My french doors led outside to a patio with a view that I could tell even at this late hour was spectacular! This was the beginning of what ended up to be a first-rate, elegantly run photo shoot led by a very dear old friend who is now on staff here at *Gladys*, Lynda Gordon.

I awoke four hours later to the sound of my blackberry's alarm clock playing Caribbean music and tried to fight off my exhaustion to meet everyone at their 8am, call time. Take a look at our editorial starting on page 24 with peaceful Biscayne Bay as our backdrop and gorgeous Grove Isle as our host location. Our Cover Models, Elio Soto, Miami's "it" boy and Courtney Upshaw, our model on the rise have their own inspiring stories for such a young age. Our "Florida" Issue brings our *Gladys* readers the sights, sounds, people and fashions of this incredible vacation state. We invite you to indulge in this panoramic beauty destination, be a part of it, relish in the relaxation, the sunsets, the vibrancy of the designer's passions, and mostly the inspiration behind each person we chose to showcase in this very special edition of *Gladys*!

At *Gladys* Magazine we hope to inspire, motivate and help you dream and create. The success of this issue is supported by the fact that we all have a love for creating something beautiful from the heart and in the process, we honor those no longer with us and bring old and new friends together to show our gratitude during this Valentine's season of love. And, so as we start a brand New Year... Here's to Life and every joy it brings. Here's to Life and Dreamers and their Dreams. May all your storms be weathered and all that's good get better. Here's to Life. Here's to Love. Here's to You.

Guess where I'll be using that roundtrip ticket? Grove Isle, I'll be back very soon!

*Andrea Patrick Forte*



a magazine dedicated to anyone who has been inspired to pursue their dreams by someone they love.

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*Dedicated to Mom & Dad*

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