

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Disney's Weiss, Universal's Williams to Join
Central Florida Hospitality Hall of Fame**

ORLANDO, Nov. 1, 2011 – Retired Walt Disney Parks and Resorts executive Al Weiss and Universal Parks & Resorts CEO Thomas L. Williams will be the Central Florida Hospitality Hall of Fame's 2011 inductees.

The Hall of Fame was established in 2007 by the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida to honor outstanding community leaders for their service and commitment to the Central Florida hospitality industry.

The honorees were selected after consultations with the faculty and staff of the Rosen College and industry executives. Their official inductions will be part of the 2012 Grand Tour Gala, an annual event organized by the Orlando Chapter of the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE) that supports the Rosen College and its programs.

At that event, Rosen College Dean Abraham Pizam will present the inductees with Steuben crystal pineapple awards, the symbol of the hospitality industry. Both honorees also will be pictured with plaques on the Hall of Fame at the Rosen campus.

Before retiring this year, Al Weiss served as president of worldwide operations for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. He was responsible for operations at the Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland Resort, Hong Kong Disneyland, Disneyland Resort Paris, Disney Cruise Line and Disney Vacation Club.

Weiss began his Disney career in 1972 as an hourly cast member. He has since directed the largest resort expansion in Walt Disney World history, overseen the successful opening of Disney's Animal Kingdom and launched Disney Cruise Line.

He has been designated as a distinguished alumnus by UCF, his alma mater, and he has served on the UCF Board of Trustees. He previously served as chairman of the UCF Foundation Board of Directors.

Weiss has been named the "Most Influential Businessman in Central Florida" by the *Orlando Business Journal*. He is an active community leader who has served on the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission, the EDC Governors Council, the Florida Council of 100 Board of Directors, the SunTrust Bank Central Florida Board of Directors, the Orange County Minority/Women Business Enterprise Alliance and the Give Kids the World Advisory Board.

--Continued--

--Continued from page 1--

Thomas L. Williams is the chairman and CEO of Universal Parks and Resorts, overseeing all Universal theme park entertainment destinations around the world. These include Universal Orlando Resort, Wet 'n Wild Orlando and Universal Studios Hollywood, as well as Universal Studios Japan and Universal Studios Singapore. They also include developing locations in South Korea and Dubai.

Williams has worked more than 40 years in the hospitality and leisure industry. His first key role with Universal was vice president of hotels and restaurants at Yosemite National Park, where he oversaw guest services and operations for 12 on-site hotels and 14 restaurants. He came to Orlando in 1987 to lead the development and opening of Universal Studios Florida. Since then, Williams has led the transformation of Universal Orlando into a world-class entertainment destination and pioneered the expansion of the Universal theme park experience across the globe.

Most recently, Williams led the development and creation of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort – gaining significant national and international attention for both Universal Orlando and Central Florida.

Williams has held leadership roles in several tourism and community organizations, and he is a founding trustee of World Class Schools (Florida) and United Arts of Central Florida. He currently serves on the advisory board for Give Kids the World.

Weiss and Williams will be the ninth and 10th Central Florida Hospitality Hall of Fame members. Prior inductees are Carolyn Fennell, Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, and Mark McHugh, Gatorland, (2010); Jim D. Atchison, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, and Harris Rosen, Rosen Hotels & Resorts (2009); Patricia J. Engfer, Hyatt Orlando, and Richard A. Nunis, Walt Disney Attractions (2008); and Richard J. Walsh, Darden Restaurants, and William C. Peeper, Orlando/Orange County Convention and Visitors Bureau (2007).

About UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management

Located in the heart of the tourism and hospitality industry, Orlando, the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management is dedicated to the values of professionalism, leadership and service. The mission of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management is to develop future generations of global hospitality and tourism leaders representing all industry segments in the hospitality capital of the world, through innovative academic programs, cutting edge research and strong industry and community partnerships. For more information, visit www.hospitality.ucf.edu.

###