

# THE BOARDROOM

13 YEARS OF EDUCATING THE PRIVATE CLUB INDUSTRY

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*Distinguished President of the Year*

Fernando Leal

BoardRoom Recognizes  
21 Private Club Presidents World Wide

Fernando Leal, president of Addison Reserve Country Club in Delray Beach, FL

# BoardRoom Recognizes 21 World Wide Private Club Presidents of the Year

## Additional Award to Fernando Leal As Distinguished President of the Year

By Dave White, Editor, BoardRoom magazine

Private Club Presidents of the Year sponsored by  
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**W**hat do you do with a private club mired down with committees involved in every detail of the daily operation; daylong board meetings, no strategic plan and very little board structure?

Find a board president who practices what he preaches, like Fernando Leal, president of Addison Reserve Country Club in Delray Beach, FL. And that's why Leal is *BoardRoom magazine's first Distinguished Club President of the Year*.

BoardRoom is recognizing 21 club presidents, captains and chairs around the world as *Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2008* for their outstanding work with their private clubs. These are board presidents, captains or chairs that have served the majority of 2008 as the leader of their club. Most have completed their term of office.

One of the 21, Fernando Leal is recognized with the additional award as the *Distinguished Club President of the Year*.

Nominations of the top 21 have been reviewed by BoardRoom's industry experts who have an understanding of the industry, the structure of the board of directors, and the role and responsibilities of a club's board of directors.

Stories on the other recipients will follow in the next three Boardroom issues.

In the first year, the Private Club President of the Year designation has attracted over 300 board president nominations from clubs and nominators in the U.S., Canada, the UK, Sweden and South Africa.

"That's astounding for our first year," says BoardRoom publisher, John Fornaro.

"It bodes well for the future. We think it's important to recognize people who devote their time to volunteer board activities.

"It's a real credit to these volunteers who work diligently to set policy for their general managers and who then let them get on with managing what the club's members want done.

"Our congratulations go out to Fernando Leal who has done such exceptional work at Addison Reserve," Fornaro enthused.

When Leal took over as Addison's Board president in 2007, all things political at this quite dysfunctional club were turned upside down. The result? The club's gone full circle.

"We've made a 360 degree turn," boasts Addison's CEO and general manager Michael McCarthy, Leal's nominator for the award.

"There are many reasons to consider Fernando Leal," McCarthy said in his nominating letter. "He not only meets all 10 of BoardRoom's criteria, the accomplishments that have been made and the changes Leal has brought about at Addison go far beyond Boardroom's criteria."

Addison Reserve's members took over the reins from the club's developer in May 2002. Like many clubs going through this kind of turnover, members want to get involved for the "right" reasons. In Addison's case, this led to a massive committee structure that almost doomed the club to failure.

There was no strategic plan in place, and little to balance the board, committee and management matrix, no matter how well intended the attentions of the board and members. The club was fraught with conflicts, high management turnover and, as might be expected, high member turnover.

Change began to happen when Leal took over as president in 2007, and McCarthy came on board as the club's CEO and general manager.

"This was a club with very little direction, and the earlier board's desire to satisfy the wishes of all members left the door wide open for unrestrained committee involvement.

"Our president realized the committee system was out of control and in one bold move made drastic changes," McCarthy added. Leal basically eliminated all commit-

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# *Distinguished President*



**Michael McCarthy** (left),  
CEO and general manager and  
**Fernando Leal**, president of Addison  
Reserve Country Club in Delray Beach, FL

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interactive club communications

tees and instituted a new system with fewer committees that now operate with clear guidelines, and which provide checks and balances and support for the board and management.

“All day board meetings that focused on operational issues are now under two hours long and solely devoted to strategic planning and policy. The composition and teamwork from the entire board is most impressive,” McCarthy explained.

Professional management now addresses operational issues, creating member confidence in management’s ability to deliver services without a political agenda.

“It’s a pivotal change that has altered the complexion of Addison,” McCarthy says of Leal’s influence.

Working with McCarthy, the Addison board under Leal’s guidance instituted a strategic plan in 2007 and “that’s our roadmap for the future.”

The club garners more feedback from members than ever before through weekly focus groups and is now on a sound financial footing. The club’s revenue has grown to \$20.5 million from \$15.7 in the two years.

“Under the guidance of our board, we’ve rebuilt our reserves to \$2 million in a two-year period and we’ve had an operating surplus both years while offering many more amenities and services for our members,” McCarthy commented.

The club has also just finished building a \$10 million Esplanade spa complex, and renovated 27 holes of golf course to pristine condition – “a stunning example of membership support,” exclaims McCarthy. In fact, a recent survey showed member satisfaction above 90 percent and Addison resale home listings dropped from nearly 10 percent down to under four percent... “and this is in the toughest of times. There’s no gated community in Palm Beach County that can make this claim,” McCarthy boasts.

Addison Reserve has also been an attraction for other clubs around the country.

“Not a week goes by that I don’t get a call from another club asking for advice on how we made the transition and how we’ve fulfilled our mission statement – ‘Addison Reserve – Excellence is our Standard.’

“We’ve done it because of our president Fernando Leal. I can assure you he’s an exceptional board president, the proof being the astonishing turnaround in leadership and management systems at Addison Reserve with him at the helm,” McCarthy explained.

“Never have I seen someone as focused on big picture thinking as Fernando Leal. He’s a great ambassador for future leaders of the club industry.”

And that’s the reason why *Fernando Leal is BoardRoom magazine’s 2008 Distinguished Club President of the Year.* **BR**

## 2008 Private Club Presidents of the Year

John Anhorn . . . . .	Rogue Valley CC . . . . .	US	
Kjell Axelsson . . . . .	Kalmar Golf Club . . . . .	Sweden	
Arch Arnold III . . . . .	Country Club of Columbus . . . . .	US	
Kevin Bublitz . . . . .	Western Racquet Club . . . . .	US	
Don Cahoon . . . . .	Long Cove Club . . . . .	US	
Frank Elliott . . . . .	Blackhawk Country Club . . . . .	US	
Warren W. H. Finlay . . . . .	Granite Club . . . . .	Canada	
Stanley Frank . . . . .	Polo Club of Boca Raton . . . . .	US	
Eugene Greene . . . . .	Blainroe Golf Club . . . . .	Ireland	
Don Jones . . . . .	Hillwood Country Club . . . . .	US	
Gordon Lawson . . . . .	Royal Dornoch Golf Club . . . . .	UK	
Fernando Leal . . . . .	Addison Reserve Country Club . . . . .	US	
Stan Michel . . . . .	Glendower Golf Club . . . . .	S. Africa	
Patrick Nolan . . . . .	St. Francis Yacht Club . . . . .	US	
John Odell . . . . .	Oakmont Country Club . . . . .	US	
Nina Owen . . . . .	Union League Club of Chicago . . . . .	US	
Michael Schachtrop . . . . .	Country Club of Peoria . . . . .	US	
Donald Schaevitz . . . . .	Broken Sound Club . . . . .	US	
Phil Schneider . . . . .	Paradise Valley Country Club . . . . .	US	
Richard Secrist . . . . .	Baltusrol Golf Club . . . . .	US	
David Whitehouse . . . . .	The Lansdowne Club . . . . .	UK	