

Charles P. García

Charles P. García, 46, founded Sterling Financial in 1997, whose competitive advantage was its focus on the Hispanic consumer. The firm began with three people operating out of the cleaned out broom closet of another firm and grew to more than 60 offices in seven countries, offering investment banking and financial advisory services. In May 2006, it was sold to Vfinance Investments Inc., where he now serves as President of the Sterling Hispanic Markets Capital Group.

In both 2000 and 2001, Sterling Financial was named as the #1 fastest growing privately held firm in Florida. In August of 2002, *Hispanic Business* magazine named Sterling Financial the number one fastest growing Hispanic company in the United States and it was named by *Inc.* magazine as the #8 fastest growing privately held company in the United States. He was a financial services finalist in Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year Award and in 2004 he received the "Outstanding Business Leader" award by Northwood University, the youngest person honored in the 24-year history of the award. Prior recipients include the Chairman and CEO's of this nation's largest companies. Mr. García was also selected by *Hispanic* magazine for the "Entrepreneur of the Year" award.

Mr. García has worked for three Presidential administrations, a Cabinet Secretary and a four star General. In February 2002, President George W. Bush appointed him to the Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, charged with developing a blueprint to close the educational achievement gap for Hispanic children. In June 2001, Florida Governor Jeb Bush appointed him as the only Hispanic to the seven member State Board of Education, a new government entity responsible for overseeing all education delivery systems in the state with an annual budget exceeding \$15 billion. In 2005, President Bush appointed him to the U.S. Air Force Academy Board of Visitors which oversees all operations at the military academy. In 2006, the 15-member board, which includes four U.S. Senators and four members of the U.S. House of Representatives, elected him the Chairman of the Board.

In November 2006, Winn Dixie Stores elected him to their Board of Directors, and he serves on the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee. Winn Dixie is a Fortune 500 company that is one of the nations largest food retailers operating 525 stores in Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia and Mississippi.

Hispanic Business magazine recognized Mr. García as one of the "100 most influential Hispanics in the United States" and *Hispanic Today* magazine featured him in a cover story titled "Committing to Hispanic America." Univision Network television selected him for their prestigious series "Orgullo Hispano" that spotlights Latinos who have made "an exceptional impact on the culture and life of American society." He is profiled in two recent books: *Think and Grow Rich: A Latino Choice* and *Hispanics in the USA: Making History* where he was chosen as one of the 14 Hispanic role models for the nation. In December 2006, he received the Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez Public Service and Integrity Award for his leadership promoting diversity and championing rights for all persons, especially Latinos.

In 1988, a commission appointed by President Ronald Reagan selected Mr. García to serve as one of fourteen White House Fellows. This leadership program has launched the careers of governors, Cabinet officials, Fortune 500 CEOs, members of Congress, generals, admirals, and national university presidents. He worked for former Goldman Sachs Chairman John C. Whitehead at the State Department, who was serving as the Deputy Secretary of State. He was later hired by former “Drug Czar” William J. Bennett to help draft the nation's first *National Drug Control Strategy* which was tied to a \$6 billion budget involving 23 federal agencies.

In the mid-1980s, Mr. García was assigned to war torn Central America where he served as a military trainer in the region. General John R. Galvin, the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command in the Republic of Panama, who later became NATO Supreme Allied Commander, chose him as one of his key advisors. He wrote a major study on Cuba's efforts to destabilize the region that was published as a cover story for *U.S. News and World Report* magazine. For his counterinsurgency training of Latin American militaries and his analysis on sensitive geopolitical matters, he was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the third-highest award bestowed upon members of the armed forces by the Department of Defense.

Mr. García is frequently sought by Telemundo, Univision, Fox, ABC, NBC and shows such as CNN's Crossfire to lend his unique insights into issues of national significance. During the twenty-three day launch of the war in Iraq, he was Telemundo's behind-the-desk military expert. After the 9/11 attacks his commentary on the threat from biological warfare was sought by the news media where he made frequent appearances discussing creative solutions to the challenges faced by the nation. In October 2003, Mr. Garcia authored his first leadership book, *A Message From Garcia*, published by John Wiley & Sons, and released simultaneously in English and Spanish. Within forty-eight hours of its release both Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble ranked it as their #1 selling business book. The second week it was ranked #6 on the *Wall Street Journal* Best Seller list, and then the *New York Times* favorably reviewed it.

Mr. García graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Air Force Academy, achieving the rank of Deputy Wing Commander -- the 4th highest-ranking officer leading over 4,400 cadets. A distinguished graduate of the skydiving program, and the elite Army Reconnaissance Commando School, he was chosen to represent the U.S. Air Force Academy at the 2nd Annual Leadership Conference at West Point. His peers elected him to serve as the Chairman of the Cadet Wing Honor Committee and he was awarded the “*Class of 1983 Honor and Ethics Trophy*.” In 1987, Mr. García received a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma and in 1994 a law degree from Columbia Law School, where he published an article in the *Columbia Law Review* that was cited extensively by the Florida Supreme Court in a landmark Fourth Amendment case.

Mr. García has attended Harvard Business School's executive education program “Corporate Governance: Leadership in the Boardroom” and he has also attended the board development education program at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. He is a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors.