

Kelly Smallridge

Kelly L. Smallridge is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County (BDB), the county's public-private economic development organization. With more than 30 years of service, she is the longest-tenured economic development president in the State of Florida and is widely recognized for her leadership in securing some of the region's most significant job creation and capital investment projects.

In 2013, Governor Rick Scott honored Ms. Smallridge with the Governor's Ambassador Medal for her contributions to job creation in Palm Beach County. In 2022, she was inducted into the University of Florida's prestigious Golden Gators.

Ms. Smallridge oversees all operations of the BDB, one of only six accredited economic development boards in Florida. In 2004, she became the first female president of a South Florida economic development organization after holding multiple leadership roles within the BDB, including directing the county's recruitment, retention, and business expansion efforts from 1988 to 2004. She currently serves on several key boards, including Select Florida, the Southeast Economic Development Council, the International Economic Development Council, the South Florida Fair, the Homeless Coalition, the Housing Leadership Council, and the Education Foundation of Palm Beach County.

A recognized thought leader, Ms. Smallridge has been featured in national media outlets such as Fox News, CNBC, and the *New York Post* for her leadership in promoting Palm Beach County's business climate and spearheading the "Wall Street South" initiative. Under her direction, the BDB has earned numerous state and national awards for excellence in business recruitment and expansion. She is credited with securing two of the world's foremost bioscience institutions—The Scripps Research Institute and the Max Planck Society—to establish a presence in Florida. Her results-driven approach has contributed to major job announcements from companies such as Carrier Corporation, Amazon, ADT, Pratt & Whitney, G4S, FedEx, Sikorsky, Aldi, and TBC Corporation.

Ms. Smallridge has also introduced several pioneering programs in Palm Beach County, including the county's first Expedited Permitting Ordinance—ultimately adopted by 15 municipalities—a countywide "Shovel-Ready" initiative to identify development-ready sites, and multiple education partnerships benefiting high school and college students.

Awards and Recognition

- Palm Beach Atlantic University Companion Medalist for American Free Enterprise
- Governor's Ambassador Medal
- *Florida Trend* "Florida 500" Most Influential Business Leaders (10 years)
- South Florida CEO "Top 40 Business Leaders" (15 years)
- Sun Sentinel "Small Business Leader of the Year"
- Education Foundation "Distinguished Alumni Award"

- *Palm Beacher* Magazine “Top 40 Influential Business Leader”
- South Florida Business Journal “Ultimate CEO”
- Palm Beach North Chamber “Woman of the Year”
- South Florida Business Journal “2021 Influential Business Woman Honoree”

Ms. Smallridge is a graduate of the University of Florida and resides in Wellington with her husband, Rex Kirby.