Introduction

MATTHEW T. CORRIGAN AND MICHAEL BINDER

November 8, 2016—Election Day—came with an expectation of a Hillary Clinton victory, a metaphorical shattering of the literal glass ceiling in the Jacob Javits Center in New York City where her election night watch party was taking place. Across town, in the midtown Manhattan Hilton, uncertainty ran through the halls and the rooms upstairs where Donald Trump's team had no idea if those expansive rallies and intense supporters would turn out enough votes to make him the most improbable president in American history. As that evening wore on and results began trickling in, like many elections before, Florida found itself at ground zero of one of the biggest political earthquakes in history. As the key counties for Clinton began coming in—Miami-Dade, Orlando, and Broward— Clinton was raking up enormous leads, far surpassing vote totals from Barack Obama in 2004 and 2008. Even in Duval County, a county that John McCain won, Clinton was running even with Trump. The Clinton campaign should have been ecstatic. Without Florida, it was presumed that Trump had no path to the White House.

However, as Clinton's urban counties were delivering in spades, rural Florida and the exurbs were coming in with never before seen landslide numbers for the Republican candidate. Shortly after 10 p.m. eastern time, with more than 90 percent of the vote in, Trump was leading Clinton by 0.8 percentage points. Tom Brokaw, the ever-present voice of reason on election nights for the past four decades, chimed in, "For me, it's déjà

vu. Florida. Florida. Florida." An hour later the Associated Press called Florida for Trump, and two hours after that, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin (depending on the network) put Trump over 270 electoral votes.

Prior to the Election Day shockwaves, Donald Trump confidently predicted victory in the state during his last visit to Florida in the 2016 presidential campaign. His visit to the southwestern part of the state in Sarasota brought out large crowds and a heavy media presence. Most analysts had the state going to Hillary Clinton by a small margin. With incredible turnout in the suburban, rural, and exurban counties of Florida, Donald Trump pulled off a surprise in the state and went on to the biggest upset win for the U.S. presidency in modern American political history.

This book is an examination of how the Trump campaign won Florida in 2016. Florida, a perennial battleground state, was a microcosm of his national victory. Trump secured suburban and Republican voters that many thought would abandon him; white voters overwhelming supported him; and even Hispanic voters cast some ballots for the controversial candidate. We have assembled an all-star group of academics, political commentators, and up-and-coming graduate students from Florida to dissect this political phenomenon.

With Election Day expectations overturned, there is still a sense of shock at the chaos that has continued from the campaign into Trump's administration. While few have been able to successfully predict anything about the 2016 election and the ensuing administration, we hope to provide a thorough explanation of what happened and why. The book begins by looking to Florida's past to better understand its present and ultimately its future. Chapter 1, from Aubrey Jewett, examines why Florida is so important for presidential nominees in order to win the Electoral College. His historical analysis details how Florida has emerged from a small, inconsequential state in the postbellum South to the quintessential battleground state over the past half-dozen elections.

Florida's history sets up the next section of the book. Only a state with Florida's diversity and importance can provide a presidential contest with two preelection establishment frontrunners and a couple political outsiders who turned the presidential contest of 2016 on its head. In chapter 2, Matthew Corrigan and Dario Moreno examine how the supposed state favorites, former governor Jeb Bush and Senator Marco Rubio, lost the primary race to Trump. Both candidates took very different paths to the presidential race, and it shows the power of the Trump movement that

neither could win his home state (the Bush campaign did not even make it to the March primary). Corrigan gives a broad overview of how Trump and other outsiders completely jarred the political establishment of the state during the primary season.

The next section of book analyzes various levels of data (media markets, counties, and individuals) to give a more comprehensive understanding of what happened on Election Day, and in the weeks leading up to it. Chapter 3 highlights county-level analysis of the Trump victories in the primary and the general election. Focusing on county election returns, Daniel Smith and Seth McKee skillfully dissect the important factors in the surprise Trump win.

Chapter 4 focuses on the important political real estate in the state: the I-4 corridor. Susan MacManus, David Bonanza, and Anthony Cilluffo have combined to show how the Trump and Clinton campaigns battled it out county by county and media market by media market in the crucial political geography of the state. In chapter 5, Michael Binder and Peter Licari focus on the all-important Hispanic vote in the state using both historical comparisons and 2016 data.

Florida has many unique features, not the least of which is its predilection for casting ballots early. More than two-thirds of all votes cast occurred prior to November 8, 2018. Election Day has now become Election Month, and Dan Smith, Dillon Boatner, Caitlin Ostroff, Pedro Otalora, and Laura Uribe show the important impacts of this change in chapter 6.

In chapter 7, Smith, Brian Amos, Carl Klarner, Daniel Maxwell, Thessalia Merivaki, and Tyler Richards focus on how Supervisors of Elections deal with the myriad of issues that involve a general election in a major state. An important finding is that minority voters cast over half of provisional ballots.

These chapters reveal some major surprises about the 2016 election. For example, the immigration issue may not have been as important to Hispanic voters as stated by many political observers. Moreover, while the Clinton campaign hit its marks in most urban counties, it ignored too many rural and suburban counties, leaving openings for the Trump campaign. While Trump was the most racially divisive presidential candidate since George Wallace, African American turnout was down significantly from 2012. Early voting was not as a decisive as most people would believe. More surprises are ahead as congressional investigators and Special Counsel Robert Mueller are examining Russian influence in the election.

Jeb Bush famously dubbed Trump the "Chaos Candidate," and the chaos has continued after the inauguration; Trump has seen unprecedented turnover in his administration. Whatever the outcome of the investigations and turbulent administration, the 2016 presidential election in Florida will go down as one of the most important in Florida's history.