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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Gecko's Grill & Pub's Michael Quillen Invited to Join Leadership Florida Class**  
Statewide Community of Leaders Organize to Contribute to Florida's Wellbeing

**Sarasota, FL; July 2, 2014** // - Michael Quillen, Co-Owner of local *Gecko's Grill & Pub* family of restaurants, has accepted an invitation to participate in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Class of the prestigious Leadership Florida organization. Participation in Leadership Florida is a year-long commitment, by invitation only, and brings together a diverse group of local leaders from all over the State to build a sense of statewide community.

Quillen was recognized by the National Restaurant Association in 2013 with the prestigious *Cornerstone Humanitarian Award*, and *Gecko's Grill & Pub* has been recognized for the past two years with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's *Florida Restaurant Neighbor* award, which recognizes outstanding restaurants around the country that go above and beyond in community service and aim to inspire other restaurateurs to get or stay involved in their local communities.

*Gecko's Grill & Pub* has a long history of serving as Business Partners with dozens of schools in Sarasota and Manatee County, providing Super Student Free Meals to tens of thousands of elementary students and supporting untold numbers of teams, projects, fundraisers and events in area schools. *Gecko's* is a benefactor of the non-profit *Y Youth Shelter*, which serves children 10-17 years of age who are homeless, and *Operation Second Chance*, which serves America's wounded, injured and ill combat veterans, *The 4H Club & Foundation*, and the *Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches*, among many others. Quillen also personally serves on several community Boards, and is the immediate Past President of The Argus Foundation, a public policy community foundation which harnesses business leadership for effective community building.

*Gecko's Grill & Pub* has been locally owned and operated since 1992, and employs over 300 Floridians. Quillen and his partner, Mike Gowan's newest *Gecko's*, located at Fruitville and North Cattlemen Roads opened June 30, 2014 and their 'Better Burger' concept, *S'macks Burgers & Shakes*, opened in Summer, 2013.

For more information, please contact 941.921.3924, or [office@geckoshospitality.com](mailto:office@geckoshospitality.com).

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