



**DREAM COME TRUE**  
Jorge Fernandez's business success allows him to follow his other passion: creating sculptures.

# Against the odds

Foreword by Scott Morrow

FOR MANY, BEING SUCCESSFUL MEANS more than working hard. It means overcoming obstacles, often based on one's income or ethnicity, and always believing in one's self in the face of adversity. These resolute entrepreneurs have come a long way, dealing with more than their share of problems.

Jorge Fernandez faced discrimination and discouragement as a Cuban immigrant in 1960s Miami; now he leads Gem Paver Systems, one of the top

10 paver-producing companies in the world. Another Cuban American, Mike Gonzalez, overcame taxing times with the help of strong women in his life—namely his mother, an immigrant—and his fluency in Spanish, which opened doors to business in Central America for his company, Door and Hardware Openings.

Alex Acuña got his start with a \$6 per hour job in cable installation, but he overcame racial prejudice and a lack of

education to found his own data-systems company. Now a screenwriter is telling the tale of Acuña, a fast and dedicated learner. Meanwhile, Don Gonzales Jr. is thankful for the success of his own venture, Gonzales Electrical Systems, which likely never would have began had he not lost his job in the early 1990s.

Though their challenges may have differed, these determined businessmen never let their trials negatively affect their futures.