

13 Georgia Business Brokers Named to Million Dollar Club with \$30 Million Sold

ATLANTA, Ga., April 19 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The economy may be in a slump, but 13 members of the [Georgia Association of Business Brokers](#) (GABB) helped enough business owners buy and sell \$30 million worth of businesses to earn membership to the organization's prestigious Million Dollar Club for 2009.

Each year the GABB, the state's only professional association dedicated to buying and selling business, recognizes the state's outstanding business brokers. To earn this distinction, a GABB member must have produced business sales of a million dollars or more. This year's list includes 13 professional business brokers whose hard work resulted in \$30 million worth of transaction values.

GABB's Top Producer for 2009 was Matt Slappey, the owner of Murphy Business and Financial Corporation of Decatur.

"I work hard, work smart, and work ethically for my clients to help them achieve their goals of buying or selling the right business," said Mr. Slappey in accepting the honor. "I feel fortunate to have worked with excellent business owners and business buyers in a year when getting a transaction closed was extremely difficult."

Second overall was Jeffery E. Merry of Gainesville, owner and founder of The Business House, Inc., who was the GABB's top seller in 2008. Other top 5 GABB brokers for 2009 are (3) Bina Cline a senior business broker with Coldwell Banker Commercial Metro Brokers; (4) C. Patrick Harkins, CEO of Anchor Business Advisors and (5) Patricia McDonald, president and founder of CBI Business Group.

Loren Marc Schmerler (6), founder and president of Bottom Line Management, Inc., is a member of the Multi-Million Dollar club for 2009.

Other 2009 Million Dollar Club members are (7) James Welch, the senior business broker/intermediary with Coldwell Banker Commercial Metro Brokers; (8) Charles Jay, founder of Jay and Associates of Macon, (9) Steven Josovitz, vice president of The Shumacher Group (10) Eric Gagnon, founder and president of We Sell Restaurants, (11) Peter Antoniadis, a senior business analyst with Prime Business Investments, Inc., (12) Nick Modares, president, managing broker and owner of Business Brokers, Inc., and owner of Atlanta Business Advisors; and Matt Wochele (13) of Preferred Business Brokers, Inc.

Charles Jay and Jeffery Merry were honored as the first recipients of the GABB Phoenix Million Dollar Club Award for achieving a million dollars in sales for 10 years.

"Achieving a million dollars in sales is a great achievement in itself in any year, but even more so in today's economy," commented GABB President Art Lennig. "We congratulate our colleagues for successfully completing so many business sales in 2009."

The Georgia Association of Business Brokers, GABB, is a "not-for-profit," statewide membership organization committed to establishing and maintaining an environment and support structure for success and professionalism in the business brokerage industry. GABB actively encourages each member to achieve his or her highest potential by promoting education, integrity, community responsibility, leadership, professionalism and productivity.

Matt Slappey, a native of Decatur/DeKalb County, is the owner of the Decatur branch of Murphy Business and Financial Corporation. Slappey was the top broker in Murphy Business & Financial Corporation of Georgia in 2008 and 2009 for both the number of deals closed and the total dollar volume of transactions. Matt has been one of the top two producers of the GABB each year of his membership. He has helped clients acquire or sell businesses ranging from \$150,000 to almost \$20 million. Mr. Slappey draws from his experiences in previous business transactions, his Certified Business Intermediary (CBI) designation from the International Business Broker Association (IBBA), degrees in Accounting, Economics and Business and 12 years of experience in management for a Fortune 100 healthcare company. A veteran, Mr. Slappey served as a pilot and military intelligence officer in the U.S. Army. According to Mr. Slappey, "Given the great uncertainty we had in 2009 regarding business valuations, credit and financing, buyers and sellers of small to medium sized companies need to find a broker who will think out of the box to find solutions for them in maximizing value for their company and helping them actually get to a closing. The focus for 2010 is to get businesses sold before the end of the year to take advantage of the current capital gains tax rate before it increases Jan 1, 2011."

Jeffery E. Merry, a past president of the GABB, was the GABB top producer in 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2002, and has been a part of the Million Dollar Club since its inception in 1999. Mr. Merry, owner and founder of The Business House, Inc. of Gainesville has been a broker for 16 years. He specializes in serving the manufacturing and distribution industry, the service and construction industry and the consumer products industry. As a Business Intermediary, Mr. Merry has been involved in more than 150 mergers and acquisitions that have ranged in acquisition price from \$100,000 to more than \$10 million. Mr. Merry holds a Bachelors Degree from Mercer University, a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Illinois, and a Juris Doctorate from Atlanta Law School. Mr. Merry is a licensed real estate agent in Georgia and Florida, a Senior Business Analyst and a Certified Business Counselor.

Bina Cline, a senior business broker with Coldwell Banker Commercial Metro Brokers, is in her fourth year in a row in the GABB's Million Dollar Club. Ms. Cline specializes in the sales of child-care centers, both franchised and independent, and is a child-care industry expert. Ms. Cline was a Top Business Broker at Metro Brokers in 2008 and 2009, and a Top Five Commercial

Agent at Metro Brokers in 2006 and 2007. She has been a GMAC Summit Century Club member since 2005. She has a MBA from Atlanta University and is a Six Sigma Certified Greenbelt. She is president of Advantage Solutions, LLC and of Child Care Center Sales, LLC. She speaks English, Hindi and Gujarati.

C. Patrick Harkins, CEO of Anchor Business Advisors, Inc., is a past GABB president and has had substantial experience as a consultant and auditor with a large national CPA firm. After five years of progressive experience, he became a vice president & CFO with a manufacturing client and directed a leveraged buyout of the shareholder group. After successfully implementing the strategic plan and stabilizing cash flow, Mr. Harkins was elevated to the board of directors and given additional operating responsibilities. A national search firm recruited him to assume the role of senior vice president & CFO of a large electronics and software company, where he directed the firm's merger activity and helped consolidate several previous acquisitions. With more than 25 years experience in the merger and acquisition field, he started Anchor Business Advisors in 1997 to help business owners sell their business and extract the greatest value while doing this process confidentially. Mr. Harkins was graduated magna cum laude from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, and earned an MBA in Finance "With Distinction" from DePaul University. He has been a guest lecturer at the University of Georgia's Graduate School of Business in buying and selling a business. He is a member of the American Institute of CPA's, the IBBA and M&A Source.

Patricia McDonald is founder and president of CBI Business Group, and is in her second year with multi-million dollar sales with GABB. A business broker for more than 21 years, Ms. McDonald has been a member of the International Business Brokers Association (IBBA) since 1990. She was designated a CBI (Certified Business Intermediary) in 1992 and in 2002 became a Fellow of the IBBA (FCBI), an honor conferred to CBI members who have made significant contributions to the IBBA. In 2004 she joined the M&A Source of the IBBA, and earned the M&AMI designation (Merger & Acquisition Master Intermediary) in 2005, one of 82 worldwide. Pat works with the conference planning and education committees of the IBBA and is an IBBA instructor. She helped to coordinate the Train the Trainer program, which was started to certify Instructors for the IBBA and has now grown into the IBBA Speakers Training Camp. Pat has been the GABB's membership chairperson and a member of the board. She is a member of the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, where she is involved in the CEO Roundtable and the Leadership Cobb Class for 2009-2010. She belongs to the Marietta Kiwanis Club, actively participates in community projects sponsored by that group, and works with the Cobb County Boys & Girls Club. The YWCA of Northwest Georgia honored Ms. McDonald in 2010 in its Tribute to Women of Achievement. Pat maintains a real estate broker's license in Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina and has been a graduate of the REALTORS® Institute (GRI) since 1973. She specializes in manufacturing, wholesale, distribution, and specific service companies.

Loren Marc Schmerler is founder and president of Bottom Line Management, Inc. Mr. Schmerler graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Boston University School of Management and obtained a Masters Degree with honors from Georgia State

University. He has been a business consultant for 40 years and a business broker for 24 years. Loren has the added distinction of having been the only business advice columnist for Sam's Club in the early 1990's and a national public speaker at Inc. conferences, BellSouth Symposiums and Staples new store openings. Mr. Schmerler has developed a Buyer's Broker Program that helps a corporate executive find a suitable business and transition into entrepreneurial life. When working with sellers of businesses, Loren helps them objectively decide whether freedom or money is most important to them when they are ready to exit their companies.

James Welch, past president of the GABB, is the senior business broker with Coldwell Banker Commercial Metro Brokers. Mr. Welch, a resident of Peachtree Corners, was the top Business Broker at his company in 2004 and 2007, and has led the Business Brokerage Division since 2003. In March 2010, he was awarded "Millionaires Club" status at Metro Brokers. Mr. Welch is a graduate of the Kenan-Flagler NHFA Key Executives Program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and a graduate of the Pacific Institute's Investment in Excellence Program. Mr. Welch is president and founder of Bottom Line Business Consulting, Inc. and www.BuySellSwapStuff.com, of Norcross; president, COO and executive board member of the Norcross Soccer Association, Inc. Mr. Welch specializes in brokering medium to large volume businesses, targeting privately held companies with annual revenues up to \$20 million; and construction related businesses, all service companies and large retail, manufacturing, distribution and automotive companies. He also is a motivational speaker to business, church and civic groups, and is an active member of Peachtree Corners Baptist Church.

Charles Jay, a former GABB president, is the founder of Macon's Jay and Associates. Mr. Jay was one of the first five individuals in Georgia to be awarded the Certified Business Intermediary (CBI) designation by the International Business Brokers Association (IBBA), and has become a lifetime CBI. He is a fellow of the IBBA. Mr. Jay's firm works closely with select clients in investments, commercial real estate, insurance, income producing properties, partnerships, syndicates, providing venture capital, and business acquisitions throughout the State of Georgia. In 1998 Jay & Associates received the Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics. Mr. Jay's background includes approximately 20 years of dedicated service as the President of a financial institution. As a community leader he has also served as president, chairman, or a member of the board of directors for more than 35 different business, civic, and religious organizations throughout Middle Georgia and the State.

Steven Josovitz is vice president of The Shumacher Group, having joined the firm in 1992. As an Associate Real Estate Broker, he heads up the company's restaurant business brokerage division in addition to providing commercial retail and restaurant real estate site selection, sales and lease negotiation expertise. A former restaurant owner and trained professional chef, Steven has an extensive background in restaurant and hotel management. He also offers consulting, appraisal services and has been retained by law firms for his expert opinion to help settle disputes. Mr. Josovitz, a resident of Norcross, earned a B.S. in Hotel/Restaurant Management from Florida

International University in 1981. Mr. Josovitz is a member of the Georgia Restaurant Association, International Council of Shopping Centers and the Retail Brokers Network. Steven's goals and thoughts for 2010 is the same as every year "Making sure all parties – buyers, sellers and landlords – walk away from the closing table happy. Maintaining integrity and honesty along with professionalism and expertise is a must. The needs of your clients must always come first before your commission."

Eric Gagnon, vice president and executive board member of GABB, is the founder and President of We Sell Restaurants and www.wesellrestaurants.com, a business brokerage firm specializing exclusively in selling Atlanta restaurants and bars. Mr. Gagnon has an extensive background in financial services and business valuation. He has worked for Bank of America and Bank of New York and previously served as director of business development for KPMG Atlanta. A graduate of Francis Marion University and the University of Montreal, he is licensed as a broker by the Georgia and Florida Real Estate Commission. He has been designated a Business Industry Expert by the Business Brokerage Press. Eric is well known as an industry expert in restaurant sales and valuation where he is a frequent speaker and writer for restaurant brokerage. Eric is a weekly contributor to the Atlanta radio show "Dishing with Donna" (AM920 WGKA) where he hosts a segment on the restaurant and business brokerage industry. He is also a member of the Georgia Restaurant Association and Georgia Restaurant Consulting Group.

Peter Antoniadis is a senior business analyst with Prime Business Investments, Inc. He was recently certified as a Business Value Improvement Program Manager (CBVI-PM) where he helps business owners identify whether their businesses are "market ready" through an exclusive proprietary analysis process of BVI Resources. If not, he sets up a program to help them achieve that. This strategy is to improve the business's value and potential for sale or take it to another financial level. Peter has owned and operated many different types of businesses ranging from the hospitality industry, to retail, to light manufacturing. He immigrated to the USA in 1993 and was instrumental in opening two major national franchises in Atlanta. He attended the Rand Afrikaans University and the Damelin Management School and holds a Diploma in Business Management. He is also a professional chef with extensive restaurant knowledge. He was instrumental in setting up the South African Chefs Association as well as the South African Food & Cookery Association and is a member of both. He holds a State of Georgia Real Estate License and was a board member and past secretary of the GABB.

Nick Modares of Roswell is president, managing broker and owner of Business Brokers, Inc., and owner of Atlanta Business Advisors. Mr. Modares has owned and operated several retail, service, and distribution companies in his lifetime. He previously worked as a broker for Sunbelt Business Brokers in Atlanta. As a business intermediary and consultant, Nick has been involved in sales, service, mergers and acquisitions ranging in price from \$50,000 to more than fifteen million dollars since 1988. After receiving his Masters Degree in Engineering Management (MBA of Engineering) from the University of Evansville, Ind., he studied at Purdue University towards his Ph.D. In his engineering and project management career, he worked with such multinational

companies as Bechtel, Daniel International, and Ahlstrom Kamyer Incorporated.

Matt Wochele founded Preferred Business Brokers, Inc. in 1996 after a 17-year career as an investment banker. During this time he also was a partner in five Atlanta restaurants. He has enjoyed success both as a business broker, making the Million Dollar Club several times, and as a business owner guiding other agents in their careers. After working in the public investment arena as a vice president of investment sales, Mr. Wochele felt that his skills and experience would serve the private business owner very well. Preferred has successfully represented many business owners and sold hundreds of businesses over the past 14 years. Mr. Wochele resides in Sandy Springs with his wife Kathy, a professional artist, and their five daughters.

More information online: www.gabb.org.

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