

# 11 Georgia Business Brokers Named to Million Dollar Club with \$40 Million Sold

ATLANTA, Ga., March 29 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – In a difficult year for business transactions, 13 members of the Georgia Association of Business Brokers helped enough business owners buy and sell \$40 million worth of businesses to earn membership to the organization's prestigious Million Dollar Club for 2010.

Each year the GABB, the state's only professional association dedicated to buying and selling businesses, recognizes the state's top-selling business brokers. To earn this distinction, each GABB member produced business sales of a million dollars or more. This year's list includes 11 professional business brokers whose hard work resulted in almost \$40 million worth of transactions. The awards were announced at the GABB's meeting March 29.

"Our work has an impact on owners, employees, and suppliers and therefore, a direct and significant impact on Georgia's economy relating to small- to medium-sized businesses," said GABB Board member Matt Slappey, chair of the Million Dollar Club committee and top-selling broker in 2009.

GABB's Top Producer for 2010 was Jeff Merry, owner and founder of the BUSINESS HOUSE, Inc., of Gainesville. Merry was GABB's top producer in five previous years and has been a part of the Million Dollar Club since its inception in 1999.

A close second was David Chambless, president of Abraxas Business Services, Inc., which focuses on businesses with revenues between \$5- and \$30-million in the manufacturing, distribution, healthcare, technology, and services industries. Chambless is a Lifetime Member of GABB's Multi-Million Dollar Club.

Other top five producers are Mike Kelly of Mike Kelly Realty and Development in Blairsville, Ga., Matt Slappey, owner of the Decatur branch of Murphy Business and Financial Corporation, and Steven Josovitz, vice president of The Shumacher Group.

Pat Harkins, CEO of Anchor Business Advisors, Inc., was named a member of the GABB Multi-Million Dollar Club. GABB President Eric Gagnon, founder of We Sell Restaurants, Inc., was named a Lifetime Member of the Million Dollar Club.

Rounding out the GABB Million Dollar Club members are Charles Jay, founder of Jay and Associates, and three brokers with Preferred Business Brokers, Inc., J. Snypp, Jay Mitchell and firm founder Matt Wochele, who each had a million dollars or more in sales in 2010.

Jeffery E. Merry, a past president of the GABB, was the GABB top producer in 2010, 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 six professional analysts in the Southeast and two in house marketing managers. His firm has been doing business in the area for almost 20 years. They specialize in serving the manufacturing, distribution, and veterinary industry. As a Business Intermediary, Mr. Merry has been involved in more than 200 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, a resident of Dahlongega, is a licensed real estate agent in several states, a Senior Business Analyst, and a member of the Exit Planning Institute.

C. David Chambless, vice president of GABB, is the president of Abraxas Business Services, Inc., which focuses on businesses with revenues between \$5- and \$30-million in the manufacturing, distribution, healthcare, technology, and services industries. An inactive CPA, Mr. Chambless has served in sales, marketing, and executive roles in technology firms; as CFO for public and private companies; and as a management consultant. He has served or is serving in various roles in the Technology Association of Georgia (TAG), including as a member of its board of directors, chair of its Leadership Council, chair of TAG-Finance, and chair of TAG-FinTech. He also serves on the boards of the Grant Park Conservancy and the Southeast Atlanta Business Association. Mr. Chambless is actively involved in All Saints' Episcopal Church. Other community investments include service on the boards of The Samaritan House of Atlanta and the Resource Opportunity Center of Atlanta, and on the Advisory Council of 24/7 Gateway, a homeless-services center sponsored by United Way of Atlanta. Mr. Chambless has an MBA in Finance from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering from Georgia Tech. Mr. Chambless and his family live in historic Grant Park.

Mike Kelly, GRI, founder and owner of Mike Kelly Realty and Development in Blairsville, Ga., which specializes in the brokerage of commercial and industrial real estate and businesses in northeast Georgia and western North Carolina. Mr. Kelly has a strong background in the commercial and industrial field, working in valuation consultation for 20 years with the world's largest appraisal company in the world, American Appraisal Associates. Mr. Kelly operated several startup companies in Florida and after achieving significant growth in a decade, sold the companies at the peak of the market. Mr. Kelly was born and raised in Freeport, New York, and graduated from St Peter's College in New Jersey with a bachelor's degree in economics. Mike and his wife Ruth have four married daughters and eleven grandchildren. Kelly is in-coming president of the Union County Rotary Club, a member of St. Francis of Assisi's Finance Council and an active member of the Blairsville-Union Chamber of Commerce.

Matt Slappey, a native of Decatur/DeKalb County, is the owner of the Decatur branch of Murphy Business and Financial Corporation. Mr. Slappey was the top

broker in Murphy Business & Financial Corporation of Georgia in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Matt has ranked in the top 10% 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 was a pilot and military intelligence officer in the U.S. Army.

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 2011 are 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."

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.

Charles Jay, a former GABB president, is the founder of Jay and Associates of Macon. 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.

J. Snynn III, a former GABB Board member, lives in Dunwoody, grew up in Atlanta and graduated from Georgia Southern University with a degree in marketing. Mr. Snynn spent more than two decades in the office furniture business before becoming a Business Broker and has been with Preferred Business Brokers, Inc. for 5 years. He has found success selling businesses in a variety of industries most recently selling multiple day care centers. Mr. Snynn is married and has two sons ages 8 and 13. Therefore, when he is not selling businesses he is usually coaching a football or baseball team, camping, canoeing, water skiing, scuba diving, or involved in some other family activity.

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 as a business broker, making the Million Dollar Club several times and being inducted as a life member in 2006. He has also enjoyed success 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 15 years. Mr. Wochele resides in Sandy Springs with his wife Kathy, a professional artist, and their five daughters.

Jay Mitchell of Preferred Business Brokers is a former commodities broker, where he learned how to build lasting relationships with clients. He credits Mr. Wochele with "taking me under his wing and teaching me invaluable lessons on being a professional in the business world." He has a degree in business administration from Georgia State University. Born in New Orleans, Mr. Mitchell grew up in New York City where he lived until 1996, when he moved to Georgia. Mr. Mitchell lives in Alpharetta.

Eric Gagnon, current GABB president, became a Business Broker in 2001 after a successful career in the financial services industry for Bank of America, Bank of New York and KPMG. He founded [We Sell Restaurants](#) in the Atlanta marketplace, headquartered at 101 Centennial Olympic Park Drive SW and serving most of the southeastern United States. Mr. Gagnon has served multiple years as an executive board member and officer for the GABB, and is also a multi-year recipient of the GABB Million Dollar Club recognition. Mr. Gagnon is a graduate of Francis Marion University and the University of Montreal. A frequent speaker and writer about the restaurant brokerage

industry, he is co-author of the recently released book on restaurant brokerage, "Appetite for Acquisition" (ISBN: 978-1617398148). Mr. Gagnon has been designated a Business Industry Expert by Business Brokerage Press and is a member of the International Business Brokers Association. He is a member of the Business Brokers of Florida (BBF), and is the preferred broker for Georgia Restaurant Consulting Group. Eric is a licensed Broker in both Georgia and Florida.

More information about GABB can be found online at: <http://www.gabb.org> .

News issued by: Georgia Association of Business Brokers



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Original Story ID: 2011-03-0329-002 (6814) :: 2011-03-0329-002-GABB

Original Keywords: Jeff Merry, GABB Million Dollar Club, Georgia Association of Business Brokers, real estate, awards, Eric Gagnon, Jay Mitchell, Matt Wochele, J. Snyp III, Charles Jay, C. Patrick Harkins, Steven Josovitz, Matt Slappey, Mike Kelly, C. David Chambless, Jeffery E. Merry, Pat Harkins, GABB Top Producer Georgia Association of Business Brokers Atlanta Georgia ATLANTA, Ga.

Alternate Headline: For 2010, 11 Georgia Business Brokers Named to Million Dollar Club with \$40 Million Sold

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