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## Business Notes

Two attorneys from Miami at the Florida law firm of Shutts and Bowen LLP have been named top lawyers in their fields by London-based Chambers and Partners in the latest edition of Chambers USA: America's Leading Business Lawyers. The 2007 edition also recognized the firm for excellence in the following practice areas: banking and finance, corporate/M&A, bankruptcy/restructuring, real estate, construction and zoning/land use.

The two attorneys included in the guide to the nation's top lawyers are: Shutts & Bowen Chairman **Bowman Brown** in Miami (banking and finance), partner **Kevin Cowan** in Miami (real estate), and **Luis de Armas** (corporate/M&A). Brown is chairman of the firm's Executive Committee and Financial Services Practice Group. Brown has an extensive regulatory and transactional practice representing domestic, interstate and international banks, broker/dealers and insurance companies, and drafting laws and regulations addressing the development of international banking and insurance in Florida. Brown resides in Coral Gables.

Cowan is co-chairman of the real estate department. Cowan's experience ranges from downtown office or anchor tenant retail leases to mega yacht marina/mixed-use hotel/ retail developments, commercial ground leases and related financing, and large-scale condominium developments. In addition, he represents developers and institutions. Cowan resides in Miami Beach.

De Armas is chairman of the Corporate Transactions Practice Group. A resident of Pinecrest, de Armas was recognized for his experience with cross-border capital markets and mergers-and-acquisition work, both outbound and inbound.

Esslinger Wooten Maxwell (EWM), one of the largest residential real estate firms in the United States, announced that two new sales associates have joined its Miami Beach branch office, **Orlando Abreu** and **Linda Zabelinsky**. Abreu is a New York native who has called South Florida home for the last two years. He attended Community College of the Air Force, where he earned an associate's degree in applied science. Before relocating to South Florida, he brings more than eight years of experience in both residential and commercial real estate, having worked in New York.

Zabelinsky was born and raised in Miami Beach. She belongs to a second generation hotel business family, whose ownership and operation of Miami Beach landmarks included the Park Central on Ocean Drive and the Caribbean Hotel on Collins Avenue. Zabelinsky's experience in real estate has been both as an investor and renovator of many homes in Miami Beach.

Her recent accomplishment has been to open and operate two local successful restaurants, Tasti Caf' and Sam's Deli and Grill in Miami Beach.

**Joyce J. Elam**, executive dean of the College of Business Administration at Florida International University, has announced that **Joseph L. Caruncho, ESQ.**, chief executive officer of Preferred Care Partners, has been appointed as chairmanship of the College of Business Administration's Dean's Council, replacing **Angel J. Medina Jr.**, president, Miami-Dade County, Regions Bank, who formerly held the position. Caruncho, an FIU alumnus, founded Preferred Care Partners, the first licensed health plan recognized as a Medicare PSO in Florida and has overseen its growth from inception to more than \$340

million in annual revenue.

Caruncho holds a business degree in finance from FIU, and a juris doctorate degree from Nova Southeastern University. He is a licensed attorney and member of the Florida Bar's Corporate and Health Law Sections.

WPBT-PBS 2 and the Steering Committee of the *Hablando de la Salud de la Mujer* conference are proud to recognize the dedication and achievements of **Dr. Maribel Santa Cruz** and **Marie-Ilene Whitehurst** as honorees for the second annual *Hablando de la Salud de la Mujer* conference, hosted by Channel 2.

Born in Cuba, Santa Cruz began her career in natural medicine. She graduated from Trinity College of Natural Health and is a licensed nutritionist, master herbalist, and doctor in naturopathy. She is also an advisor of natural medicine at Trinity College of Natural Health. She is founder of the Dr. Maribel Santa Cruz Foundation, which focuses on aiding less-fortunate children suffering from health and social difficulties.

Whitehurst, a University of Miami graduate, is involved in fighting for autism causes. Whitehurst recently completed her second, three-year term as board member and co-founder of CARD -- Center for Autism and Related Disabilities -- at the University of Miami and Nova Southeastern. As a member of CARD'S development committee, Whitehurst served and co-chaired the first Tropical Nights fundraiser to support the organization's center of activities. Born in Chile, Whitehurst spent her childhood in New York, then moved to Miami.

Macala USA, LLC has announced the appointment of **Mario Kroeff** to lead the sales efforts for the company's River Oaks Marina and Condominium development in Miami. Kroeff has been a member of the Vistas International Realty management team since 2001 and has been active in Miami real estate development sales for more than 10 years. Kroeff holds a degree in business administration from the University Gama Filho in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As director of sales for River Oaks, Kroeff will manage the sales effort for the planned luxury residential tower and marina, which is located on the south bank of the Miami River.

**George Johnson** has been appointed chief financial officer/chief operating officer of Westminster Christian School, a Christian college-preparatory school in Palmetto Bay since 1961.

As CFO/COO, Johnson is responsible for the financial operations of the school, and directs the day-to-day functions of the business office, including human resources, facilities management, financial aid administration, budgeting and financial forecasting. Johnson has served as president of the school's board of directors for two terms and as a recent member of the WCS Foundation board of directors. A native of the Finger Lakes region of New York, Johnson graduated with a bachelor's of science degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1970, and earned a master's of business administration and a master's of public administration from the University of Miami in the 1980s. He and his wife, Caroline, reside in Palmetto Bay.

Florida Trend magazine has named Markowitz, Davis, Ringel & Trusty, P.A. partners **Jerry M. Markowitz**, **Joseph I. Davis Jr.**, and **Candis Trusty** to its 2007 Florida Legal Elite list, which recognizes the top 1.8 percent of Florida's 56,000 lawyers. Davis, a resident of Kendall, focuses on a transactional, litigation and mediation practice.

The magazine also has named law firm Richman Greer, P.A., president **Gerald Richman**, managing shareholder **Manuel Garcia-Linares** and shareholder **Alan Greer** to its 2007 Florida Legal Elite list. Garcia-Linares, who practices primarily in commercial and class action litigation, and Greer, who concentrates his practice in the areas of civil commercial litigation, antitrust, mediation and arbitration, are

residents of Coral Gables.

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