

Johnson banking on competing for market

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offer basic deposit and lending services in Washington before opening several branches over the next two years. Urban Trust will immediately market college loans nationally through those institutions' financial

aid departments.

Urban Trust is Johnson's latest foray into the financial services industry. Last year, he became a major shareholder in Charlotte-based RolloverSystems. He also is teaming with Deutsche Bank AG to build a hedge-fund

investment business for wealthy clients.

Three years ago, after selling Black Entertainment Television to Viacom Inc for \$3 billion and acquiring the Bobcats, Johnson invested in hotels, and has \$3 billion in properties around the U.S.

Cochran firm faces changes

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including when and why they left

They said Bowers, the receptionist with whom he and other members of the media have conversed many times over the years, got pregnant, left on maternity leave and did not return. A Wave investigation uncovered that Bowers' pregnancy resulted in the birth of a daughter in 2003, after which she returned to her duties at the firm in January 2004, where she remained until May 13, 2005 - the exact date of her 20th anniversary with the company - when she was "let go," reportedly by a white attorney working out of Dothan, Ala., in a "restructuring" of Cochran's Los Angeles office.

McMurray and Dunn said Ferrer relocated his family to Maui "at least eight years ago," leaving us the impression that he had been away from the firm for that long. However, the Cochran Firm-Los Angeles Web site states that it has an office in Maui, which co-workers said Ferrer ran while also working with Cochran in Los Angeles. The truth of the matter is that Ferrer left the Cochran law firm in December 2005. Our telephone calls to Maui in search of Cochran's former right-hand man were answered with, "You have reached the law office of Eric Ferrer."

McMurray and Dunn declined to speak of Chapman Holley and Davis because they have retained lawyers to deal with their separation from the firm. However, in an e-mail response to an initial inquiry about the changes, McMurray said Chapman Holley's "departure from the firm several years ago was while Mr. Cochran was at the helm.... And again, the partnership of this firm has not changed in over six years."

The firm's Web site, which prominently reads "Remembering Johnnie 1937-2005" across the top, lists Chapman Holley as a managing partner and displays her picture opposite Cochran's in a photo array of the firm's seven California licensed attorneys? She was obviously there after his death (as was Ferrer) because the site commemorates his passing. There may not have been any changes in the partnership in the six years that preceded Cochran's death, but there certainly have been plenty in the year since two-thirds of the managing partners are gone, leaving only McMurray.

McMurray said Stewart still works for the Cochran firm. When we asked to see her, we were shown her name on a closed office door. Two other lawyers who are friends of Stewart say she is on the way out. "She's been told by management to finish up the cases she already has and then leave," her friend said. "Cameron is a very private person who doesn't readily discuss her problems, but she's also very astute and she's read the writing on the wall."

As to the white Ms. Wright, McMurray said she is the firm's only Caucasian employee and was hired in the newly created position

of chief operating officer because her services were badly needed and she was the best person immediately available.

McMurray explained that following Cochran's death, the firm launched an advertising campaign, or "an awareness campaign," in McMurray's words, "to let the community know that the firm did not die with Johnnie and that our services are available to anybody who has been hurt by another, not just by the police, and that we don't just handle high-profile cases."

McMurray said the campaign was so successful that the office became inundated with requests for services, making it necessary to implement changes in the firm to handle the increased volume of calls and to create a workable intake system. Those changes, McMurray said, included hiring an office manager - which is basically what a COO is - to keep the business running efficiently.

Nonetheless, Wright's employment ruffled the black feathers of some Cochran employees who maintain that she was hired without the position being open to other, preferably African-American, applicants. One employee said that when they complained, they were told no African-American was qualified for the position.

So, Ali et al. apparently saw the newly hired Wright busily managing the office and concluded the firm was being run by whites. But Wright is not the only Caucasian associated with the firm, she's just one of the newest.

In 1997, Cochran decided to deliver his renowned legal skills to people all over the country. He entered into an arrangement with two white lawyers in Dothan, Ala., Samuel Cherry and Keith Givens, and a black lawyer in Memphis named Jack Smith. They formed a national law firm called Cochran, Cherry, Givens & Smith, LLP. Through a series of mergers, office expansions and regional partnerships, that firm became the behemoth Cochran Firm, the largest personal injury plaintiffs tort law firm in the country, with more than 150 lawyers available for and devoted to civil trial litigation.

The white partners ascended into the firm's leadership when Cochran died. Less than two months later, they led Cochran's firm into a merger with Imhoff and Associates, one of the nation's largest criminal defense firms, thus creating a criminal defense section within The Cochran Firm.

The defense of child molesters and rapists around the country are now being provided in the Cochran name.

Despite the changes in the firm, McMurray said there are no non-black attorneys in the Los Angeles office, that he is looking to hire three or four additional lawyers, and that "we want to make sure that we uphold everything that Johnnie meant to the African-American community."

Motown artists open Detroit restaurant with touch of soul

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT - A dozen Motown recording artists, including members of the Four Tops, the Supremes and the Miracles, are part of a group of investors opening a restaurant in an area where music is playing a key role in redevelopment efforts.

La Musique is scheduled to open next month at the Hotel St. Regis in the city's New Center area, less than a mile from Hitsville USA, the home of the Motown Historical Museum.

Abdul "Duke" Fakir, a member of the Four Tops, told The Detroit News for a

story published Monday that he is excited about investing in the city at a time when it appears to be on an upswing.

"I never lost faith (in Detroit)," said Fakir, whose group recorded the hit single "Reach Out (I'll Be There)" at Hitsville USA 40 years ago. "I know it's been through tough times, and I'm glad to see so many others are starting to believe."

La Musique arrives as the New Center area shows signs of a music-fueled revival. The nonprofit New Center Council Inc plans to revamp a park for open air music shows. A restored club called Northern Lights Lounge opened last year and

features local acts.

"Music makes a city great," said Bobby Rogers of the Miracles, whose hits include "I'm the One You Need." "It's good to give back to our home."

La Musique will serve French cuisine amid Motown-themed decor. Although patrons can expect to hear legendary artists croon a classic hit occasionally, the restaurant will not have a formal stage or a set schedule of performances.

"It will be more impromptu," said developer Herbert Strather, who masterminded the deal. "Whenever the artists are in town, they can just come in and play or



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The First Pillar of Success: Physical

In the previous column, I mentioned that usually when we think of creating a life of success, we focus on the area of financial achievement. However, true success is built on more than financial prosperity. If we want complete success we must work on establishing the four pillars that create a strong foundation for complete success.

In this column we will focus on the first Pillar of Success: Physical Wellness. It may seem very obvious that we would already know about this first pillar of success and would easily keep it in the forefront of our minds. However, it is one of the easiest for us to overlook or perhaps take for granted. In order for us to have success, we must be willing to take care of our bodies. It is very difficult to enjoy the fruits of our labor if our bodies are not healthy.

Caring for our bodies means that we must watch the foods that we eat. We must be careful not to eat too many fats or sweets. As most of us know by now, too much of these foods can lead to our being overweight, which can increase our chances of developing heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

We are often told that we should be sure to exercise for at least twenty minutes three times per week. The more we are able to exercise, the more energy we actually feel and the easier it is for our bodies to burn calories. When we exercise, we can actually eat some of those foods we should not eat very much of because

the well-exercised body will burn up calories more quickly.

On the other hand, because of our hectic lifestyles, especially when we are trying to develop a business and trying to balance other responsibilities, it may not be as easy for us to eat as balanced a meal as we should.

If that is the case, nutritionists strongly recommend that we consider taking multiple vitamins and minerals to insure our nutrition is complete. You might also consider eating healthy meal replacement products.

However, in choosing a multivitamin, keep in mind that they are not all created equal. It is very important to know the absorbency rate of the vitamin or mineral supplement. If the vitamin and mineral supplements are not formulated so that the body can absorb the great majority of the supplement, it is actually a waste of money. Before spending your money on supplements that the body cannot absorb, check to see if the vitamins and minerals you are considering have an absorption rate of at least 90-95%. Take the kind of nutrition that you will actually be able to feel the difference it makes. Taking care of our bodies will help us to live longer and healthier lives and enjoy our success for years to come!

In our next column, we will take a look at the Second Pillar of Success.

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