

Banker Nick Becton Is Close To His Customers And Community

By Rheta Logan

Nick Becton likes making things financially possible for people. Becton is retail banking manager of Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. in Fayetteville. He oversees consumer banking services such as Personal Checking, loans and deposits at Fayetteville's four Wachovia branches.

Lending money is the highlight of his job, Becton said. "It is very rewarding, for example, for me to be able to satisfy the financial needs of a couple who want to start their own business."

Becton also enjoys managing the employees at the branches. "I like hiring a teller and watching the person blossom and become a productive employee. My relationships with my employees are very important to me."

Managing a large number of people is new for Becton, but he has been lending money since 1985, when he became manager of Wachovia branch in Fayetteville. As a branch manager, I was responsible for two bankers and tellers and generating loans as my primary task," he said.

Before becoming a branch manager, Becton worked as a credit analyst, a Personal Banker and a representative for Wachovia.

"I've enjoyed having front-line, production mode jobs as opposed to working behind the scenes," Becton said. "I hope to continue working in a lending capacity, getting closer to the customer."

Becton's enjoyment of people-oriented activities began early. As a manager, he played on his high school football, baseball and basketball teams and served as an athlete in his church.

Becton was born John J. Becton but was given the name Nick in keeping with a family tradition. It is a custom in our family to alternate the nicknames Nick and Jasper with each generation," he said. "I was the son born in the third generation, so I got that name. I think the tradition will stop with me because I don't think my grandkids would like to be called Jasper!"

Becton was reared in Beaufort, N.C., by his maternal grandmother and great-grandmother. He kept in touch with his parents, who visited when he was 3, through phone calls and summer visits. Becton visits his mother and sister. He lives in Indianapolis, whenever he can. He sees his grandmother and great-grandmother regularly.

Becton's childhood ambition was to be a lawyer. "I didn't see a lot of lawyers when I was growing up and I wanted to change that," he said. But after taking general business courses in high school, Becton decided to pursue an economics degree when he entered C. A. & T. State University in Greensboro. He met his wife, Dale,

at a wedding during his junior year. After graduating from college, they were married in the church where they met.

With a bachelor's degree in hand, Becton toyed with the idea of getting a master's degree in business administration, but instead joined Wachovia in Durham. "I was eager to get into the work force, and I felt I owed it to my grandmother and great-grandmother to start working," he said.

Becton believes people need to give back to society what they have been given. He serves on the School of Business and Economics Advisory Board at Fayetteville State University and is a volunteer with the university's "Find-a-Friend" program, which pairs adolescent criminal offenders with positive role models. Becton serves on the advisory board that recruits the role models.

"We try to find people who are understanding, but stern, and who have time to give to the kids," he said.

Becton worked with the FSU Youth Motivational Task Force a few years ago and talked to junior high school and high school students about his career in banking. "The idea was to motivate

the kids to want to be successful," he said.

One reason Becton volunteered with the Fayetteville State University programs was because his junior high school basketball coach was an FSU Graduate. "I wanted to do something to pay him back for being such a positive influence on me," he said.

Becton also has volunteered with a Junior Achievement program at a Fayetteville high school. As a volunteer, he spoke to students about careers in banking and was a mentor to some of them until they went off to college. "It was great to see how they had progressed," he said.

As for his future, Becton would like to get an advanced degree in either business or law. His wife, a first-grade teacher, plans to get a Ph.D. Meanwhile, they are enjoying a recent addition to their family, a son, 8-month-old Nicholas.

"My short-range goal is to give 110 percent in all my endeavors," he said. Working with young people also will remain a priority for Becton.

"I believe we have a lot of good youth out there," he said. "When I was young, people helped me develop my potential, and I want to give back what was given to me."



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Money Management

Location, Location, Location

If you are thinking of opening your own business and are trying to decide on a location, consider this: poor location is frequently an important factor in the failure of small businesses. What this warning underscores is the importance of knowing what to look for in choosing a location for your new business. The decision to buy a particular piece of property should not be made on impulse or solely because the location is beautiful or close to home. There are some general guidelines you can follow to help you make the right choice.

LOOK AT THE DEMOGRAPHICS

The North Carolina Association of CPAs suggests that you begin by investigating the make-up of several target communities and locations. One of the best resources for information about a community and a particular location are census bureaus. They can tell you if the community is growing or shrinking. In addition, they can supply you with vital details about a community's population, such as the average income, predominant occupations, and median age. By comparing this information with past figures, you can determine if and how a community is changing. Also find out whether nearby

residents tend to be college-educated or blue-collar, whether they rent or buy their homes, and whether property values have increased or decreased. These statistics will paint a picture of the population and help you determine whether it can support your type of business. For instance, if you're thinking of opening a children's bookstore in a neighborhood whose local population is near retirement age, you may want to consider another location that services younger consumers.

Besides the census bureau, other sources of background information include local government agencies, chambers of commerce, the Small Business Administration, trade associations, local newspapers, and local residents. By talking to the "locals," you can get a feel for the distinct personality of the area, and which types of businesses are more

likely to thrive. Also, read the editorials and letters to the editor in the local press to find out some of the concerns of community residents.

TRAFFIC PATTERNS

Traffic patterns are an important factor in choosing the right location. For example, if your business is manufacturing, you should have quick and easy access to transportation routes and necessary suppliers. If you are a retailer, you should pay particular attention to store visibility and the amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The Small Business Administration has a number of publications that can help you utilize traffic studies.

Find out if any new construction is planned for the near future that might affect your business. For instance, if a new office building is

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Durham County Board of Commissioners solicits applicants to fill positions on the following boards and commissions:

Open Space Commission: Four expired terms; one appointment each from Lebanon and Oak Grove Townships and two appointments from Triangle Township (terms expire October 1993). The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners in matters related to the Open Space Program.

Transportation Advisory Board: Four expired terms; members should be representatives from human service agencies, civic organizations, consumer groups, transportation providers, and citizen volunteers (terms expire October 1992). The Board serves as the advisory board to the County Manager and Board of County Commissioners on issues related to human services transportation policy matters.

Property tax listings must be current. County and City fees must not reflect any delinquencies before an application is submitted.

Appointments will be considered by the County Commissioners on Monday, November 12, 1990, at 10 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, sixth floor, Durham County Judicial Building, 201 E. Main Street.

For applications or additional information, contact Garry E. Umstead, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners (560-0027).

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS OCTOBER 29, 1990

Garry E. Umstead
Clerk to the Board

Proposal Would Reward Students Who Take Tough High School Courses

CHAPEL HILL (AP) - Some 12,000 North Carolina freshmen would win \$600 college scholarships in 1992 under a proposed program that rewards students who take rigorous high school courses.

But that's only if the state legislature can find the money. The request comes as state officials predict growing budget shortfalls in coming years.

University of North Carolina system officials unveiled their plan for the N.C. Academic Scholars program Monday at a Board of Governors committee meeting to approve the system's proposed 1991-93 budget.

Along with the new scholarship program, which would cost \$7.2 million its first year, the new budget calls for 6 percent faculty and staff raises for each of the next two years. Raises for university

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