

# Press Release

## **Local entrepreneurs announced as new entrepreneurial finance lecturers by the Kellogg School of Management's Levy Entrepreneurship Institute**

**Evanston, IL, September 17, 2010:** Three prominently successful Chicagoland supporters of entrepreneurship have joined the 17-member award-winning faculty of the Kellogg School of Management's Levy Entrepreneurship Institute as lecturers of entrepreneurial finance for the upcoming school year 2010-2011:

1. Venita Fields, senior portfolio manager and partner, Smith Whiley & Company 33 txn  
\$300 mm 29 years
2. William Lear, managing director, The Chicago Corporation 30 yearsxp
3. Alfred D. Sharp, principal, Muller & Monroe Asset Management LLC 25 years *40 deals*  
*\$2bb\$300mm under mgmt*

Ms. Fields, Mr. Lear and Mr. Sharp together have a combined 84 years of professional experience managing and investing \$4.6 billion in capital in 73 direct investments in the Chicagoland area and across the United States. Specialized financial services areas of expertise include:

- Commercial lending
- Investment banking
- Mezzanine private equity principal investments
- Direct investments
- Raising capital as CFOs of operating companies and as managers of active investment funds

Ms. Fields has structured, closed and/or managed approximately \$2 billion in investments in the automotive, aviation, environmental, food, industrial manufacturing, retail, and service sectors. Ms.

**For Immediate Release**

Fields is the Recipient of the 2004 YWCA Woman of Achievement Award in the Business Category and was acknowledged by Chicago United in 2005 as a Business Leader of Color. She also won an award by the M&A Advisor for Consumer Deal of the Year for one of Smith Whiley's portfolio companies "Aquion Water Treatment Products". Ms. Fields was featured as a business leader in the October 2008 and 2009 issues of Crain's Chicago Business. Ms. Fields serves on the board of several Smith Whiley portfolio companies and she is active in several community and business organizations in the greater Chicago area. Ms. Field has a B.A. degree from Northwestern University and a Masters of Management degree from the J.L. Kellogg School of Management.

Mr. Sharp is principal in Investments and Client Services ("ICS") at Muller & Monroe Asset Management, LLC, ("M2"), a private equity firm that invests exclusively in emerging and niche managers on behalf of institutional investors, using a disciplined and differentiated investment process. For the past several years, he has created entrepreneurial ventures and has held senior executive and consulting roles in start-up companies and turnaround situations.

Prior to his entrepreneurial activities, Mr. Sharp was a vice president at the Prudential Capital Group, where he invested in private debt and equity instruments of companies headquartered in the Midwest. During his tenure, he executed over 40 deals totaling approximately \$2.0 billion. Earlier in his career, Mr. Sharp was a credit analyst at Manufacturers National Bank, N.A. Mr. Sharp received a B.A. degree in Accounting from Morehouse College and an M.B.A. from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.

Mr. Lear is a co-founder and Managing Director of The Chicago Corporation, a recently formed investment banking firm successor to a previous investment banking firm of the same name. For more than 30 years, Mr. Lear has provided corporate finance advisory services to middle market companies in areas including private placements, public offerings, and mergers and acquisition engagements on both buy and sell-side. His industry background includes medical services, communications and entertainment, energy, transportation, financial services, printing and publishing. Prior to co-founding The Chicago Corporation, Mr. Lear had been the managing director of FOCUS LLC. For the six prior years he was EVP and Chief Financial Officer of BioSafe Medical Technologies. Mr. Lear also spent twenty years with The First National Bank of Chicago where he managed the bank's worldwide banking relationships in the Communications, Entertainment, Energy and Transportation industries as well as the \$1BB/year Private Placement Group.

He began his business career with the New York investment banking firm of Hornblower & Weeks: Hemphill, Noyes specializing in Private Placements and Public Offerings of Cable TV and other Telecommunications entities. Mr. Lear is a member of numerous Boards and Advisory Boards of Directors including Geonostics, a medical diagnostics laboratory specializing in the collection, transportation and analysis of blood micro-samples; The Chicago Conservation Center, the largest privately owned art restoration company in the US; Pinpoint Holdings, a diversified communications company with interests in long haul fiber-optics, telephone, wireless services and data centers; and Athena Financial Services, an integrated wealth and risk management advisor.

Mr. Lear holds an undergraduate degree from Yale and received an MBA from Harvard Business School after serving two years as a US Naval Officer. He also was a National Trustee with the Leukemia-Lymphoma Society and on the boards of the Better Government Association and Friends of Prentice, a philanthropic organization affiliated with Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

### **About the Levy Entrepreneurship Institute at the Kellogg School**

Award-winning professors and lecturers from the Levy Entrepreneurship Institute educate, inspire and engage a diverse population of students, alumni and business leaders seeking success with high-growth opportunities in the Chicagoland area, the United States and every region of the globe. The Levy Entrepreneurship Institute has been recognized by Kellogg School students as the most intellectually stimulating program at the Kellogg School. Of students who majored in entrepreneurship, 85% are founders of start-up ventures, members of an entrepreneurial team, an owner or manager of a family entrepreneurial venture, or invest in start-ups. Entrepreneurship courses, first offered in 1976, average the highest student enrollment among elective courses. Successful alumni Larry Levy '67, founder and Chairman of Levy Restaurants and Carol Levy, founder of Material Possessions, endowed the program in 2003. For more information about the Kellogg School, visit [www.kellogg.northwestern.edu](http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu).

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