



FLORIDA BANKERS ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 23, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Renee Thompson, 850-224-2265

Miami banker named “Banker of the Year”

TALLAHASSEE—Leonard Abess was recently named “Banker of the Year” by the Florida Bankers Association (FBA). Abess is CEO of City National Bank of Florida, a subsidiary of Caja Madrid. He accepted the award during the FBA’s 121st Annual Meeting after a standing ovation offered by his colleagues and peers.

“It is an honor to be recognized by my fellow Florida bankers as Banker of The Year,” said Abess. “This award means a great deal to me and to everyone at City National Bank.”

Each year, the FBA’s Executive Committee selects a recipient who has given unselfishly of his or her time and effort to improve the Florida banking industry, as well as his or her community.

“The Florida Bankers Association is full of members who are dedicated to improving the business climate and economy of our state,” said FBA President and CEO Alex Sanchez. “Leonard’s tireless efforts, dedication and loyalty to the banking industry, to his state and to his community serve as a tremendous example for each of us in our own personal and professional lives.”

Abess won media attention and the hearts of his employees when he shared \$60 million of his personal money with employees of City National after selling his majority stake. Every employee on the staff received a surprise bonus based on years of service, and he even gave bonuses to 72 former employees. Some longtime employees received tens of thousands of dollars and, in some cases, more than \$100,000.

Abess was recognized in President Barack Obama’s speech to a joint session of Congress earlier this year.

A philanthropist, Abess is involved in many organizations, including the Mount Sinai Medical Center, the World Wildlife Fund and the Audubon Society. He is also active with the University of Miami, serving on its board of trustees and by endowing the Leonard and Jayne Abess Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy with his wife. He founded the Abess Center for Environmental Studies at Miami Country Day School and the Abess Floating Research Station in the Brazilian Amazon.

About the Florida Bankers Association: The Florida Bankers Association serves as the primary resource through which Florida financial service providers work in unity to influence the state and federal legal regulatory environment in which they serve their customers. Established in 1888, the FBA is one of Florida’s oldest trade associations and has a membership of nearly 400 financial institutions ranging in size from small community banks, thrifts, and trust companies to medium sized banks operating in several parts of the state, to large regional financial institutions that are headquartered in Florida or outside the state. Nearly 96 percent of banks operating in Florida are members.

###

• 1001 Thomasville Road • Suite 201 • P.O. Box 1360 • Tallahassee, FL 32302 •
• Telephone: (850) 224-2265 • Fax: (850) 224-2423 •