

Michael J. Coles

Deeply involved in the community, Michael Coles is a transformational leader, accomplished entrepreneur, education advocate and motivational speaker. He is living proof that there are no limits to what we as individuals can accomplish. He brings his story to life in his presentation which is entitled *Taking on Goliath**.

After a successful 19 year career in the clothing business Michael tested his entrepreneurial skills in 1977 when he co-founded Great American Cookie Company with an investment of only \$8000. Shortly after starting the Company, he was involved in a near-fatal motorcycle accident and was told by doctors he would never walk again unaided. As Michael recovered thru a self-designed rehabilitation program he took the Company from its first store in Perimeter Mall in Atlanta to hundreds of stores nationwide and at the same time set 3 coast-to-coast cycling records. When Michael started the Company there were three major cookie companies in business; one had almost 100 stores and the other two had fifty each. When he sold the Company in 1998 with sales over \$100 million, Great American Cookie Company was the largest franchisor of cookie stores and the other three companies no longer existed.

Michael's commitment to community service led him to run for public office in 1996 as the Democratic nominee for the House of Representatives in the Sixth District and in 1998 he won the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate, challenging Senator Paul Coverdell.

In 2003 Michael accepted the corporate reins of Caribou Coffee Company as Chairman, CEO and President. Over the next five years Michael more than doubled the size of the company extending the brand reach domestically and internationally. In September 2005, he successfully took the company public on NASDAQ under the symbol CBOU.

Coles was one of the founders of Charter Bank & Trust and served as its Chairman, taking the bank public and selling the publicly traded company to Synovus Bank.

Appointed by Governor Roy Barnes to Chair the Georgia Film, Video and Music Advisory Board, during his four years as Chairman, Michael took it from \$170 million to over \$1.5 billion in economic impact.

Having contributed much of their time and resources to education, the arts, environment and philanthropic organizations, Michael and his wife, Donna were honored as the Georgia Philanthropists of the year in 1995.

Michael was appointed by Governor Roy Barnes in 2001 to serve on the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Michael now serves as Chairman of Brand Holding Company and Chairman of Brand Bank.

In recognition of Michael's success, leadership and benevolence, Kennesaw State University, under the authority granted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, declared that the institution's School of Business be named and known in perpetuity as the **Michael J. Coles College of Business at Kennesaw State University**. In 1999 Michael received the Honorary Doctor of Human Letters Degree from Kennesaw State University.

As Entrepreneur in Residence for the Coles MBA 2013 Spring Semester, Michael led a class entitled “Concept to Counter”, allowing students to grasp the concept of taking their creative thoughts and ideas to the marketplace.

Michael received the National Women’s Political Caucus Good Guy of the Year Award for his work on behalf of women’s issues. He joined the ranks of past recipients, including Bill Cosby, Ed Asner, Alan Alda and former Vice President and U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Walter Mondale.

Michael continues to serve on numerous non-profit boards.

Michael lives in Atlanta with his wife Donna and they are the parents of three adult children and seven grandchildren.

* Michael’s presentation, *Taking on Goliath*, gives insight into his business principles and how to acquire and sustain globally competitive advantage. He will talk about how he rebounded from a near-fatal motorcycle accident when he was told he would never walk again unaided. He not only learned to walk again, but in the process of building The Great American Cookie Company he became a world record bicyclist.

Michael Coles

CORPORATE BOARDS

- **The Georgian Club**
Board Member & Advisor since 1983
- **Global OnBoard Partners**
Executive Chairman & President
Since it's inception in 2009, Michael has taken the company from startup to this past year's 6-1/2 million dollars in revenue. Under management's leadership the company plans to double its size again next year.
- **Brand Bank Holding Company, Chairman**
- **Brand Bank, Chairman**
Board Member since June 2010 to present
- **The Buckhead Club**
Board Member & Advisor since 2014
- **Refrigiwear, Inc, Advisory Board Member**

PAST CORPORATE BOARDS

- **Great American Cookie Company**
Founder, CEO & Chairman, since inception in 1977
Grew from one store to a national chain of hundreds of stores nationwide with sales of over \$100 million when the company was sold in 1998
- **E-Hatchery**
Board Member & Advisor
- **Caribou Coffee Company**
Chairman, CEO & President, Jan 2003 till Jan 2008
Grew sales from approximately \$165 million to \$250 million. Changed the brand reach from a small midwest company to a national and international presence. Successfully took company public in 2005.
- **The Coleman Company**
Board Member & Advisor, 2000-2003
- **Charter Bank & Trust**
One of the organizers of the bank from 1987 until the time it was acquired by Synovus in 1999. Served on the Board as Chairman. Took the bank from startup to \$300 million in assets. Merged with Mountain National Bank and created Merit Holding Company. Successfully took Merit Holding Company public and was later acquired by Synovus Financial.
Served as Chairman of Loan Committee
- **Georgia Film, Video & Music Board**
Served as Chairman 1999-2003. Over the four years he lead the organization from approximately \$170 million to over \$1 billion in economic impact.
- **Blamtastic**
Board Member & Advisor June 2013 to April 2015

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- **Hillels of Georgia, Board President**
- **Chick-fil-A Foundation Advisory Board**
- **Atlanta Jewish Federation, Board Member**
- **The Temple Board Member; Executive Committee; Endowment Board Member**
- **Kennesaw State University**
Board Member; Past Chairman; Executive Committee Member; Chairman of Development Committee
- **Buckhead Coalition**

PAST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- **Metro Atlanta Heart Association Walk-A-Thon** Chairman, 1997
- **Georgia Special Olympics**
- **American Lung Association**
- **Manufacturer's Hanover Road Race**
- **Scottish Rite Children's Medical Care**
- **The Open Gate**
- **Cobb County Chamber of Commerce**, Board of Directors and Member of the Chairman's Club
- **March of Dimes**, Honorary Chairman Two Years
- **Westside Senior Citizens' Home**, Sponsor
- **The Walker School**
- **Atlanta Project**, Sponsor
- **Celebration of Women**, Contributor
- **El Tour De Tucson**, Advisory Board Member
- **National Conference**, Board Member
- **Safe America Foundation**, Board Member
- **Museum of the Rockies**, Board of Directors
- **Georgia Public Television**, Board Member
- **Tommy Nobis Center**, Board Member
- **Friends of Kennesaw National Park**, Contributor
- **Alliance Children's Theater Education Program**
- **American Heart Association Cobb County Heart Ball Chair 2001**
- **The Carter Center**, Board of Councilors

HONORS

- **2012 TIE Lifetime Achievement Reward**
- **2000 Galaxy of the Stars Philanthropy Award/Tommy Nobis Center**
- **1999 Honorary Doctorate, Kennesaw State University**
- **1999 Beta Gamma Sigma Medallion for Entrepreneurship Award**
- **1996 Heart Association Community Service Award**
- **1995 Philanthropist of the Year**, Georgia Chapter of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives
- **1991 Certified Franchising Executive (CFE)**
- **1986 National Women's Political Caucus' Good Guy of the Year**
- **Entrepreneur of the Year**-stanford University Alumni Association
- **Path Foundation**, Contributor

PAST ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Upper Chattahoochee River Keepers**, Board
- **Living Brightwater Trust**, Member
- **Yellowstone Park Foundation Board**
- **Greater Yellowstone Coalition**, Member
- **Global Green**

PAST EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & APPOINTMENTS

- **University of Georgia** Guest Practitioner
- **Devereux Georgia Treatment Network**, Board Member
- **Kennesaw State University**, Entrepreneur-In-Residence
Taught "Concept to Counter"
- **2001 Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia**
- **Walker School Board** Chairman
- **U.C.L.A. Business School**, Past Entrepreneur-In-Residence
- **Guest Lecturer** at Hundreds of Businesses, Business Organizations, Elementary Schools, Secondary Schools, Colleges and Civic Groups

POLITICAL

- **Past Chairman Democratic Party of Georgia**
- **Governor's Georgia Roundtable**, Past Chairman
- **1996 6th Congressional Democratic Candidate**
- **1998 U.S. Senate Democratic Candidate**
- **Co-Chair Georgia: Gore for President**
- **Vice Chair, National Business Leaders for Gore/Lieberman**
- **Chair, Georgia Business Leaders for Gore/Lieberman**
- **Jason Carter for Governor**, Chairman