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Complimentary

Network Transport Officials Unveil Plan to Increase Diversity & Inclusion



Network Transport Grand Opening at new location: from left, David Ferguson, President, Network Transport; Lurone 'Coach' Jennings, Executive Director, Mary Walker Foundation and Chronicle Media Group Vice President of Strategic Growth; and Bob Poulos, Chief Commercial Officer Network Transport.

at include internships for local high school students, special recruitment events where company information is presented in an easy-to-understand and concise manner, and developing relationships within the African American community, among others.

"We believe the African American community has a wealth of talented people who don't know about the opportunities in the logistics industry," Ferguson said. "We want to change that."

Network Transport Chairman Marc Kramer and Chief Commercial Officer Bob Poulos also spoke during the presentation.

One of the nation's fastest-growing private companies, Network Transport currently employs 82 people, but Ferguson projects that the logistics startup will be creating 100 new Chattanooga-based jobs within its "Freight Alley" operation over the next 12 months.

"We look forward to working with the principal owners of Network Transport and support the vision of its leaders and of their interest in inclusion and equity," said Lurone "Coach" Jennings Sr., Mary Walker Foundation executive director and Chronicle Media Group vice president of Strategic Growth.

Following a sit-down lunch, Jennings and other Chronicle executives toured the freight brokerage company's new headquarters, which spans 14,000 square feet of Class A space within the CBL Center at 2034 Hamilton Place Blvd. Prior to the move, Network Transport had run its Chattanooga operation within 4,400 square feet of office space downtown, in the Loveman's building on Cherry Street.

"Looking at where we are today and where we know we are going in

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By Camm Ashford

Officials at Network Transport unveiled a plan to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion among its workforce during a special grand opening celebration Tuesday for the company's new headquarters.

"We are an inclusive company," Network Transport President David Ferguson told a group of about 15 community leaders, including staff of the Chattanooga News Chronicle, during a 10:30 a.m. interactive presentation. "Our desire is to have our workforce be a reflection of the community we live in."

Network Transport's diversity challenge is a top priority, said Ferguson, a 25-year veteran in the trucking industry. Some of the recommendations the company is looking



Attending Network Transport Grand Opening, from left: Faith R. Edwards, Executive Editor, Chattanooga News Chronicle talking with Network Transport employee Bernard King, III; and Bria Sibley, Community Forward Schools Coordinator, City of Chattanooga. (Photos: Chronicle Staff: F. Stoudemire).

Studdard Coming To UTC To Teach



From left, Camm Ashford, Associate Editor, Chatt News Chronicle with Ruben Studdard, American Idol winner and UTC Masterclass Instructor; are joined by Studdard's long-time friend, Stacy Lightfoot, UTC vice chancellor for diversity and engagement. (Photo: John Edwards, III, CNC)

By Shawn Ryan

"American Idol" winner Ruben Studdard will be joining the full-time faculty at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Starting fall semester 2022, he will teach two courses, one on the commercial side of the music business and one on the performing side, said Stuart Benkert, head of the Department of Music.

On March 7, Studdard presented a masterclass at a rehearsal of the UTC Singing Mocs. Winner of the 2003 season of "American Idol," he listened to the group's performance, gave advice and offered singing tips.

"I think when Ruben came to do a masterclass, he proved to everyone that he is not only a great performer but an excellent teacher," Benkert said.

"He immediately connected with the students in a relevant and meaningful manner. He improved their level of performance and increased their aware-

ness of what it takes to be performer."

When course enrollment for fall semester begins, students from all majors can sign up, not just music majors.

Studdard returns to UTC on March 28 to hold another masterclass with the Singing Mocs, and the public is invited.

During the masterclass, sponsored by the Department of Music in collaboration with the UTC Division of Diversity and Engagement and the Tivoli Foundation, Studdard will recall his career in the music industry and guests can watch as he coaches the Singing Mocs to refine their performance.

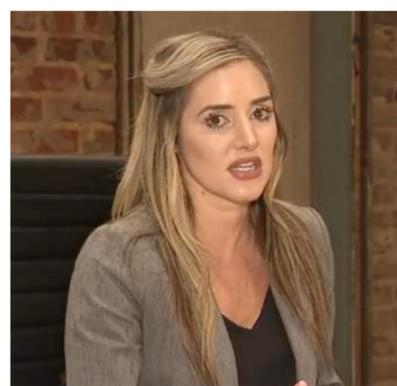
The masterclass event is from 5:30-7 p.m. in the Walker Theatre. Tickets are \$10 for the public, and UTC students will be admitted free with a valid student ID. A \$50 VIP ticket includes a general admission ticket and access to an after-class reception.

Tickets are now on sale via Ticketmaster.

DA Candidate Coty Wamp Under Fire For Calling the NAACP "Divisive"



NAACP President Ann Jones Pierre



Candidate for DA Coty Wamp

By Camm Ashford

Tensions between Hamilton County Assistant District Attorney Coty Wamp who is also a Republican candidate for the office of Hamilton County District Attorney and the Chattanooga NAACP came to a boiling point last Friday when the organization's president demanded an apology from Wamp.

Chattanooga NAACP Branch President the Reverend Ann Jones Pierre said Wamp called the historic civil rights organization "divisive" and accused it of mistreating police officers, and of providing statistics on its website about police crime against black residents, but no corresponding statistics reflecting crimes committed by blacks against blacks.

Wamp "does not understand the purpose of the NAACP and should apologize for misleading the public," Rev. Pierre said last Friday.

"As a branch of this 113-year-old organization, we are nervous when a candidate for the office of Hamilton County District Attorney states that she cannot support the NAACP," Rev. Pierre said. "The DA must be impartial and work for the people of Hamilton County and those people include members of the NAACP."

Wamp, the lead counsel for the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, re-

fused to apologize--instead doubling down by holding a press conference last Friday afternoon where she went on the attack.

"It really was conversational, and I stand by every single thing I said during that probably 35 to 40 minute talk we had," Wamp said, referring to a recently surfaced 43-second audio clip where she was heard speaking last Tuesday night to the Tennessee Valley Republican women at Wally's restaurant--while DA candidates Republican Neal Pinkston and Democrat John Allen Brooks were addressing the NAACP.

"So you all know, there was an NAACP forum tonight for my race between the three candidates," Wamp told the Republican women. "There is a Democrat running against us. There was a forum and I had committed to this in December. I was happy to be able to come here."

She continued, "But listen, the NAACP has accomplished some good things in the last hundred years, but one

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