

Reach for the world



Photos by A. J. Wolfe/The Commercial Appeal

Hundreds of local business leaders came to FedExForum Wednesday for the Memphis Regional Chamber's Chairman's Inaugural Luncheon.

FedEx's Smith says Memphis must pursue, nurture young, creative talent

By JANE ROBERTS
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In his usual frank and succinct style, Frederick W. Smith Wednesday told Memphis to "hitch its wagon to the global economy" and backed the advice with a list of how to's.

"In one word, the biggest factor is China," the FedEx founder, chairman and CEO told hundreds of business leaders at the Memphis Regional Chamber's Chairman's Inaugural Luncheon at FedExForum.

"That one country is changing the face of the world economy and drastically altering world trade."

Locally, the chamber recognized two leaders for changing the face of Memphis as employers and visionaries.

It presented its second annual Kemmons Wilson Emerging Business Award to Darren Metz, president and CEO of NovaCopy, for innovation that transformed a typewriter supply business (Office Equipment Services) into a business that today sells multi-function digital copiers and uses GPS technology to dispatch service tech-

2004 KEMMONS WILSON EMERGING BUSINESS AWARD

Presented to: Darren Metz, president, CEO of NovaCopy.
Address: 5520 Shelby Oaks Drive
Employees: 60
2003 Sales: \$13 million
Web site: www.novacopy.net
Telephone: 388-3399

COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE AWARD

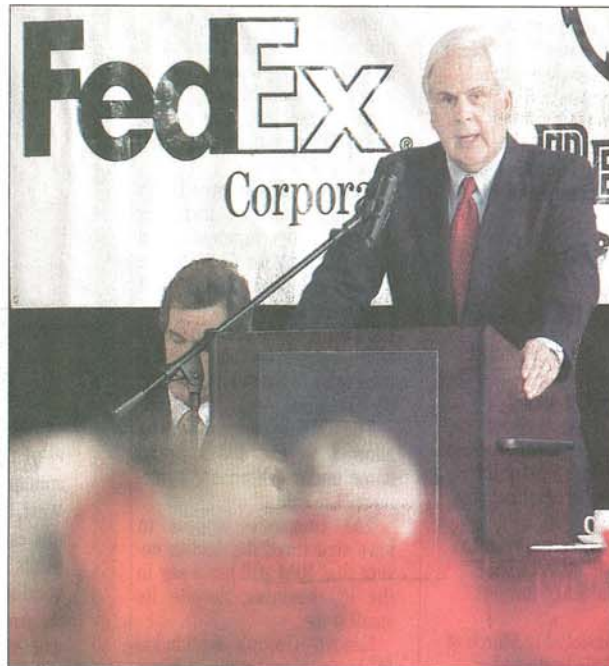
Presented to: Arnold Perl, partner in Young & Perl law firm

- Chairman of the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority
- Chairman, commissioners committee, Airport Council International
- Chairman, New Memphis Arena Public Building Authority
- Senior vice president, Temple Israel
- Trustee emeritus, University of Tennessee

nicians within the hour.

NovaCopy began in Memphis with

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Keynote speaker Frederick W. Smith urged Memphis to "hitch its wagon to the global economy," and to nurture the talent to do that.

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CHAMBER

eight employees in 1998. Today, it employs 60 people who generated \$13 million in sales in 2003.

"We go about our business day-to-day with a passion for customer service and certainly not with an eye for getting awards," Metz said. "It's like a big pat on the back to know that people are noticing."

In a first-time Community Quality of Life Award, the chamber honored Arnold Perl, chairman of the Public Building Authority that oversaw construction of FedExForum.

"Your life has been defined by the quality of your work," Andy Dolich, president of Memphis Grizzlies business operations, told Perl, crediting him for managing not only the city's "gateway

to the world" (Perl is chairman of the Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority), but also for building the "front porch to our city."

Perl, known nationally for his labor mediation skills, "brought peace and brought harmony" to a project that otherwise would have been wrought with "catastrophic friction," Shelby County Mayor A.C. Wharton said.

The early days of the project were marred with fights over minority contractor participation.

In his keynote address, Smith challenged Memphis to collaborate with business partners to encourage expansion and investment here and to "capture the imagination of the imaginative" from other areas.

"The new economy belongs to the young, ambitious, creative and mobile" who "have the time, intellect and talent to make a difference."

To attract them, he suggests Memphis continue to invest in upbeat ways to stimulate entrepreneurs, "promote tolerance" and "nurture talent."

"Welcome newcomers to the city's civic life," he said. "New points of view will give Memphis an even greater economic outlook."

"One hand cannot clap," Smith said, quoting the favorite Chinese proverb of FedEx economist Gene Huang, a Chinese immigrant.

"What that means for us is that one person cannot trade with himself or herself."

"Whether we live in Memphis, Shanghai or Moscow or India, we must all work together to promote global trade. Doing so will mean we ultimately promote the prosperity of our businesses, our cities and countries, and ultimately our world."

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