

Business

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SECTION D

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HUMAN RESOURCE CONSULTANCY LAUNCHES MONDAY

Finding a niche, more than filling it

Charlotte's Johnny Taylor will chair global HR society

BY STELLA M. HOPKINS
Staff Writer

The magnitude of Johnny Taylor's biggest assignment ever hit him in June as he looked at an audience of 13,000 people.

He was in New Orleans, on stage at the annual meeting of the Society for Human Resource Management, with Queen Noor, the widow of Jordan's King Hussein, and quadriplegic actor Christopher Reeve of Superman fame.

Taylor, already a rising star on Charlotte's corporate and civic scene, takes over in January as chair of the 190,000-member society, one of the world's largest professional groups.

"Wow, this is what it's all about," Taylor, 36, recalled feeling, as he introduced the stars to share their stories of leadership. "I'm representing a profession I'm so passionate about."

The chairmanship is a volunteer post. On Monday, he starts a new paying job, launching a business that plays to his passion. He'll be president of McGuireWoods HR Strategies, a new con-



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Johnny Taylor welcomes Jordan's Queen Noor in June at the Society for Human Resource Management's annual meeting in New Orleans.

sulting arm of the law firm sharing its name. He'll open with a major client, Charlotte's Compass Group North America, where he had been an executive vice president and general counsel before leaving to set up on his own.

The firm will specialize in working with top management on such issues as integrating work forces after a merger and labor union disputes. Taylor expects big demand for developing policies to avoid the increasingly common class-action employment lawsuits such as the sex-discrimination filing against Wal-Mart, the largest such case.

More than 10 years of corporate

legal and human resources work convinced him that there's a need for the specialty.

"I've had a number of instances ... where I've had a CEO call me and say, 'We have a mess on our hands. We need a strategy to fix it and prevent it from occurring again,'" he said. "As an HR strategy company, the idea is to get in on the front end."

Taylor, a native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., completed his law degree at Iowa's Drake University in 1992 and joined a Miami law firm. A year later, he moved to video-rental giant Blockbuster as a corporate lawyer.

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Johnny Taylor

Born: Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 1968
Wife: Charlotte Smith-Taylor, Charlotte Sting forward.
Education: University of Miami undergraduate, Drake University law school.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1996: Blockbuster vice president human resources.
1998: Moved to Charlotte, Paramount Parks, senior vice president human resources.
2002: Compass Group N.A., executive vice president, general counsel.
2004: Appointed incoming chair Society for Human Resource Management.
Monday: Launches McGuireWoods HR Strategies.

CIVIC POSTS

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- Board member North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center