

BiS

Savannah banker **TOM WILEY's** proudest accomplishments are his business relationships that have stood the test of time, some of them for more than 34 years. **4 >>>**

SAVANNAH BEE CO. founder Ted Dennard says his company's success comes from chasing something that gives his company an artistic focus. **8**



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\$1⁰⁰



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Everyday Errands Owner Cynthia Sharpley will pick up your dry cleaning and mail and go grocery or giftshopping for you — for a price.

banking

GSU's Ed Sibbold, in the second part of a four-column series, says the second quarter of '09 was tough on Georgia's banks. | **11**

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Errand runners for hire

Short on time?

These services can give you hand. One will even do nearly any service you need, 'as long as it's legal'

BY LANIE PETERSON • For BiS

When a Savannah executive was too busy to shop for his mother's birthday, Cynthia Sharpley picked out the jewelry and flowers.

Short on time and low on groceries? Sharpley can buy what you want, deliver the goods to your kitchen and organize your pantry to boot.

And when one over-loaded professional couldn't wait from noon to 5 p.m. for the cable man to arrive,

Sharpley sat patiently at his home.

Sharpley, a Sandfly entrepreneur, has made running errands her business.

Working from a cozy home office, she runs a 9-month-old firm, Everyday Errands. Her promise: she can do "nearly any service you need, as long as it's legal."

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Sharpley's company is one of several in the Savannah area that does errands for busy professionals or anyone who could use a hand.

Companies offering similar services include 912Food2Go.com, The Last Biscuit and, on Hilton Head Island, a business called Hopper Shopper.

Diana Morrison, chairman of the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors, said the theory behind these firms make sense.

"In this economy, so many people have extra responsibilities. So an executive can farm out a job to someone else to do the things they don't have time to do," Morrison said.

Morrison sometimes has turned to personal services for help.

"I've used a personal shopper," she said. "And if I'm planning a big event, I'll have someone do my grocery shopping. Or, in my business, if we need things picked up, we'll hire someone."

Sharpley, 38, a native of Brazil, says she gained her expertise in pampering people in several managerial jobs at the luxurious Ritz-Carlton hotels. And despite a down economy, she says, she has plenty of customers, all too busy to run small errands themselves.

Her goal is basic: "to simplify and balance your life."

Doing for others — for a price

Sharpley offers a wide range of services. She charges \$30 an hour from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Her rate for Saturday, Sunday and holidays is \$35 an hour.

At least three other local firms focus on delivering groceries or meals to your home.

At 912Food2Go.com, owners Corey and Jayna Phillips deliver food to homes, offices and 50 hotels from restaurants that don't ordinarily offer orders to-go. If you order online, the cost is \$3.99 above the usual cost of a meal — \$5.99 if you order by phone.

Office workers who use the service are saving time, Corey Phillips said. "They don't have to send someone out as a gopher to enjoy a good meal," he said.

Plus, he said, the restaurants he works with — and promotes in brochures and online — benefit by selling as much as \$1,000 a month in extra meals.

Working with six drivers, the Phillipses offer food from Moon River, Spanky's, Kao, Chili's and 12 other restaurants.

Although his focus is delivering meals, Phillips said he will make exceptions.

"Once an older lady who was ordering a meal asked if we could bring her some Ex-Lax," Phillips said. "So we picked it up with her meal. It's all about convenience."

Also delivering food to offices and homes is another home-based business, The Last Biscuit.

The owner, "Momma Ally," said she began the business last New Year's Eve, hoping people would turn to eating instead of driving after a night of drinking.



"Once an older lady who was ordering a meal asked if we could bring her some Ex-Lax. So we picked it up with her meal. ... It's all about convenience."

<<< Corey Phillips, co-owner of 912Food2Go.com

TOP AND FAR LEFT: Sandfly entrepreneur Cynthia Sharpley picks up a client's laundry as well as a few groceries at the Piggly Wiggly on Sandfly recently. Sharpley has made running errands her business. Her 9-month-old firm, Everyday Errands, promises to do nearly any service you need "as long as it's legal."

John Carrington/BiS

LEFT: Corey Phillips, co-owner of 912Food2Go.com, promotes his meal-delivery business at the recent Chamber of Commerce Business Expo and Car Show. 912Food2Go.com delivers food to homes, offices and 50 hotels from restaurants that don't ordinarily offer orders to-go.

Richard Burkhardt/BiS

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These days, "Momma Ally" cooks homemade meals — country fried steak, biscuits and gravy, for instance — and 15 drivers deliver her entrees around the clock.

"Momma Ally" claims to have cooked and delivered "thousands" of meals, many priced at about \$7 each. She said she's making a profit and her drivers "will work for the food."

Her business does well, she said, because people love her fresh biscuits and because "we're good to people. We take care of them."

Hopping around the island

On Hilton Head Island, Brooke Loughman is serving her fifth summer as the island's Hopper Shopper.

Loughman invites tourists to contact her before they arrive and order their vacation groceries. Then she'll deliver as much as \$1,000 in food and drink to their temporary island home.

She'll also supply beach balls, rafts and other beach toys. Plus, Loughman will pick up dry cleaning or order your child a birthday cake. At Christmas, she offers gift wrapping and gift baskets as well.

The idea, Loughman says in her Internet ad, is "to make your vacation arrival as seamless as possible. By ordering your groceries in advance, you can go out and enjoy this beautiful island instead of fighting the crowd in the grocery store."

There is a fee, of course — a minimum \$50 an hour.

Loughman, a full-time office manager, said her Hopper Shopper business has repeat customers and she is making a profit from her side job.

It's hard work, lugging bags of groceries up 20 steps to island homes' front doors, but it's a great workout, she said. Beside, "I love it."

And like others who do errands, she enjoys making life easy for her customers.

As her ad states: "It's time for you to do the things you want to do instead of the things you need to do. It's about time."