

BEL Hall of Fame 2015 Profile

M. James Johnston, *Corporate & Endowment Strategy*

M. James (Jim) Johnston believes that when you do what needs to be done, success will come. This philosophy began early in life, as he watched his parents do what needed to be done to secure professional resources for the special needs of his two sisters. It continued as he was encouraged to do what needed to be done to make the best use of his own talents.

“I had been a good student in high school, and I simply went to work after graduation. My minister saw a different potential and took me to several colleges,” says Jim Johnston, President, Corporate & Endowment Strategy, LLC. “I was admitted to Butler University on probationary status, and later received my MBA degree.”

With that foundation for success, Johnston married his wife Beth, whom he met at Butler, and secured a position at Indiana National Bank in Indianapolis.

“After several years at Indiana National Bank, I was in a meeting at Fort Wayne National Bank,” Johnston says. “Shortly after, Paul Shaffer offered me job there. It was 1968, and I started in a marketing job.”

Johnston’s banking career progressed steadily. In 1992 he accepted the position as President of Fort Wayne National Bank. In 1996 he became its Chairman/CEO.

“Fort Wayne National was steeped in culture and values,” Johnston says. “I was able to maintain and further develop that reputation.”

His dedication to maintaining the bank’s reputation included building business relationships. Those relationships ensured mutual success and allowed employees to give time to the community’s success.

When Fort Wayne National Bank was sold in 1998, Johnston invested time and energy into doing what needed to be done to continue the success of its employees, customers, and the community.

“In 2002, I moved to the third phase of my life. I formed my own consulting company and began connecting people and resources for community success,” Johnston says.

In addition to his Junior Achievement involvement, Johnston’s community activities grew to include serving as president of the Schwab Foundation.

“The ability to help develop the skills of young people dovetails with the work I have been doing with Junior Achievement since the 1970s,” Johnston says. “I know from personal experience the importance of helping young people get into the career that makes the most of their talents.”

Johnston says that by preparing young people to sustain their future, he is “giving back to the community. What I contribute leaves the organizations I’m involved with and the people we serve better for tomorrow.”

“My goals were never to be president or chair of something. Rather, I wanted to do the best job I could. I want to support the right people in doing the right things,” Johnston says.

In addition to his work with Junior Achievement and the Schwab Foundation, Johnston is active with Anthony Wayne Services, Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo, Mad Anthonys Children’s Foundation, and Butler University, as a past Trustee, and currently serves on their Endowment Committee. His dedication has included numerous Board positions and fund-raising campaigns.

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) granted Johnston an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2002. United Way has recognized him as an Outstanding Volunteer. He also chaired the Committee at IPFW to bring Division 1 Athletics to the University.

Johnston is also committed to community redevelopment efforts. In fact, he secured the return of invested funds to the Fort Wayne Alliance, now merged into the Greater Fort Wayne organization. As a result, the Johnston Fund was created for investment into new site development.