



# NEWS RELEASE

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**For immediate release**  
**March 16, 2001**

**What:** Alumni-in-Residence Program - "From the Classroom to the Boardroom"  
**Who:** Mr. Steve Lowrey, president and chief executive officer of Franchise Concepts Inc.  
**When:** Two open forums - 9 to 9:50 a.m. and from 11 to 11:50 a.m., Monday, March 26  
**Where:** Carter Hall, in the University Center, on the USI campus

## **Alumnus to share secrets of success**

A 1976 USI graduate, who is president and chief executive officer of Franchise Concepts Inc. (FCI), will be a featured speaker in the School of Business Alumni-in-Residence Program, Monday, March 26, at University of Southern Indiana.

**Mr. Steve Lowrey** will present two open forums, from 9 to 9:50 a.m., and from 11 to 11:50 a.m., both in the University Center's Carter Hall. His topic will be "From the Classroom to the Boardroom."

As president and chief executive officer of FCI, Lowrey directs all aspects of the Texas-based Corporate Franchise Support Center, an executive staff of more than 50 providing franchise assistance to all FCI brands, including Deck The Walls, The Great Frame Up, and Framing & Art Centre as well as Ashley Avery's Collectables, a joint venture incorporated under FCI. Together, the four brands generate more than \$150 million in annual retail sales.

Bringing more than 30 years of experience to the job, Lowrey's career began with four years in the United States Air Force followed by work at National City Bank, now Integra, and Geo. S. Olive & Co., now Olive LLP, in Evansville.

In 1982 he became a Deck the Walls franchisee. He soon owned three stores and was elected to the first National Franchise Committee, representing the interests of other franchisees in his region. In 1985 he sold his stores to assume the position of director of operations at Deck The Walls.

Promoted to eastern regional vice president in 1986, Lowrey became vice president of WNS Inc. in 1988. He was part of the management team that executed the buyout of the Deck The Walls division from WNS in 1990 and was named senior vice president of real estate and franchise development for Deck The Walls.

In 1997, Lowrey was promoted to president and chief executive officer of Deck The Walls Inc. Under his guidance, the enterprise grew from two concepts, Deck The Walls and Ashley Avery's Collectables, to a system of more than 400 retail stores across the U.S. and Canada. The acquisitions of Framing & Art Centre in 1997 and The Great Frame Up stores in 1998 brought the four brands together and led to formation of Franchise Concepts Inc.

A CPA, Lowrey earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and finance at USI. He is a member of the USI Alumni Association, the International Association of CPAs, and the Indiana CPA Society. He resides in Houston, Texas, with his wife, Marilyn Jo, and their daughter, Stephanie, and is the son of Grace Lowrey of Mount Vernon, Indiana, and the late Joseph Lowrey. His wife's parents, Herman and Mary Lou York, also reside in Mt. Vernon.

The Alumni-in-Residence Program honors successful graduates and provides USI students with opportunities to learn from alumni experiences, insights, and examples. The event is free and open to the public.