



For Immediate Release

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James H. Blanchard Receives 2008 BITS Leadership Award

Washington, D.C. – July 30, 2008 – Former Chairman and CEO of Synovus, James H. Blanchard received the 2008 BITS Leadership Award, presented at a Board meeting of TSYS. The award acknowledges excellence in leadership within the financial services community and exceptional service in advancing the interests of the member institutions of BITS and The Financial Services Roundtable, their customers, and the industry. BITS Leadership Award recipients are innovative leaders who are highly respected by their peers and whose contributions have substantial and lasting benefits to the financial services industry.

During his over 30 years leading Synovus, Blanchard has had numerous accomplishments that are highlights of the industry. His early understanding of the interplay of technology, commerce and financial services served the industry well. He was one of the founding leaders of BITS and was Chairman from 2000 to 2002. In the aftermath of 9-11, Blanchard promoted crisis management coordination among Roundtable members. He championed the payments system through TSYS and his support for BITS' payments work. Over the years, he also promoted industry efforts in privacy, patent reform, data aggregation, and outsourcing risk management.



“Jimmy’s leadership and guidance have had a tremendous, permanent impact on both the companies and the people of our industry,” said Leigh Williams, President of BITS. “He’s helped us address concrete operational issues, and modeled the best qualities of the “servant leader”: honesty, integrity and genuine concern for others.”

Blanchard served as CEO of the Columbus, Georgia-based Synovus family of companies from 1971 through 2006. Synovus is a multi-billion dollar, multi-financial services company. Under Blanchard’s leadership, Synovus has been ranked the No. 1 best place to work in the United States by *Fortune*, and in the top 10 for the past four years. He was named the “1997 Most Respected CEO” in the state by *Georgia Trend*.

The Financial Services Roundtable represents 100 of the largest integrated financial services companies providing banking, insurance, and investment products and services to the American consumer. Member companies participate through the Chief Executive Officer and other senior executives nominated by the CEO. Roundtable member companies provide fuel for America's economic engine, accounting directly for \$65.8 trillion in managed assets, \$1 trillion in revenue, and 2.4 million jobs.

BITS is the operations and technology division of the Roundtable, leveraging intellectual capital to address issues at the intersection of financial services, operations and technology. BITS focuses on strategic issues where industry cooperation serves the public good, such as critical infrastructure protection, fraud prevention, and the safety of financial services.

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