



**The RLJ Companies and Roth Capital Partners  
Launch RLJ Capital Markets, a Full Service Minority Owned Investment Bank and Brokerage  
Firm**

*- RLJ Capital Markets to serve institutional and corporate clients with diverse solutions for debt and equity securities offerings, sales and trading and corporate access -*

*- Firm leverages robust existing platforms via Roth including research and trading resources -*

**Bethesda, MD – July 11, 2016** – Robert L. Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET) and The RLJ Companies, in collaboration with Roth Capital Partners (“Roth”) today announced that they have launched a full service minority owned investment bank, RLJ Capital Markets, which will provide corporations with capital markets solutions that will enhance their ability to raise equity and debt capital, invest in their businesses, and pursue growth opportunities. RLJ Capital Markets provides resources in underwriting and placing equity and fixed income offerings, sales and trading, research and corporate access for institutional investors. The RLJ Companies is one of the nation’s leading minority-owned businesses and owns a controlling stake in RLJ Capital Markets.

The powerful combination of The RLJ Companies and Roth Capital Partners, a well-established investment banking firm dedicated to emerging companies and the small and midcap public market, ensures that clients have access to a network of experienced industry advisors, as well as sales, trading and research platforms. RLJ Capital Markets brings specific sector expertise in Business Services, Consumer, Cleantech, Healthcare, Industrials, Media, Resources and Technology.

Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman of The RLJ Companies, stated, “Over the past fifteen years we have built a platform of minority owned businesses aimed at creating value for large corporations, including top ranked money center banking institutions, which have invested in NYSE traded RLJ Lodging Trust, RLJ Equity Partners, and RLJ Credit Opportunity Fund. RLJ Capital Markets is a natural extension to this robust financial platform. As a full service broker-dealer, it is RLJ Capital Markets’ objective to help clients achieve their growth goals as they seek a diverse solution for debt and equity securities offerings, sales and trading and corporate access with an experienced minority firm that has deep expertise and capabilities. Importantly, because RLJ Capital Markets is collaborating with Roth Capital Partners, an established leader in the financial services industry, its clients will have access to an

extensive network of expertise, and a set of research and trading resources that align with its competencies to meet each client's particular goals."

Byron Roth, Chairman & CEO of Roth Capital Partners, said, "We are pleased to be collaborating with such a respected organization and with Bob Johnson, a true visionary, to build a business that fills an unmet need in the market. In my more than 30 years in the investment banking business, it's become abundantly clear that there is an enormous opportunity to transform the way all types of companies and business leaders access and benefit from the capital markets."

The RLJ Capital Markets founding team includes the following:

- **Eddie Polite:** Most recently at Roth Capital, Mr. Polite brings to RLJ Capital Markets over 25 years of experience working in the securities industry. Prior to Roth Capital, Mr. Polite was responsible for the execution desk at Montgomery Securities; was named the youngest managing director while at Mabon Securities; and was directly responsible for setting up and building out the trading desk as Director of Trading at Global Hunter Securities. In his time at Global Hunter Securities, he also led the initial effort to build Global Hunter Trading which was their MBE broker dealer. Mr. Polite studied economics at the University of Iowa, while playing football, and received his BGS degree from the University of Connecticut.
- **Ernita F. Thomas:** As Senior Vice President and Controller of The RLJ Companies, Ms. Thomas brings 25 years of corporate experience in various financial functions, including managerial and financial accounting, regulatory reporting, budgeting, corporate compliance, planning and forecasting. Previously, Ms. Thomas was an Assistant Controller at Freddie Mac, where she provided reporting and credit analysis related to securitizations and mortgage guarantees. Prior to Freddie Mac, Ms. Thomas worked for ten years in a variety of financial roles with The Carlyle Group. Ms. Thomas graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with a B.S. in accounting, and is a Certified Public Accountant.

Mr. Polite added, "This is an incredibly exciting time to be entering the investment banking space. The midmarket community is an enormous engine of growth for the U.S. economy and we need to connect with it and support it in every possible way. RLJ Capital Markets is well positioned to do that, and going forward, we will build a team of experts and products that establish us as true market leaders."

#### **About RLJ Capital Markets:**

RLJ Capital Markets, a collaboration between The RLJ Companies and Roth Capital Partners, is a full service investment bank and broker-dealer providing institutional and corporate clients with capital markets solutions that enhance their ability to raise equity and debt capital, invest in their businesses, and pursue growth opportunities. RLJ Capital Markets provides resources in underwriting and placing

equity and fixed income offerings, sales and trading, research and corporate access for institutional investors. RLJ Capital Markets is a licensed broker-dealer that is registered with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). More information can be found at [www.rljcapitalmarkets.com](http://www.rljcapitalmarkets.com).

**About The RLJ Companies:**

The RLJ Companies, founded by Robert L. Johnson, is an innovative business network that provides strategic investments in a diverse portfolio of companies. Within The RLJ Companies portfolio, Johnson owns or holds interests in businesses operating in a publicly traded hotel real estate investment trust; private equity; financial services; asset management; automobile dealerships; entertainment; and video lottery terminal (VLT) gaming. The RLJ Companies is headquartered in Bethesda, MD. Prior to founding The RLJ Companies, Johnson was founder and chairman of Black Entertainment Television (BET). For more information visit: [www.rljcompanies.com](http://www.rljcompanies.com).

**About Roth Capital Partners, LLC:**

ROTH Capital Partners, LLC is a relationship-driven investment bank focused on serving emerging growth companies and their investors. As a full-service investment bank, ROTH provides capital raising, M&A advisory, analytical research, trading, market-making services and corporate access. Headquartered in Newport Beach, CA, ROTH is privately-held and employee owned, and maintains offices throughout the U.S. For more information on ROTH, please visit [www.roth.com](http://www.roth.com).

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