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First Commerce to Present Power Forward with Kevin O'Leary on Feb. 6

Next entrepreneurial speaker at Tallahassee's largest annual business event will be Shark Tank's "Mr. Wonderful" talking Success, Entrepreneurship, Money, and Hard Work

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – As small businesses across the country continue to power the economy forward, First Commerce is celebrating their entrepreneurial spirit with the sixth year of its Power Forward Speaker Series. First Commerce announced today that the next Power Forward event will feature acclaimed investor and entrepreneur Kevin O'Leary of *Shark Tank* fame. From modest beginnings to building a billion-dollar business, O'Leary will share insights about life as a shark and what it takes to be successful in business and in life.

Established as Tallahassee's largest annual business event, Power Forward with *Shark Tank*'s "Mr. Wonderful" Kevin O'Leary will be held Wednesday, Feb. 6, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall on FSU's campus.

"We believe small businesses are the backbone of our community, and Power Forward is just one way we support entrepreneurship by inspiring and motivating local business leaders," said Cecilia Homison, CEO of First Commerce. "Kevin O'Leary's story of perseverance and hard work speaks to the heart of what every business owner can accomplish when you dare to dream big."

As the son of a travelling international business expert, O'Leary had the opportunity to live and be educated in Cambodia, Cyprus, Tunisia, Ethiopia, France and Switzerland. After completing his MBA, O'Leary founded Special Event Television, an independent production company that produced original sports programming such as "The Original Six," "Don Cherry's -Grapevine" and "Bobby Orr and the Hockey Legends."

In 1986, O'Leary founded SoftKey Software Products (later called The Learning Company). SoftKey soon became a catalyst of consolidation in the software industry, raising more than \$1 billion in financing and completing a series of aggressive acquisitions. By 1998, O'Leary's company was the undisputed world leader in educational, reference and home productivity software and the world's second largest consumer software company with annual sales over \$800 million. In 1999, Mattel acquired the company for \$4.2 billion.

Among his many successful business ventures, O'Leary is perhaps best recognized for his role on the business reality show, *Shark Tank*. Known as "Mr. Wonderful" on the show, O'Leary is passionate about startups and has invested in numerous small businesses during his 10 years on the show. He describes *Shark Tank* as the embodiment of the American Dream.

"There's something indescribably magical about seeing someone with a dream, and taking the journey from startup to multimillion-dollar business with them," says O'Leary.

Today, O'Leary is the Chairman of O'Shares Investments. He is also the founder and Chief Sommelier of O'Leary Fine Wines, an award-winning wine label, as well as a member of Boston's 107-year old Hamilton Trust. In addition to *Shark Tank*, O'Leary is a regular contributor on ABC, CNBC and CTV, and a bestselling author of two books: *Cold Hard Truth and Men, Women and Money*, and *Cold Hard Truth on Family, Kids and Money*.

The first speaker in the Power Forward Speaker Series in 2013 was also from *Shark Tank*: Barbara Corcoran. Other previous speakers in the Power Forward Speaker Series include Airbnb's Chip Conley; NFL legend and entrepreneur Jim Kelly; Facebook startup team member Randi Zuckerberg; and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak.

Tickets are now available for the sixth annual Power Forward Speaker Series at tickets.fsu.edu (\$40* base price for main level seating and \$30* base price for balcony seating; \$10* for students – student ID required for college students). Tickets also will be sold at the FSU Fine Arts Ticket Office (in the lobby of the Fine Arts Building at 540 W. Call St.). Sponsorship opportunities are available.

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Other sponsors of Power Forward with Shark Tank's Kevin O'Leary include the FSU College of Business, the Office of Economic Vitality, City of Tallahassee, NCR, Harland Clarke, WilliamsGautier Law, Rodney Rich and Co., WCTV, the Tallahassee Democrat, Comcast, 100.7 WFLA, 850 Business Magazine, and Lamar Advertising.

For more information about Power Forward with Shark Tank's Kevin O'Leary, please visit FirstCommerceCU.org/PowerForward.

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**Service fees apply*

First Commerce Credit Union has proudly supported the communities we serve for more than 75 years. Headquartered in Tallahassee, First Commerce is a full-service financial institution with consumer and business products and services, currently serving more than 55,000 members in Northwest Florida and Southwest Georgia. First Commerce has 12 financial centers – eight in Tallahassee, one in Marianna, one in Thomasville and two in Valdosta, Ga. First Commerce was again named "Best of Tallahassee" in 2018. In addition, First Commerce offers a wide range of financial planning and investment services through our subsidiary, Six Pillars Financial Advisors, and auto, home, and life insurance through First Commerce Insurance Agency. For more information, visit FirstCommerceCU.org/Business or call (850) 410-3559 or (850) 488-0035. First Commerce is federally insured by the NCUA and is an equal opportunity lender.