

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Noble Investment Group Opens 122-Room Courtyard by Marriott at the University of Alabama-Birmingham—Downtown Birmingham’s First New Hotel in 15 Years**

**Six-Story Hotel Features Restaurant and Bar,  
Executive Meeting Facilities and Other Premium Amenities**

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.—July 11, 2005—Noble Investment Group, one of the lodging industry’s leading owner/operators of upscale and premium branded hotels and resorts, has opened the Courtyard by Marriott at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The six-story, 122-room property is downtown Birmingham’s first new hotel in 15 years.



The upscale hotel is located at 1820 5th Ave. South and is adjacent to the UAB Hospital North Pavilion parking deck. A skywalk connects the hospital to the parking deck. The skywalk allows patrons to walk indoors for six or more city blocks to the many buildings comprising UAB Hospital.

“The relationship we have established with the leaders of the University of Alabama-Birmingham has enabled our organization to fill a need for first-class service and accommodations in the high-profile medical district of downtown Birmingham,” says Mit Shah, President and C.E.O. of Noble.

“We are pleased that visitors to UAB will have an attractive, convenient place to stay, and that the campus will be able to take advantage of additional meeting and conference space,” adds Richard Margison, UAB's Vice President of Financial Affairs and Administration. “We believe the facility's presence in the heart of our medical district and the features it offers will be real assets to our campus.”

**Noble Investment’s growth strategy**

“We are aggressively looking at development opportunities like the Courtyard by Marriott here in Birmingham, where we can invest in thriving and dynamic communities with strong leadership,” Shah says. “We are focused on developing first-class hotels in markets with high barriers to new competition and in locations that can act as a catalyst for other development in the immediate area.”

The most unique item in the new Courtyard is the space. The design of the lobby, lounge and business center was done in such a way that the individual areas meld into each other to create a sense of openness. Curves—not hard lines—are emphasized.

“All of the space flows and is complemented with high ceilings, touches of marble, wood, brick and glass,” says Richard Duhon, General Manager of the new property. “The design and functionality is very crisp and modern, and the openness encourages interaction.”

The hotel features a street-front restaurant and bar —5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bistro—that will be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bistro, enclosed with large glass windows for a sidewalk view of the cityscape, continues the hotel’s open and interactive design.

“5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bistro’s menu offers a core of traditional favorites and a few exciting specialty items with a New Orleans flare,” Duhon says.

### **Courtyard by Marriott offers ample meeting space**

The hotel has more than 2,200 square feet of flexible meeting space with individual meeting rooms that can hold up to 100 people. Additionally, there is a state-of-the-art board room and an auxiliary meeting room by the board room for catered meals or separate meetings. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bistro will provide all catering onsite and has an extensive menu for meeting and banquet selections.

Each guest room in the hotel will include a mini-refrigerator, high-speed Internet access, a large desk with conveniently placed lighting, and an ergonomic chair for comfort. As part of Marriott’s new bedding initiative, all bed linens—including top linens—will be freshly laundered for each new guest. A business center also will be available to guests.

“The hotel was designed with the business traveler in mind,” says Layne Matthews, Director of Sales for the Courtyard by Marriott.

The property features an on-site fitness center complete with cardiovascular equipment and free weights. The hotel has made arrangements for registered guests to have complimentary use of the new, world-class UAB Campus Recreation Center that offers aquatics, court sports, indoor track, weights, climbing wall and game room. The hotel will provide a courtesy shuttle for guests wishing to travel within a three-mile radius of the hotel.

### **Experienced leadership team**

Duhon and Matthews bring more than 30 years of hospitality experience to the Courtyard by Marriott. Duhon was the general manager for the Courtyard Baton Rouge (La.) Siegen Lane for six years. In addition to being Director of Sales at the Courtyard by Marriott at UAB, Matthews is the Regional Director of Sales for Noble Investment Group's Alabama hotels.

“Noble’s reputation for its commitment to service and loyalty will be easily recognized at the Courtyard by Marriott at UAB,” Matthews says. “It is one of those intangible things that can be seen in a person’s smile, heard in a person’s voice, and experienced in a person’s demeanor. We want to ensure that every experience is a building block to achieving the topmost loyalty of our future guests. A hotel is all about service and that is why we made it our mission to find individuals who possess a passion for excellence in hospitality and embody the Noble mission.”

“When one considers that UAB’s metropolitan impact is close to \$3 billion and that Jefferson County tourism accounted for \$1 billion in 2004, we think this venture will be extremely successful,” says Larry Holt, Director of Research, Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Noble will work closely with UAB to provide internship and scholarship opportunities.

“That is consistent with our company’s commitment to give back to the community and foster relationships therein,” Shah says.

#### About the Courtyard by Marriott at UAB:

The six-story Courtyard by Marriott at UAB, located at 1820 5th Ave. South in downtown Birmingham, Ala., features 122 guest rooms and more than 2,200 square feet of meeting space. Each guest room will include high-speed Internet access and mini-refrigerator. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bistro will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. The hotel is located directly adjacent to the UAB Hospital North Pavilion parking deck. For more information on the Courtyard by Marriott at UAB, call (205) 254-0004, or go to [www.marriott.com/bhmdw](http://www.marriott.com/bhmdw).

#### About Noble Investment Group:

Noble Investment Group is a leading national hospitality organization that makes ownership investments in luxury and upscale hotels, resorts and convention/conference centers, is a preeminent developer of first-class hospitality and mixed-use developments and an award-winning operator of independent destination resorts and upscale hotels affiliated with Marriott, Hilton, Starwood and InterContinental Hotels Group. Currently, Noble operates more than 5,000 hotel and resort guest rooms including more than 600,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, convention and conference centers, championship golf courses, spas, and fine dining operations, together with approximately 7,000 hotel rooms operated by Alliance Hospitality Management, a majority-owned affiliate of Noble.

Since 1979, Noble Investment Group and its predecessors have developed and acquired almost \$1 billion in hospitality assets. In the past year, the company began development on and acquired an aggregate of \$300 million in hospitality investments. For more information on the Noble Investment Group, call (404) 262-9660, or go to [www.nobleinvestment.com](http://www.nobleinvestment.com).

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