

# dbbr DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW

**PROFILE** Chris Lyons' next big client is LeBron James' mother

## FIRM FINDS NICHE MEETING ATHLETES' LEGAL NEEDS



J. ALBERT DIAZ

Miami criminal defense attorney Chris Lyons got in the spotlight after negotiating a plea deal for NFL player Donte Stallworth.

**by John Pacenti, DBR.** The sports world took notice when Miami criminal defense attorney Chris Lyons negotiated a plea deal that got NFL wide receiver Donte Stallworth less than a month in jail for drunken-driving manslaughter.

Soon other athletes started calling him for representation on a variety of matters. Lyons represented professional tennis player Wayne Odesnik before the International Tennis

Federation on a doping issue and former NFL star Warren Sapp in a high-profile domestic abuse charge that was dismissed.

His latest client: LeBron James' mother, Gloria, who was arrested this month after allegedly slapping a valet. Lyons and partner Dan Lurvey aim to establish a new kind of law firm catering to the legal needs of professional, college and Olympic athletes.

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**PROFILE** Chris Lyons representing LeBron James' mother

## FIRM CATERS TO LEGAL NEEDS OF ATHLETES

**by John Pacenti**  
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As the New Orleans Saints prepared to play the Indianapolis Colts in last year's Super Bowl, Miami attorney Chris Lyons received two phone calls.

One came from former NFL star defensive lineman Warren Sapp, and the other from Miami Dolphins defensive lineman Anthony McDaniel. Both had been charged with domestic violence, and both wanted

Lyons

to be represented by Lyons.

Lyons was fresh off his representation of NFL wide receiver Donté Stallworth on a drunken-driving manslaughter charge, and his new clients knew he got results. Lyons dispatched his partner, fellow former Miami-Dade prosecutor Dan Lurvey, to McDaniel, while he drove to meet Sapp.

"That's when you know you are connected, that's when you know you got people out there saying, 'This is the guy to go to,'" Lyons said.

Lyons knew then he had hit on a new business model for Lyons &



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

When Miami criminal defense attorney Chris Lyons negotiated a plea deal for NFL wide receiver Donte Stallworth, right, the sports world took notice. Lyons' newest client is Gloria James, left, the mother of Miami Heat player LeBron James.

Lurvey, one that caters to the legal needs of professional, college and Olympic athletes, and not just in criminal court.

It could be as high profile as a domestic abuse charge or a paternity accusation. Or it could be as mundane as drawing up a rental agreement or as crucial as reviewing a long-term free agent contract.

"The development of the sports concierge law firm resulted from

a commitment to a discreet and effective strategy to accomplish goals complicated by the client's unique position in our society," Lurvey said.

"There is an obligation in this type of representation to mediate an incredible number of interests not inherent in the representation of non-celebrity clientele."

Lyons represented University of

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