



Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1st of the year in which the election is held.

National Director Requirements - Directors Elected Nationally or by Region must be Individual Members of the Corporation admitted to the practice of law. Each such director must meet the following qualifications at the time of election: (a) The candidate shall have been a DRI member for a total of at least five (5) years, and (b) The candidate shall have been a member of at least one DRI substantive law committee for at least three (3) years, and (c) The candidate must have registered for and attended at least one (1) DRI Annual Meeting within the previous three (3) years, and, within the three (3) years prior to the final day of the Annual Meeting, the candidate must have 1) registered for and attended at least two (2) DRI seminars, or 2) registered for and attended one (1) DRI seminar and one (1) DRI Regional Meeting.

Position sought

Second Vice President* Secretary- Treasurer National Director

*If you have declared your candidacy for Second Vice President and are not the successful candidate, will you consider the Secretary - Treasurer Officer position?

Yes No

Name: Ricardo A. Woods

Firm/Company: Burr & Forman, LLP—Equity Partner

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Education:

J. D.-- Samford University-Cumberland School of Law, 2004

B.A.--Political Science--University of Southern Mississippi, 2000

Awards and achievements

100 Black Men of Greater Mobile--President (2010-2012)

Alabama Super Lawyers

Alabama Super Lawyers Rising Star Award, Civil Litigation Defense (2010)

Burr Forman, LLP—Executive Committee Member (2018-present)

Cumberland School of Law Young Alumnus of the Year (2019)

Leadership Mobile Graduate (2010)

Leadership Alabama Graduate (2021)

Mobile Community Action Hero Award (2015)

Mobile's Top 40 Under 40 (Inaugural Class 2009)

Mobile United – Chairman of the Board (2015-2017)

Prichard Preparatory Board of Directors – Chairman of the Board (2017-2019)

Volunteer Lawyers Program Distinguished Service Award (2011)

Areas of practice: Toxic Tort, Product Liability, Insurance Litigation and

Government Liability

Employment history (Please do not include years)

Bowron, Latta & Wasden—Associate

Burr Forman, LLP—Equity Partner

Noteworthy defense work

- Retained to defend a State operated facility in wrongful death action involving the drowning death of a minor.
- Secured summary judgment and successfully served as national medical counsel in mass tort action involving air filtration system and alleged toxic chemical exposure on an aircraft.
- Resolved a complex products liability case after litigating in both state and federal court in the process of defending a manufacturer of a nationally distributed household product in triple wrongful death case involving minors.

- Successfully defended a boiler manufacturer and a companion maintenance company in a wrongful death case (secured summary judgment).
- Retained as trial counsel in a product liability action involving a seatbelt manufacturer where a minor suffered permanent paralysis.
- Retained to defend product liability a manufacturer in law suit arising from the use of a portable breathable air system in an industrial setting (secured dismissal).
- Retained to defend an owner in a catastrophic loss case involving an alleged design defect of multilevel collar system designed to secure an 800-ton floating vessel.
- Retained to defend natural gas pipeline owner in wrongful death case of pipeline construction worker.
- Retained to defend a highway contractor in wrongful death action arising from the death of a law enforcement officer (secured dismissal).
- Retained by oil and gas provider to investigate multiple deaths in an industrial setting.
- Retained as trial counsel in product liability action involving hand held cigarette lighter (secured dismissal).
- Retained in multi district litigation/product liability action arising from the installation of "Chinese Drywall" in residential homes (secured a dismissal).
- Retained by defendant in multi district litigation/products liability suit arising from the use of the manufacturer's clothing near secondary heat sources.
- Retained by industrial printing company to defend a wrongful death action involving the death of a subcontractor's employee.
- Retained as trial counsel in wrongful death case involving a homicide inside a State operated facility.
- Retained as local counsel in a product liability lawsuit involving chemical burns associated with product misuse.
- Retained and successfully represent defendants in double homicide related to liquor liability claims.
- Retained as trial counsel to defend wrongful death action involving a third party criminal act in Escambia County, Florida.

Professional affiliations

Alabama Defense Lawyers (ADLA)
Alabama Lawyers Association Board of Directors (2005-2007)
Alabama Leadership Initiative (2015)
Alabama State Bar Association
American Bar Foundation Fellow
Cumberland Alumni Advisory Board (2012-present)
Defense Research Institute (DRI)
Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel (FDCC)
International Association of Defense Counsel (IADC)
Mississippi Bar Association
Mobile Bar Association Executive Committee Member (2005-2006)
Vernon Z. Crawford Bay Area Bar Association –President (2012-2014)

Have you been a DRI member for 5 or more years?

Please describe your previous involvement in DRI, including but not limited to, leadership positions held. Projects contributed to, Committee memberships, presentations given, and written materials authored. Special accomplishments should also be noted.

DRI member since 2006/active since 2006

I attended the first Diversity for Success Seminar early on in my career, and I have been all in with DRI and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee (“D&I”) ever since that day. Over the years my D&I team and I helped support diversity and inclusion as a core value of DRI.

D&I crafted and rebranded the DRI Diversity & Inclusion Manual. Working together we created a DRI Diversity Tool Kit. We collaborated with Women in the Law and CCC by combining our fly-in meeting during the Diversity for Success Seminar which resulted in a much needed flow of information. This past year in the wake of the death of George Floyd, we conducted a series of town halls in collaboration with the DRI Government Liability and Civil Rights Committee that lead to the formation of the DRI Protect and Serve Task Force.

In addition to working with the SLCs our committee created two new SLDO liaison positions last year (East Coast/West Coast). Our SLDO liaisons actively

reached out to the SLDO community about increasing their diversity efforts. As a result, the D&I committee conducted diversity training for the Arizona Bar Association with a panel of past DRI presidents and board members. Our committee also conducted diversity training/presentations during the Employment & Labor Law Virtual Seminar on November 12, 2020, the DRI North Central Regional Meeting (North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Indiana) on March 4, 2021 and the DRI Super Regional Meeting (Central, Mid, & Mid Atlantic Regions) on May 20, 2021.

We are consistently focused on the next generation of lawyers. We introduced the idea of a pipeline program for law students five years ago by placing a law student forum on the first day of our seminar. The law student program is alive and well today.

We are promoting the DRI Diversity Scholarship in a more robust fashion and the committee members take a very active role in the selection process. Additionally, we are introducing a pilot "Rainmaker Mentoring Program" in collaboration with the Corporate Counsel Committee. The program will enlist 20 diverse mentees, along with 10 D&I committee members and 10 CCC members to serve as mentors in a yearlong endeavor designed to expose young lawyers to the inner workings of the in-house/outside counsel relationship.

Last and certainly not least, the D&I Committee was the first SLC to hold an in person seminar in June of 2021 in New Orleans. We registered over a 150 people and lead the way to getting back to normal with in person meetings.

Committee Memberships:

Chair, DRI Diversity & Inclusion Committee (2019-present)
Vice-Chair, DRI Diversity & Inclusion Committee (2017-2019)
DRI Diversity Scholarship Selection Committee (2018-2021)
DRI Protect and Serve Task Force
DRI Annual Meeting Steering Committee (2019-2021)
Member DRI Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Steering Committee
Member DRI Product Liability Committee
Member DRI Insurance Law Committee
Member DRI Government Liability Committee
Member DRI Nominating Committee (2020)

Presentations include the following:

Diversity for Success Seminar/Corporate Expo: "How to Conduct a Zoom Pitch Meeting," (June 2021)

Diversity for Success Seminar/Corporate Expo: "Law Student Forum," (June 2021)

Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Virtual Seminar: "Environmental Justice in the Wake of a Disaster: Dissecting the Connection between Minority Communities and Disasters Through a Legal Lens," (June 2021)

Young Lawyers Seminar: "Beyond Lip Service: What Present and Future Managing Partners, Equity Partners, and Decision Makers Need to Hear About How They Can Meaningfully Advance Diversity and Inclusion from Within (And Ways to Tell Them)" (June 2021)

Future Leaders Virtual Boot Camp: "How Do I Know What I Don't Know?: A Day In the Life of Management," (March 2021)

Asbestos Medicine Virtual Seminar: "Three's Company: Ethical Issues," (November 2020)

Employment and Labor Law Virtual Seminar: "Welcome Remarks and What Lies Beneath the Surface?" (November 2020)

Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar: Life, Health, Disability and ERISA Seminar" (April 2020) **CANCELLED**

Litigation Skills Seminar: Deposition of Plaintiff's Damages Expert, Dr. Carson Jones (March 2020) **CANCELLED**

Civil Rights and Governmental Tort Liability: "Ethical Issues in the Tripartite Relationship," (January 2020)

Insurance Coverage and Practice Symposium: "Ethical Issues with Sharing Information," (December 2019)

Diversity for Success Seminar: "Moving on Up or Out," (June 2019)

Product Liability Seminar: "Conducting Voir Dire in the Same Case, With the Same Product," (February 2019)

Product Liability Seminar: "Opening Statements in the Same Case, With the Same Product," Moderator (February 2019)

Diversity for Success Seminar and Corporate Expo: Law Student Forum: "A Frank Discussion on Succeeding As a Minority Attorney," (June 2018)

Diversity for Success and Corporate Expo: "Joint Workshop of Corporate Counsel and Managing Partners," (June 2017)

Insurance Bad Faith and Extra-Contractual Liability Seminar: "Crystal Ball: The Biggest Recent Bad Faith Decisions and Case Product Liability Conference," (June 2015)

Articles written for DRI include:

"Conducting Voir Dire in the Same Case with the Same Product, but in Different Parts of the Country," *For the Defense* (November 2019)

"A New Skill Set: Navigating Your New Life as Corporate Counsel," *For the Defense*, (September 2019)

"Trouble in Paradise: The Increasingly Dangerous Legal Landscape for Pesticide Exposure," *Covered Events*, Issue 10 (October 2018)

"Message from the Diversity Seminar Program Chair," *Diversity Insider*, Volume 9 Issue 1 (June 2017)

"¡Cuidado! Danger Ahead! The Heeding Presumption and the Duty to Warn in Spanish," *DRI Diversity Insider*, (Spring 2013)

"Pitfalls and Opportunities: Avoiding the Cost of Spoliation," *For the Defense*, (April 2011)

List any leadership roles in other defense organizations.

None.

Describe your goals if you are elected to the above position.

If elected as a National Director, I have three goals.

First, I want to focus on helping DRI successfully shift to the next stage of its evolution as a thriving organization made for and supported by the lawyers who represent business. Second, I want to make sure that our dedication to our core goals of education, justice, balance, economics, professionalism and service remain steadfast. Third, I want to make sure our diversity and inclusion efforts continue to grow within the organization.

COVID-19 has changed the practice of law and we have to adapt in the way we recruit new members, network, serve our clients, provide business development opportunities and support our current members. I would like to focus on the systems and strategies that work for our SLCs and SLDOs and replicate them where possible because effectively doing helps our clients and our profession. I want to consistently evaluate what works and what does not work in our organizational structure. For example the Young Lawyers Committee has a measured application process for their leadership pipeline and Women in the Law have a robust membership program. Those systems can be replicated.

DRI already provides premiere educational opportunities. I think it is vital that we continue to raise the bar as we move forward. Our content is amazing. We can raise the bar by reaching a larger audience with information that aids them in adapting to the changing legal landscape (i.e. Zoom depositions, and remote hearings). Our programming must continue to be top tier, competitive in costs, serve as a counter balance the plaintiff's bar and improve the profession.

We can do both by critically evaluating what works already and consistently replicating the systems that work for us. There is always room for improvement.

What do you believe is the most important issue confronting the defense bar?

The most important issue confronting the defense bar today is the commoditization of professional legal services coupled with the rapid change of the legal practice.

Far too often clients believe all lawyers/law firms have an equal ability to solve problems, provide guidance and garner superior results. Consequently, clients are consistently seeking to reduce the amount of their legal spend, sever

relationships and treat our services like widgets. This problem has manifested itself in a number of ways including but not limited to; serious discussions about profitability by law firms, artificial rate pressure, consolidation of law firms and less time to teach the next generation of defense lawyers how to practice of law.

It is vital that DRI continue to provide our members with first class educational opportunities to learn and further develop their law practices. It is critical that we maintain our network of high level legal professional who advocate for the people and places that create employment opportunities. And, it is supremely important that we strengthen our relationship with the business community at large. In order to accomplish these goals we need to maintain the pipeline of great leaders and strong networks.

Without a strong leadership team, a strong network and the ability to confront this issue using our platform we stand to lose the ground DRI has gained in the business community over the last 60 years.

Define the appropriate role for DRI as the national defense bar organization.

DRI serves more than one role for the defense bar. We have a singular purpose as advocates, but we serve many different roles for our members and that is a good thing. For some we are a leadership proofing ground for lawyers, a center stage for extroverts, a publications platform for introverts and a clearing house for experts.

We are a locally known, nationally recognized and internationally respected platform for the lawyers who represent the interests of the collective business community. To others we are a think tank full of professional advocates and a network of people striving to improve the way we practice law.

DRI is a place where young lawyers and experienced lawyers can continue to grow their skill sets, expand their business contacts and enhance their professional networks. We are a repository for great ideas, valuable information, strong principles, stellar programs and most importantly a broad network of people who know a great deal about this profession.

Simply put our purpose is to serve as the voice of the defense bar and the businesses we represent on an international level. Our role in this organization is unique because it allows us to enhance the profession by serving each other.

Family:

I am married to the remarkable Tina Woods and we have two daughters, Danielle, age 15 and Morgan, age 13.