



Woods Rogers and Vandeventer Black to Merge, Forming Virginia-Based Powerhouse Law Firm

With Offices Spanning the Commonwealth, Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black Will Offer Greater Breadth and Depth of Legal Talent and Enhanced Services for Clients



Virginia law firms Woods Rogers and Vandeventer Black announced plans to merge this year. From left to right, current leadership includes Woods Rogers President Daniel Summerlin, Woods Rogers Chair Victor Cardwell, Woods Rogers Chief Financial Officer Autumn Visser, Vandeventer Black Managing Partner Michael Sterling, Vandeventer Black Executive Board Member Deborah Casey, and Vandeventer Black Executive Director Paul Julius (Photos provided by Woods Rogers and Vandeventer Black).

Two of Virginia's most highly respected law firms, **Woods Rogers** and **Vandeventer Black**, have entered into a formal agreement to merge, creating a regional powerhouse to be known as **Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black**. With the intent of operating as a combined firm as quickly as possible, firm leaders are moving forward to finalize the organizational structure and execute integration plans. The new Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black will become one of Virginia's largest law firms with more than 130 attorneys and a total workforce of more than 250 people.

"Mutual respect, cooperation, community leadership and an unwavering dedication to client service are deeply rooted traits our firms have in common," said **Daniel Summerlin, president of Woods Rogers**. "We share a vision with Vandeventer Black for the future of our business and look forward to bringing our collective talent and a wider range of specialties to clients as we grow stronger together."

The combination of Woods Rogers, founded in Roanoke in 1893, and Vandeventer Black, established in Norfolk in 1883, highlights the heritage and legal talent of both firms across many industry sectors and in key areas such as corporate and transactions, finance, commercial real estate, litigation, construction, transportation, energy, labor and employment, government contracts, cybersecurity, intellectual property, and more.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to create a more robust platform to serve clients with enhanced legal expertise for Virginia businesses, including the technology and manufacturing corridors," said **Vandeventer Black Managing Partner Michael Sterling**. "By joining forces with Woods Rogers, we are ensuring the continuity of a high-quality,

multiservice law firm for our clients and, at the same time, providing access to more capabilities and resources across the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

As the combined firm’s leadership team fills out, Summerlin will remain in the role of president, **Woods Rogers Board of Directors Chair Victor Cardwell** continues as chair, **Vandeventer Black Executive Board Member Deborah Casey** becomes vice-chair, and **Woods Rogers Chief Financial Officer Autumn Visser** will serve as the new firm’s CFO. Vandeventer Black Executive Director Paul Julius will become executive director of the new firm. The full board of the combined firm will be elected shortly and will include a Managing Member of the Norfolk office from Vandeventer Black.

Both firms share a strong commitment to corporate citizenship that will continue to grow in the combined firm. As Virginia’s Law Firm® with offices in five key markets and a significantly larger bench of attorneys, efforts will increase to have more attorneys serve on the boards of nonprofits and community and business organizations in each location as well as in statewide positions.

Cardwell is currently president of the Virginia Bar Association. Earlier this year, the gavel was handed over to Cardwell by **Vandeventer Black’s Richard Ottinger**, who served as VBA president in 2021. The combined firm can count ten lawyers who have served as VBA president.

“We’ve had the opportunity to collaborate with one another on several legal industry initiatives over the years. Each firm has a long history of providing pro bono counsel, so our dedication to public service is a connection that will cross over into future endeavors,” said Cardwell.

Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black will be attractive to lateral and associate candidates — including out-of-state attorneys — interested in a firm that recognizes work-life balance and values community involvement. The combined firm will provide a flexible structure that stands apart from larger firms where entrepreneurial attorneys are able to build and sustain their practices with strong specialization in services.

“Our law firm will become a destination for Virginia’s next generation of attorneys, and we will continue to promote the advancement of inclusiveness and diversity through several areas and programs that will come forward in the merger,” Cardwell added.

Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black will span the state with offices in Roanoke, Norfolk, Richmond, Lynchburg and Charlottesville. With additional locations in Kitty Hawk, NC, and Hamburg, Germany, the firm will serve local, Mid-Atlantic, national and international clients. The combined firm’s attorneys are admitted to practice in 20 states and appear before federal courts across the country.

Currently, *Virginia Business* ranks Woods Rogers as #7 and Vandeventer Black as #12 of the largest law firms in Virginia.

ABOUT WOODS ROGERS PLC

More than 80 attorneys at Woods Rogers provide counsel to a variety of industries throughout Virginia, the Mid-Atlantic, and beyond. The firm’s clients include major corporations, small and mid-sized businesses, entrepreneurs, start-up ventures and individuals. For more information about Woods Rogers, its 125+ year history, and its commitment to helping businesses, individuals and communities thrive, visit **www.woodsrogers.com**.

ABOUT VANDEVENTER BLACK LLP

Vandeventer Black LLP is a dynamic business and litigation law firm established in 1883 dedicated to responsiveness and results while delivering internationally recognized legal solutions. Headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia’s commercial gateway, its accomplished and diverse attorneys assist clients from offices in Virginia, North Carolina and Germany. For more information, visit **www.vanblacklaw.com**.