

E. Lee Davis

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EDUCATION

University of Georgia School of Law, Athens, Georgia

- Juris Doctor Cum Laude, May 1991
- American Jurisprudence Award for Achievement in the Study of Legal Profession, 1989

Georgia Southern College, Statesboro, Georgia

- Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Summa Cum Laude, June, 1987
- Bell Honors Scholar
- Phi Kappa Phi
- University System of Georgia Academic Recognition Award, 1987
- Outstanding Achievement in Political Science Award, 1987

EMPLOYMENT

Armstrong State University, Savannah, Georgia

University Counsel, January 2011 to present

- Founded university's Office of Legal Affairs, established near paperless record keeping and workflow
- Provide legal advice to administrators throughout the university on matters including contractual relations, employment (including faculty tenure and promotion matters), student affairs (including student due process issues), grants and sponsored programs, athletics, audit, and clinical affiliations
- Represent the university in contract negotiations; write and review university contracts
- Member of President's Cabinet leadership team
- Represent the university in administrative agency matters, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Liaison to University System of Georgia Office of Legal Affairs and the Georgia Department of Law
- Liaison to outside counsel for litigation and immigration matters
- Custodian of Public Records for purposes of the Georgia Open Records Act
- Member of university's Behavioral Assessment Team, Diversity Council, Campus Safety Committee, and ad hoc committee assignments
- Corporate secretary for Armstrong State University Foundation, Inc. and Armstrong State University Educational Property Foundation, Inc.

Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia

Associate Vice President for Legal Affairs, January 2006 through January, 2011

- Provided legal advice to administrators throughout the university on matters including contractual relations, employment, (including faculty tenure and promotion matters), real estate (including the issuance of tax-exempt bonds), student affairs (including student due process issues), grants and sponsored programs, and intergovernmental relations
- Represented the university in contract negotiations
- Wrote and reviewed university contracts
- Represented university in administrative agency matters, including EEOC and Georgia CEO, EPA and Georgia EPD
- Represented university in NCAA hearings and investigations
- Liaison to outside litigation counsel, as well as outside counsel used for tax-exempt bond finance and employment of international faculty and staff
- Chief legal adviser to the President
- Oversaw Office of Diversity Services; hired and supervised Director
- Hired and supervised Assistant University Attorney
- Converted Office of Legal Affairs to near-paperless filing and workflow system
- Founder, Executive Director and Corporate Secretary for Georgia Southern University Housing Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation established to assist the university in acquiring and developing real estate
- Corporate Secretary for Georgia Southern University Research and Service Foundation, Inc.
- Provided in-service training to Georgia Southern employees on a variety of topics
- Custodian of Public Records for purposes of the Georgia Open Records Act
- DMCA designated agent

University Attorney, January 2000 through December 2005

- Co-founded university's Office of Legal Affairs
- Provided legal advice to administrators in Business and Finance, Student Affairs, University Advancement, and the President on a wide range of legal issues
- Represented the university in contract negotiations and before administrative agencies
- Liaison to outside litigation counsel
- Conducted internal investigations
- Founding incorporator and Corporate Secretary for Georgia Southern University Housing Foundation, Inc.
- Negotiated and managed real estate acquisitions and leases
- Provided in-service training to managers and employees

Assistant to the Vice President for Business and Finance for Legal Affairs, March 1995 through December 1999

- Provided legal advice to administrators in Business and Finance, Student Affairs, University Advancement, and the President
- Provided in-service training for managers and employees
- Managed real estate leases on behalf of university and foundation
- Developed contract processes for Georgia Southern Athletics
- Liaison to outside litigation counsel
- Liaison to University System of Georgia Legal Affairs Office and Facilities Office
- Ad hoc committee assignments

Edenfield, Stone & Cox (now Edenfield, Cox, Bruce & Classens, P.C.), Statesboro, Georgia

Associate Attorney, June 1991 through March 1995

- General full-service advisory, litigation, and appellate practice, including education law, personal injury, domestic, business torts, collections, banking, product liability, eminent domain, and governmental immunity
- Representative clients: Bryan County Board of Education, Farmers & Merchants Bank, Rozier Ford Lincoln Mercury, Life Insurance Company of Georgia
- Selected reported appellate cases (briefed and argued): Bland v. Bulloch County, 205 Ga. App. 317, 422 S.E.2d 223 (1992) (ended practice of using pro-rata valuation for portions of landowner's property taken in partial taking highway condemnations); Ward v. Pembroke State Bank, 212 Ga. App. 322, 441 S.E.2d 691 (1994) (strengthened state law protections for debtors in foreclosure proceedings involving more than one promissory note); Stafford v. Bryan County Board of Education, 212 Ga. App. 6, 440 S.E.2d 774, 89 Ed. Law Rep. 674 (1994) (established limitations of appellate court's jurisdiction in ongoing superior court litigation)

BAR ADMISSIONS

Member, State Bar of Georgia. Admitted to bars of all courts of the State of Georgia, including Georgia Court of Appeals and Georgia Supreme Court. Admitted to the bar of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit

E. Lee Davis

May 17, 2017

President Richard A. Carvajal
and
Search Committee Chair,
Chief Legal Affairs Officer Search
Valdosta State University
1500 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA 31698

Dear President Carvajal and Legal Affairs Search Committee:

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Chief Legal Affairs Officer at Valdosta State University. During my 26-year legal career, it has been my privilege to play a key role in building and leading legal affairs offices within two University System of Georgia universities. As Georgia Southern University's first in-house counsel, I established that institution's first procedures for contract review, and in cooperation with various university officers created processes for legal review of personnel matters, business relationships, cooperation with municipal and state agencies, and litigation management. At Armstrong State University, I worked with colleagues on the President's Cabinet and throughout the institution to establish similar processes.

Though this work has helped manage these universities' exposure to liability, it is perhaps more important that my colleagues and I have found ways to see the law as a tool rather than impediment. From the establishment of Georgia Southern's Housing Foundation and the numerous projects we financed and built on that campus, to the Professional Development Schools Armstrong's College of Education is establishing in cooperation with local school districts, with hundreds of clinical affiliations, academic collaborations, real estate transactions, marketing ventures along the way, I have written the agreements, counseled internal constituents, collaborated with outside counsel, negotiated with community partners, and generally found ways to treat the law as an asset.

It isn't always that exciting. Much of what the in-house attorney does at a university involves reading and writing policies and agreements that are functional but something less than literary. But these tasks offer an opportunity to grow relationships with colleagues, to earn the trust that will be so important when a crisis threatens or an opportunity beckons. And, at its best, it gives me the happy task of offering the best legal advice of all: Don't worry about this.

I have the ability to bring to this position 22 years of University System of Georgia experience, 17 years of law office management experience, and a global understanding of the role a legal affairs office can play in a public university. This experience, coupled with my collaborative attitude and patient relationship building, qualifies me for leadership of VSU's legal affairs office.

One experience I have never had is to join an existing, functioning legal affairs office. I wouldn't want to underestimate that challenge, but I believe that it would be very interesting to learn the history of that, to understand what the fine lawyers who have served Valdosta State over the years have accomplished. I would also appreciate the chance to learn more about the university's needs, expectations, and pressing concerns. I wish you all the best in your search for a new Chief Legal Affairs Officer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Lee Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

E. Lee Davis