

Chief Judge Jeri Somers, Former Chair of the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals, to Join Jenner & Block

News

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WASHINGTON – JUNE 8, 2021 – Jenner & Block is pleased to announce that the Honorable Jeri Somers (Ret.), the former chair of the United States Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA), will join as a partner in the firm's Washington, DC, office. Chief Judge Somers, who starts with the firm on July 6, will be a member of the firm's Government Contracts and Grants Practice, the third former senior government official to join the growing team.

Chief Judge Somers, who stepped down as CBCA chair on May 31, heard and decided contract disputes between government contractors and civilian federal government agencies under the Contract Disputes Act. She also oversaw alternative dispute resolution services for government contract and other matters involving federal agencies. As chair, Chief Judge Somers was also responsible for the management and budget of the CBCA, which has worldwide jurisdiction.

"Jeri's dedication to excellence throughout her career makes her a great fit for Jenner & Block, where we are deeply committed to providing exceptional client service," said Thomas J. Perrelli, chair of the firm. "Equally significant, Jeri shares the firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion, public service, and pro bono work. We are thrilled to welcome her to the firm."

Chief Judge Somers adds a critical component to Jenner & Block's Government Contract Practice, which is already home to David B. Robbins, a former Air Force Suspending and Debarring Official and Deputy General Counsel (acting), former Air Force global Procurement Fraud Remedies Director, and the former co-chair of the Department of Defense/NASA Procurement Fraud Working Group, and Partner Noah B. Bleicher, who formerly served as a senior bid protest hearing officer at the US Government Accountability Office, where he also previously served as lead government contracts counsel for reviews of government-wide procurement and acquisition policies.

"Jeri is widely known and respected in the government contracts community, and her Board of Contract Appeals judicial experience is a rare find among law firms and will be invaluable to our clients," said Mr. Robbins, a co-chair of the practice. "Her extensive knowledge of requests for equitable adjustments claims, appeals, and cost-related matters add tremendous strength to our already sophisticated team of lawyers."

While on the bench, Chief Judge Somers presided over high-stakes trials with millions of dollars at issue. Notable cases include *Systems Integration & Management Inc. v. General Services Administration* (case presented a novel issue of jurisdiction over claims for a contractor whose status had been forfeited); *Fluor Intercontinental Inc. v. Department of State* (claims arising from a \$63 million design and construction of an embassy complex in Kazakhstan) and *Nu-Way Concrete Company, Inc. v. Department of Homeland Security* (finding that despite evidence of potential entitlement, absence of records or evidence resulting in a denial of the claim for failure to prove quantum).

Before her appointment as chair, Chief Judge Somers served as vice chair from 2008 until 2017. She became a member of the CBCA in 2007, having served on the Department of Transportation Board of Contract Appeals since 2003.

Previously, Chief Judge Somers served in the US Air Force as a lawyer in the Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG), retiring in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She also served as a trial attorney in the National Courts Section, Civil Division of the Department of Justice; as an Assistant US Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia (Alexandria Division); and as a lawyer in private practice.

Chief Judge Somers has been a professorial lecturer in law at the George Washington University Law School since 2009, where she also serves on the school's Government Contracts Advisory Board and at the American University Washington College of Law since 2018. She recently served on the board of governors for the Virginia Bar Association, and is actively involved in the American Bar Association's Public Contract Law Section, Federal Bar Association, Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, Asian American Pacific Bar Association, and the Women's Advisory Board for the Girl Scouts National Capital Region.

"I made the decision to join Jenner & Block for its exceptional people, respected practices, and deeply held values that I share with the firm," said Judge Somers. "I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues to guide clients through their most important matters and help grow the firm's successful Government Contracts and Grants Practice."

Chief Judge Somers holds a law degree from the American University Washington College of Law and a bachelor's degree from George Mason University.

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