



GEORGIA BANKERS ASSOCIATION
the resource that empowers

News Release

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Leadership Transition Announced at Georgia Bankers Association

Longtime Georgia Bankers Association (GBA) President and Chief Executive Officer Joe Brannen will retire on July 15, 2024, the 44th anniversary of his joining the association.

In making the announcement, GBA Chairman Rhodes McLanahan, Chief Executive Officer of First American Bank and Trust Company, Athens, said, "Joe has served the association and industry during the most transformative four decades of our industry. He has led the association with intelligence, passion, and integrity, and his members-first focus leaves an impactful legacy for those following in his footsteps. We are grateful for his leadership and wish him and his family well as they embark on this new chapter in life."

"It's been the honor and privilege to work with bankers throughout Georgia, helping them make dreams come true for their communities' individuals, families, and businesses. We have a great team of professionals at the association, and our goal has always been to be a resource that empowers our members' efforts. I hope I added value along the way," said Brannen.

"I want to give special thanks to my wife and partner, Vilda, who's been by my side for more than 59 years. I couldn't have navigated this journey without her support and sacrifice," he said.

During his time at the association, Brannen has served as a member and chair of the boards of the Georgia Bar Foundation, the Georgia Society of Association Executives, the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University, and the American Bankers Association Alliance of State Associations.

He has also been on the boards of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the State YMCA, the Committee of 100 of Emory University's Candler School of Theology, and the Northside United Methodist Church. He also serves as an advisory board member of the recently formed AmFree, the American Free Market Chamber of Commerce.

Brannen graduated from the University of Georgia with a B.S. in Agriculture, majoring in chemistry. He is a member of the Gridiron Secret Society and the American Society of Association Executives, where he earned his Certified Association Executive designation. Prior to joining GBA, Brannen served eight years on the staff of U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn (D-GA).

Concurrent with Brannen's retirement news, McLanahan announced that Tripp Cofield has been named GBA's incoming President and CEO. Cofield currently leads the affiliate companies GBA Insurance Trust, Inc., Paragon Benefits, Inc., and GBA Retirement Services, Inc.

"Tripp has been a friend and trusted advisor for a dozen years. Working directly with him for the last 15 months, seeing how he interacts with people, listens and learns, makes sometimes tough decisions, and uses his incredible intellect for good, proved to the search committee and me that he's the right person to lead the association in the future," said Brannen.

About the Georgia Bankers Association: Founded in September 1892, the Georgia Bankers Association promotes the general welfare and usefulness of banking and the preservation of a sound banking system. For 132 years, GBA has been the resource for all of Georgia's banks, providing effective government relations and public advocacy, a community of professional peers, top-quality education and professional development, and revenue-enhancing products and services.

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