



**GEORGIA BANKERS ASSOCIATION**  
the resource that empowers

# News Release

Chairman Contact: Rhodes McLanahan | Chief Executive Officer  
First American Bank and Trust Company, Athens, Ga.  
706.354.5093 | rhodes@fabt.bank

GBA Contact: Tripp Cofield | President & Chief Executive Officer-elect  
617.909.9530 | tcofield@gabankers.com

April 8, 2024

## Cofield Named Georgia Bankers Association Leader

Tripp Cofield has been elected by the Georgia Bankers Association (GBA) Board of Directors as the association's incoming President and CEO when the longtime current leader, Joe Brannen, retires on July 15, 2024.

In making the announcement, GBA Board Chairman Rhodes McLanahan, Chief Executive Officer of First American Bank and Trust Company, Athens, said, "I have gotten to know Tripp over the last 15 months since he joined GBA as part of our management succession plan. His thoughtful and intelligent approach to solving complex problems, complemented by his engaging leadership style and years of experience focusing on state and federal legislative and regulatory policy, makes him the right leader for the association. I'm excited about the future of our industry and our association and confident Tripp and the GBA team will successfully lead us forward."

"It's an incredible honor to be chosen by the Board of Directors to lead the Georgia Bankers Association. Our organization was founded in 1892 on the belief that in union, there is strength, and bankers speaking with one voice could wield a mighty influence. The years I've spent in the legislative and regulatory arenas have led me to believe those words are as true today as they were all those years ago. The Georgia banking industry does a wonderful job serving its customers and communities, and I very much look forward to working alongside the talented team at GBA, our exceptional volunteer leaders, and bankers across the state to serve our industry and share our story," said Cofield.

"Tripp has been a friend and trusted advisor for a dozen years. Working directly with him these 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 me he's the right person to lead the association in the future," said Brannen.

Cofield, a Valdosta native and graduate of Valdosta State University, earned his Juris Doctor Cum Laude from New England Law, Boston, MA, with an emphasis on taxation and financial services regulation.

He served as a Legislative Fellow for the U.S. House of Representatives before joining the staff of U.S. Rep. Rob Woodall (R-GA) as Legislative Counsel and House Budget Committee Associate. His issue portfolio included health care, financial services, taxation, trade, labor, and budget.

Prior to joining GBA, Cofield also served as the National Policy Counsel for the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation and Vice President for Government Relations for the Georgia Hospital Association.

Since January 2023, Cofield has been President and CEO of GBA Insurance Trust, Inc., Paragon Benefits, Inc., and GBA Retirement Services, Inc. The health and wellness affiliate serves over 12,000 members and their families. The retirement affiliate has \$295 million under management, representing the savings of more than 3,000 bankers as they prepare to secure their financial future in retirement.

Rick Whaley, Chairman of the Board of the GBA Insurance Trust and President and CEO of the Citizens Bank of Americus, said, "Tripp's healthcare policy background gave him the tools to lead the Trust when we needed his expertise to address rising costs, maintain statewide access to care for bankers and their families, and efficiently organize and lead our the 30-member team. He did that and much more, and I've appreciated his collaborative, enthusiastic approach to taking on challenges. Tripp will join the Board with this transition, and we look forward to his ongoing leadership at the Trust, which has provided our members with health, life, and other insurance benefits for more than 59 years."

Cofield resides in Madison with his wife, Jenny, a teacher in the Morgan County Charter School System, their 13-year-old daughter, Pinckney, and 7-year-old son, Rex.

**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.

-GBA-