



Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1st of the year in which the election is held.

National Director Requirements - Directors Elected Nationally or by Region must be Individual Members of the Corporation admitted to the practice of law. Each such director must meet the following qualifications at the time of election: (a) The candidate shall have been a DRI member for a total of at least five (5) years, and (b) The candidate shall have been a member of at least one DRI substantive law committee for at least three (3) years, and (c) The candidate must have registered for and attended at least one (1) DRI Annual Meeting within the previous three (3) years, and, within the three (3) years prior to the final day of the Annual Meeting, the candidate must have 1) registered for and attended at least two (2) DRI seminars, or 2) registered for and attended one (1) DRI seminar and one (1) DRI Regional Meeting.

Please also see the DRI Board of Director and Officer Competencies, attached.

Position sought:

Second Vice President* Secretary- Treasurer National Director

*If you have declared your candidacy for Second Vice President and are not the successful candidate, will you consider the Secretary - Treasurer Officer position?

Yes No

Name David L. Jones

Firm/Company Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP

Address 200 West Capitol Ave., Ste. 2300, Little Rock AR 72201

Telephone 501.212.1263

Cell Phone 501.416.4200

E-mail djones@wlj.com

How long have you been a member of DRI?

16 years

Areas of practice:

Please provide your employment history in chronological order beginning with the current position.

Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP (Arkansas)
Riley Bennett & Egloff LLP (Indianapolis)
Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates, & Woodyard P.L.L.C. (Arkansas)
Trammell Law Firm (Arkansas)

Please describe your previous involvement in DRI, including but not limited to, leadership positions held, projects contributed to, committee memberships, presentations given, and written materials authored. Special accomplishments should also be noted.

National Director, (2021-Present); Chair, Cares Committee (2023-Present); Vice Chair DRI Cares Committee (2022-2023); Chair, Construction Law Committee (2019-2021) (Davis Carr Outstanding Committee Chair Award 2020); Vice-Chair, Construction Law Committee (2017-2019); Program Chair, DRI Construction Law Seminar (2017); Program Vice Chair, DRI Construction Law Seminar (2016) Member, DRI Membership Committee (2019-2021) (State Membership Chair Liaison); Member, DRI Annual Meeting Steering Committee (2019-2021) (Chair, Substantive Law Programs (2021); Vice Chair Substantive Law Programs 2020)); Member, DRI Diversity Committee (2008-2021); Member, DRI Commercial Litigation Committee (-2021);

Presenter, DRI Leadership Fly-in 2020; Moderator, Where Do We Go From Here? How the Construction Industry Is Reaction to a Changing World, DRI Construction Seminar 2019; Moderator, DRI Diversity Seminar 2012 - How to Find and Get on For Profit Boards

Author, *Wondering About the New Normal, The Voice*, August 26, 2020; *From the Chair, You're Entering a Hard Hat Area*, For the Defense, February 2020; co-author Arkansas Chapter of DRI's *The Law of Life Insurance* state-by-state compendium (2017). DRI Construction Law Committee Newsletter, *Critical Path*:

Date	Title
04/06/2021	From the Chair: March and Still Madness
10/08/2020	Leadership Note: Thanks for Giving
07/09/2020	From the Chair: Here Comes the Sun
02/28/2020	From the Chair: What's Your Legacy? Let's Build It Together
12/26/2019	From the Chair: Winter Is Coming

03/29/2019 From the Vice Chair: Thinking Vegas
10/18/2018 From the Vice Chair: The Season to Get in the Game
04/06/2018 From the Vice Chair: I Hope You Dance

List any significant leadership commitment and involvement within the legal field other than DRI, including but not limited to other legal organizations. 1) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Partner and Committee Chair for Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP; 2) Arkansas Bar Association; 3) American Bar Association; 4) Construction Lawyers Society of America.

Why do you wish to join the board of directors or become an officer and what skills, abilities and attributes identified in the Board of Director/Officer Competencies can you bring to the role?

DRI has been foundational to my development as an attorney and leader. It has contributed to both my professional and personal growth. As the viability of professional organizations are threatened by market forces and shifting realities of the practice of law, I believe that it is imperative that DRI be preserved for future generations of young attorneys. These present and future young attorneys include my own daughter, who is currently a 3L. For these reasons, I have been and remain committed to DRI and have undertaken increasingly important leadership roles over time.

Though there are other prospective leaders, I believe that my background and experiences have uniquely positioned me to successfully serve DRI. As part of my practice, I serve as outside general counsel to and routinely provide advice to many non-profit and public sector clients. In these roles, I often sit in as an advisor to governing boards and provide advice regarding governance issues, conduct of meetings, and the divergence between governance and operations. I also regularly advise these clients in connection with crisis situations and help to craft and deliver public facing messaging related to these situations. Success in these roles requires a strong understanding of governance and governance models. It also requires the ability to navigate internal conflict and influence decision-making. From a personal perspective, I have spent the past twenty plus years serving on the boards of non-profit organizations that impact my community. One of these organizations is Habitat for Humanity of Central Arkansas, where I served as board chair during a perilous time for the organization, culminating in the organization opening its first resale store, which remains open and successful. More recently, I serve on a board of directors of a liberal arts college, which faces daunting head-winds. While other colleges of its size are closing, our college is poised to open two graduate schools, one for veterinary medicine and the other for dentistry. I also serve on the foundation board for my home state's largest hospital system. I firmly believe that these roles have prepared me to nimbly make difficult decisions, to work cooperatively with other board members, and to focus squarely on results instead of credit. As

those with whom I have served can attest, you are more likely to hear me utter the word “we” than “I” and “us” than “me”. As the fourth of my parents’ ten children, this is simply part of my DNA.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

While I am incredibly optimistic about the future of DRI, there are some important steps that DRI should take to move the organization forward. First, I would suggest that DRI double its efforts to attract and train leaders to meet the changes needs of the organization. This means not just a working knowledge of the organization, but also an understanding business imperative and of similar organizations and how those organizations either succeed or fail.

Nationally, our country’s demographics are changing. In order to ensure that our membership efforts account for these changes, we have to balance our ability to deliver impactful substantive programming with our ability to be socially relevant. In the past, it was relatively easy to court diverse constituencies with promises and platitudes. However, organizations continuing to rely on such devices to attract members now do so at their detriment. There are too many competing organizations that are willing to take a stand and voice opposition to practices, policies, and law that are archaic, oppressive, and inequitable. If we are to ensure that DRI is sustainable into the future, we must seek to show constituencies that align with trending demographics that ours is an inclusive organization and aligned with their individual values.

DRI must continue to focus on marketing and social media in order to attract, retain, and promote its members and itself.

Describe one transformational/defining experience in your professional life you have been involved with and what you learned from that experience.

The most transformation/defining experience in my professional life came before a law license was ever on my wall. I spent my first two years of law school commuting approximately three and a half hours each day, for reasons that I share later in this declaration. During that time, I managed to hold steady clerking positions, manage my responsibilities as a full-time law student, and to serve as a student leader. As you might expect, I was often told that what I was attempting to do was undoable. This experience afforded me an abiding respect for the resiliency of the human spirit to overcome obstacles. To this day, my approach is to find the path to do that which must be done instead of reciting why it cannot be done.

This experience has also given me a respect for the power of communication and getting to know those with whom I work and serve. Often our experience can objectively look the same but it is those small differences that sometimes color our perspective and approach to decision-making. Collaborative decision-making becomes infinitely easier and better when we know, understand, and value these powerful differences.

Describe the greatest challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for DRI over the next five+ years.

The opportunities for DRI abound. DRI continues to deliver cutting-edge legal programming. Its technological abilities and ability to deliver this programming in formats that on-demand and virtual have drastically improved. The greatest challenges for DRI over the next five years will continue to be rapid evolution to nature of the practice of law and the de-prioritization of both in-person CLE and membership in professional organizations, particularly those that are not local. To combat these headwinds, DRI will need to position itself as both local and national, specifically delivering more small-box and nuanced programming by leveraging its membership resources. By doing so, DRI will better position itself for exposure to potential new members and demonstrate value propositions beyond those that are currently apparent.

It is imperative that DRI continue to focus on partnerships that benefit members either personally, professionally, or both. The power of group purchasing and DRI's role in advocating for its members cannot be overstated. DRI must also continue to explore all available business solutions to viability. These potential solutions include both internal and external collaboration to produce a more sustainable model.

Finally, the emerging role of AI presents a significant challenge and opportunity for DRI and its members. DRI should not only be a leader in programming, it should be a leader in shaping the discourse and rule-making surrounding this important tool.

DRI strives to be governed by a diverse board of directors—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, location, and/or professional level, and other facts that enhance diversity and inclusion --- who can and will help advance DRI's goals through the power of collaboration. In what ways have you demonstrated a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your work, and how will your DE&I experience inform your contributions as a Board member?

Those who know me best know that one of my core foundational moments is standing beside my mother's deathbed as a sixteen-year-old and hearing her express regrets for not having achieved life goals as a function of deference to

my father and his aspirations. At that moment, I unknowingly became a strong proponent for opportunities for women. For me, that support starts at home with my spouse, Leticia, who I married the summer between graduating college and starting law school. At the time my new wife was a college Junior and aspiring physician and enrolled in the college where we had met and which has a strong record of placing students in medical school. To avoid impeding or, worse, derailing my wife's aspirations, I spent the first two years of law school commuting three and a half hours each day to law school. Our eldest, twins, were born at the beginning of my second semester and we survived by dispensing with traditional gender roles and drinking ungodly amounts of coffee and Mountain Dew. In order for us both to succeed we had to share child rearing over the next two years. During the same summer that I graduated law school, my Leticia enrolled in medical school. That is when I fully inherited both the key to the minivan and a sturdy spatula. Nothing could have prepared me for the ensuing roller coaster ride of attempting to balance the ambition of wanting to be the best of my chosen profession while serving as primary caregiver to our three children while Leticia attempted to conquer medical school, residency, and a fairly inflexible and unforgiving schedule as an OBGYN. Along the way, I had the opportunity to sit for a second bar exam outside my native Arkansas and to practice in Indiana, where Leticia completed her residency. Today, Leticia and I tell anyone who will listen that our path is one that we would not recommend—frankly, we did everything that that one would advise sane folks not to do.

However, I would not change our origin story for any amount of treasure, it has imbued me with a unique and uncommon perspective. This account is profoundly personal, but I believe necessity to a true understanding to the depth of my commitment. My origin has given me an abounding awe for women in the law, who succeed in spite of seemingly insurmountable hurdles. During my most quiet and vulnerable moments, when I wondered whether I was failing both at my career ambitions and parenting, it was intent listening to women in the law discussions at Diversity Seminars that encouraged and bolstered my resolve. I am undeniably a man, a Black man, but the total of my experiences add layer to my commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Those experiences strengthen my belief in the absolute necessity of inviting a broad spectrum of individuals from different races, ethnicities, ages, genders, religions, sexual orientations, disabilities, locations, and/or professional levels to the decision-making table. As my career has evolved, I have seen it borne out over and over again that organizations that welcome and encourage different perspectives in their decision-making processes are better equipped to spot looming perils, act nimbly, thoughtfully navigate social issues, and be successful than those for which there is no such representation. It is these deeply held beliefs that led me to accept the appointment as DEI Partner and Chair of the DEIB Committee within my firm. These accumulated experiences and “big-tent” philosophy will continue to inform my decision-making and contributions to DRI.

Is there anything else you would like to add that has not already been previously stated?

I greatly appreciate your consideration.