



Williams Mullen Provides Government Contractors With Complete Service Package

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Richmond, VA - With the recent addition of three partners to the firm's Government Contracts Group, Melissa J. Copeland and John E. Schmidt, III (Raleigh, N.C) and Walter I. Skinner (Wilmington, N.C.), Williams Mullen enhances its ability to provide government contractors with "one-stop-shopping" for all aspects of their business and legal issues nationwide, at the federal, state and local levels.

"We're pleased these talented attorneys have joined our team and added their breadth of experience to the services we can provide to our clients," said Thomas O. Mason, chair of the Government Contracts Practice. "With our combined experience, our team can now provide comprehensive assistance to government contractors in diverse industries ranging from defense technology to battlefield support, from sanitation to software, on issues occurring anywhere from Alaska to Puerto Rico or around the globe."

Williams Mullen's Government Contracts Team counsels clients on each stage of the contracting process, from the formation to the administration and termination of government contracts. The team has advised on federal, state, and local government contract law in nearly every state and numerous international locations, and has represented clients before international, federal and state courts. They have vast experience before administrative agencies and in alternative dispute resolution. They help contractors develop compliance plans to mitigate risks; protect their intellectual property; and grow revenue by successfully negotiating bid opportunities, effective performance strategies and development of positive past performance. They also advise and defend clients confronted with criminal and civil fraud allegations and investigations, including corporate internal investigations.

Ms. Copeland and Messrs. Schmidt and Skinner join the firm's expanding roster of talented business attorneys in North Carolina, further solidifying Williams Mullen's position as a "go-to" firm for clients seeking sophisticated business counsel. One year after the merger with established North Carolina law firm Maupin Taylor, Williams Mullen continues to demonstrate its commitment to the region.

About the Attorneys

Melissa J. Copeland has 14 years of experience advising on state and local government contracts matters, having handled matters dealing with the law of nearly all states as well as Puerto Rico. She has represented clients across the country before administrative tribunals, state and federal courts, and in arbitration proceedings. Ms. Copeland has served as a special assistant solicitor for the Office of the Solicitor of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in South Carolina. She earned a bachelor of arts degree from The College of Charleston and a juris doctor degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law.

John E. Schmidt, III's experience includes advice and representation of clients before administrative tribunals, government agencies, state and federal courts and in mediations and arbitrations. He has 20 years of experience handling state and local government contracts matters in over 40 states addressing a wide variety of goods, services and industries; including computer systems implementation, insurance, construction, food services, chemicals, document management, health care and others. Mr. Schmidt is a certified mediator and a frequent lecturer on government contracts and other issues. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Furman University and his juris doctor degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Walter I. Skinner has more than 30 years of experience and focuses on the management of major government systems and programs, and resolving related claims and disputes, as well international matters. His practice also includes bid protests, negotiating contracts, subcontracts, contract changes, teaming agreements, joint venture agreements, and settlement agreements, export control, and mediation and arbitration of employment contracts and related issues. Prior to joining Williams Mullen, Mr. Skinner served as general counsel for a \$1 billion defense contractor, providing legal counsel and contractual support to executives and managers in 19 states and 24 countries. Mr. Skinner's experience also includes serving as associate general counsel of a major U.S. shipyard and as an attorney with a maritime law firm in New York. He has a top secret security clearance. Mr. Skinner received his bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and his juris doctor degree from New York University School of Law.

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