

Mayanne Downs to Succeed Biff Marshall as President and Managing Director

ORLANDO, FL – June 7, 2016 – [Byrd F. “Biff” Marshall Jr.](#), president and managing director of the GrayRobinson law firm for the past 25 years, announced today he will step down, effective September 1, 2016, to make way for new leadership at the firm.

He will be succeeded by [Mayanne Downs](#), statewide chair of the firm’s Litigation Department and a shareholder in GrayRobinson’s Orlando office. Very few of the largest 200 U.S. law firms have a woman in their highest leadership position.

“We are very proud to have Mayanne as our successor managing director. I can’t think of a more qualified person than Mayanne, who is a fine lawyer and a natural and talented leader, to guide the firm into its next chapter,” Marshall said.

Downs, who received unanimous approval by the firm’s board of directors to lead the firm into the future, said she was excited to get started, while acknowledging the challenge ahead.

“It’s not going to be easy to follow Biff, who is known throughout the state of Florida and beyond as a gifted managing director,” Downs said. “I’ve known and admired Biff for over 30 years and will depend heavily on his advice and counsel.”

Downs is a native of Orlando and has been an active member of the Central Florida business community for more than 35 years. She graduated from the University of Florida College of Law at the top of her class, having held numerous leadership positions, including the *University of Florida Law Review*, Florida Blue Key and University of Florida student government.

A lawyer with more than 25 years of experience, her practice areas include bet-the-company commercial litigation, appellate law and high-stakes domestic matters. She has also served as Orlando’s city attorney since 2007, overseeing 25 lawyers and providing advice to the mayor and city commission.

Downs has handled a wide range of matters, including class actions, shareholder and business disputes; statutory shareholder-valuation matters; non-compete litigation; legal-malpractice defense; state and federal appellate matters; eminent domain litigation and trials; personal-injury cases; and family and domestic matters involving high-net-worth and high-profile individuals.

She managed one of the largest divorce settlements on record (more than \$200 million) in addition to complex class action matters, representation of lawyers and law firms, jury and non-jury trials and appeals involving matters of first impression.

Downs has been recognized by *Orlando Magazine* as the “Eighth Most Powerful Person in Orlando” and featured in the *Magazine’s* Best Lawyers. She has also been named to *Florida Trend’s* “Legal Elite”; *Florida Super Lawyers*; *Martindale-Hubbell*; and *Best Lawyers in America*. She was nominated by the state Judicial Nominating Commission for appointment to Florida’s 5th District Court of Appeal.

She is past president of The Florida Bar (2010-2011), a mandatory bar of more than 100,000 lawyers. As president, she traveled thousands of miles throughout Florida and the country, speaking to law organizations and newspaper editorial boards and testifying before the Florida Legislature.

Downs also has served as president of the Orange County Bar Association, president of the Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association and of the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers. She was also a member of the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar, serving as statewide budget chair for two terms.

She is a member of the Judicial Qualifications Commission, the constitutionally-based entity that handles disciplinary matters for Florida judges.

Marshall began his legal career as a securities lawyer. In addition to his leadership responsibilities at the firm, he has extensive experience in representing public and private companies, nationally and internationally. He has served as general counsel to a number of companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange as well as companies listed on the American Stock Exchange and NASDAQ.

When Marshall was first named president in 1992, GrayRobinson was comprised of 30 attorneys in one office. Since that time, Marshall has increased revenue from \$15 million to \$150 million and expanded the firm to include 300 attorneys and 13 offices, as well as one of the largest lobbying firms in the state. He is one of the longest-serving law firm managing directors in Florida.

Marshall will remain with the firm as chairman of the board.

