



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

August 20, 2021

**Via email delivery: [marshall.criser@flbog.edu](mailto:marshall.criser@flbog.edu)**

Marshall M. Criser III  
Chancellor  
State University System of Florida  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1614  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

### **Re: Confirmation of USF Interim President Rhea F. Law**

Dear Chancellor Criser:

I am pleased to recommend for confirmation by the Florida Board of Governors the University of South Florida's Interim President, Rhea F. Law. On August 2, 2021, the University of South Florida Board of Trustees (USF Board) unanimously selected Ms. Law to serve as Interim President following President Steven C. Currall's retirement, which was effective the same day.

Interim President Law has deep ties to the University of South Florida (USF) community. She earned her undergraduate degree in management from USF putting herself through school while working as a university research project administrator. She is one of the founding members of the USF Board of Trustees where she spent five years as vice chair and four years as the first (and only) female chair contributing significantly to USF's growth and evolution as a research one public university. President Law's accomplishments outside of the university are equally impressive and are summarized in the attached CV and biography.

The USF Board determined that it was in the best interests of USF to delegate full presidential powers to Ms. Law prior to confirmation by the Board of Governors, as permitted by Board of Governors Regulation 1.001(5)(c). Since her appointment, Interim President Law has demonstrated highly effective and engaged leadership to maintain USF's positive momentum. USF now seeks her confirmation by the Board of Governors and requests that Interim President Law's confirmation is included on the Board of Governor's agenda for the August 31- September 1, 2021 meeting.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to call with any questions or to discuss.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Will Weatherford".

Will Weatherford  
Chair, USF Board of Trustees

Enclosures: Interim President Law Bio and CV

cc: Vikki R. Shirley  
General Counsel  
State University System of Florida

Paige Geers  
Acting Chief of Staff  
University of South Florida

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## About

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### ABOUT THE INTERIM PRESIDENT

[President Law's CV](#)

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## ABOUT THE INTERIM PRESIDENT

Rhea Law is a proud fifth-generation Floridian who is passionate about the success of the state. Actively involved in corporate, public policy, civic and charitable work, Law holds top leadership positions with many Florida-based organizations.

She received gubernatorial appointments to serve on the inaugural Board of Trustees for the University of South Florida, as well as the Board of the Florida Council of 100, the public policy liaison with Florida's governor, cabinet, legislative leadership and Supreme Court. Rhea served as Chair of the Board for both organizations. Further, she served on the Presidential Search Committee for the University of South Florida in 1999 and 2019. In addition, she has served as Chair of the Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation and the Tampa Bay Partnership during times of reorganization and expansion.

Currently, Law serves on the Board of Directors of Tampa Electric Company which supplies electricity to the Tampa area and Peoples Gas which provides gas throughout Florida. Further, she currently serves as Chair of the University of South Florida Health Professions Conferencing Corporation which operates the Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation and Chair of the Stetson University College of Law Board of Overseers, as well as serving on the Board of Trustees of Stetson University. She also serves on the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute National Board of Advisors. Law is also a member of the USF President's Council Society which honors donors who have made a lifetime commitment of \$100,000 or more or a legacy gift to USF.

Law is the former CEO and Chair of the Board of Fowler White Boggs, a Florida law firm. She led the merger of Fowler with a national firm, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney in 2014 where she continues to serve in an Of Counsel position. The consolidation of the firms created a powerhouse firm with law offices throughout the country and hundreds of lawyers who specialize in a broad spectrum of business areas such as Energy, Finance, Healthcare and Life Sciences.

Her areas of practice included higher education, economic development, government, environment and land use. Over the course of her 35-year-plus career, Law has worked with clients to create thousands of acres of mixed-use projects, including business office parks, industrial complexes, retail and residential communities throughout Florida. Further, she has assisted clients in strategic planning to better prepare them for changing market and regulatory conditions.

Recent recognitions include:

- Florida 500, *Florida Trend* magazine, 2018 and 2019
- *Tampa Bay Business Journal*: Named #6 in the Power 100 – Tampa Bay's Most Powerful Business Leaders with greatest impact and influence on the local business community.
- *Tampa Bay Times*: Named one of the Top 25 Most Influential Business Players in Tampa Bay.
- *The Best Lawyers in America*® and *Florida Super Lawyers* since 2006; "Lawyer of the Year," Best Lawyers list and on the Top 50 Female Lawyers.



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**Rhea F. Law**

**January, 2021**

**Current Positions:**

**Legal:**

- Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, Of Counsel through June 30, 2022

**Business:**

- Tampa Electric Company, Board Member, 2017 – Present
- 2 G Foundation and 4 G Foundation, CEO, 2021 - Present

**Higher Education/Medical/High Tech:**

- Lions Eye Institute, Member, Board of Directors
- Stetson University College of Law, Board of Overseers, Former Chair and current Honorary Board Member; Former Member, Board of Trustees for Stetson University.
- University of South Florida Health Professions Conferencing Corporation, USF Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulations (CAMLS), Chair, 2013 – Present
- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute, National Board of Advisors, Member 2010 – Present

**Public Policy and Economic Development:**

- Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Lifetime Ex Officio Board Member as Past Chair.
- Florida Council of 100, Past Chair, Executive Committee and Chair, Economic Competitiveness Committee; Member of Program Committee and Membership Committee 2021 – Present; Subcommittee on Diversity 2019 - Present
- Tampa Bay Economic Development Council, Past Chair (THEDC), Lifetime Executive Committee member

**Military:**

- MacDill AFB Support Council – Former Chair and Member, 2011 - Present
  - Air Mobility Command Civic Leader, U. S. Air Mobility Command – 2008 – Present

## **Former Positions:**

### **Legal:**

- President, CEO and Chair of the Board of Fowler White Boggs 2002 – 2014; Chair, Florida Offices, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney 2014 – 2018.
- Led merger with Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney May 2014, became Chair, Florida Offices through December 31, 2018
- US Law Firm Group, Trustee and Former President, 2012, Member 1995 - 2018
- Terralex, Trustee
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Member, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity – 2010-2014
- The Florida Bar: Chair of Grievance Committee, 1994-1997
- Hillsborough County Bar Association: Chair, Environmental and Land Use Section 1991 – 1992
- Member, Managing Partner Forum: Advisory Committee 2002 – 2005; 2009 – 2010
- Member, Stetson University College of Law, Board of Overseers
- Member, Hillsborough Association of Women Lawyers
- Licensed, Supreme Court of Florida. 1980
- Member, Society of Trial Advocacy, Stetson University College of Law, 1978

### **Business:**

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida, Multicultural Advisory Council Member, 2012 – 2017.
- Member, Hillsborough County Business Advisory Group
- Member, Pasco County Business Advisory Group
- Event Chair, Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame, 2009

- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties: President, Tampa Bay Chapter, 1997; Board of Directors, 1996 – 2009; Chair, Tampa Bay Watch 1992 – 2009, Chair Public Affairs 1992 – 1995
- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties of Florida, Inc.: President, 1998
- Member, Tampa Bay Regional Water Accord, 1998
- Vice President, Public Affairs, 1996, Board of Directors 1992 – 2000
- Graduate, Leadership Tampa, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, 1991

#### **Medical/High Tech:**

- Member, Board of Directors, Tampa Bay Technology Forum, 2014-2015
- Member, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute Board of Directors, 2000 – 2010
- Member, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute National Advisory Board, 2010 - Present
- Judge, Band-aids B.R.I.D.G.E., USF College of Medicine, 2013

#### **Higher Education:**

- Vice Chair, USF Presidential Search Committee, 2018 - 2019
- Chair, Vice Chair, University of South Florida Inaugural Board of Trustees, 2001 – 2013
- Member, University of South Florida Presidential Selection Committee, 1999 – 2000
- Chair, Research, Innovation, Engagement and Job Creation Workgroup of the USF Board of Trustees, 2012
- Member, Advisory Committee for the University of Tampa College of Business, 1998-2001
- Corporate Committee Chair, Stetson Cornerstone Campaign
- University Research Project Administrator, Office of Sponsored Research, University of South Florida, 1968-1977

### **Public Policy and Economic Development:**

- City of Tampa Mayor's Development Advisory Committee, 2019 - 2020
- Member, Board of Directors, Enterprise Florida, Inc.
- State of Florida Attorney General's Office, Member of Transition Team – Charlie Crist
- Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Chair, 1999; Leadership Tampa Class of 1992; Chair Economic Development Day and Government Day – 2001 - 2013
- Chair, Tampa Bay Partnership (Economic Development and Marketing organization) : Former Chair, Board of Directors, Executive Committee 1999 - 2018
- Chair, Tampa Bay Partnership (Public Policy organization), 2016 - 2018
- Chair, Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation – Chair, 2000 and 2017; General Counsel - 2016 – 2018; Former Chair, 2011 and 2015; Executive Committee Member 2010 – Present; Chair, Steering Committee, 2010; Governance Committee Chair,
- Member, Advisory Committee for Development and Review, City of Tampa
- Pasco Economic Development Council, Board of Directors 2011 – 2013
- Westshore Alliance, Board of Directors, 2001-2003

### **Military:**

- Tampa Bay Defense Alliance, Inaugural Board of Directors and Secretary/Treasurer, 2012 – 2015
- Selected by Secretary of Defense to participate in Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, U. S. Department of Defense, 1997
- Member, Defense Orientation Conference Association, 1998 - 2001
- Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Committee
- Inaugural Honorary Wing Commander, 6<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing, MacDill AFB, 2009-2011
- Member, US Central Command Organization and Family Picnic Committee, 2010
- Chair, Inaugural MacDill AFB Support Committee
- Host, Operation Helping Hand, March 2012

- Member, Air Force Ball Committee, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011
- F-16 flight, MacDill Air Force Base, 1999

**Community:**

- American Heart Association, Chair, Metro Board, 2013 – 2015, Chair, Heart Walk, 2004, Logistics Chair, Heart Walk, 2001
- Host Committee, NCAA Women’s Final Four, 2008
- President, University Club – 2001 - 1<sup>st</sup> woman, Board member 1998 - 2001
- Vice Chair, Superbowl Host Committee, 2006 - 2009
- Honorary Chair with Husband, Wayne Williams, Cattle Barons’ Ball, American Cancer Society, 2007
- Participant, Day of Discovery, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute, 2007
- Tribute Chair, Gulf Coast/southwest Region, Arthritis Foundation
- Member, Tampa Bay Regional Institute for Public Policy Board of Directors
- The Victory Ship: Board of Trustees & Vice Chair, 1999-2001.
- Chair, Walk to Defeat ALS, ALS Association, 2003
- Members, H. Lee Moffitt Society, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute, 2003
- Member, Golden Triangle Civic Association, 2003-2007.
- Chair, Committee of One Hundred, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, 2001
- Participant, White Coat Mini-Internship Program, Tampa General Hospital, 2001
- Chair, Kiss a Pig or Something “Wilder”, Boys and Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay, 2000
- Graduate, USF Mini-Medical School, 1996
- Member, Shriners Hospital Benefit Days, Egypt Temple Shrine, 1984

B.A., with honors, from the University of South Florida, 1977



J.D., with honors, from Stetson University College of Law, 1979 Executive Editor, Stetson Law Review, Author of two published works, First Place, Moot Court

Frequent lecturer on Economic Development, Land Use, Law Firm Management and Leadership topics.

**Gubernatorial Appointments:**

- University of South Florida Inaugural Board of Trustees – Chair and Vice Chair, 2001 – 2013. Appointed by Governor Jeb Bush and Reappointed by Governor Charlie Crist
- Florida Council of 100, 2003 – Present. Served as Chair 2015 – 2016. Appointed by Governor Jeb Bush.
- General Counsel, Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority. Appointed by Governor Jeb Bush.

## Awards

- Martindale Hubbell AV Rating
- Florida Super Lawyer, 2006 – Present
- Top 50 Female Lawyers
- Leading Zoning/Land Use Lawyer, Chambers 2004 – Present
- Florida Legal Elite Hall of Fame 2009 – Present
- Legal Elite Lawyer of the Year 2019
- Chambers 2017 Rankings – Band 2 – Real Estate/Land Use
- Inclusion in Best Lawyers in America<sup>®</sup> 2006 - Present for:
  - Administrative/Regulatory law
  - Environmental Law
  - Government Relations Practice
  - Land Use and Zoning Law
  - Municipal Law
  - Real Estate Law
- 2021 Honoree for Edge Business Magazines' 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebration of Women
- Recipient of Resolution by the Board of Overseers of Stetson University College of Law for selfless devotion to the affairs of the College of Law and advancement of legal education. February 13, 2021
- Inclusion in Florida 500, Florida Trend Magazine, highlighting the 500 most influential executives in different economic sectors throughout the state of Florida. 2018 – 2020.
- Named an expert voice for the *Miami Herald's* Top-50 Florida Influencer Project – May 18, 2018 culminating in the Florida Priorities Summit November 13-14, 2018.
- Inducted as a *2018 Honorary Member of the National Association of Inventors* in recognition of support and commitment to innovation at USF and continued advancement of collaborative business partnerships in the Tampa Bay area – September 7, 2018

- Awarded University of South Florida Distinguished Alumna Award, October 18, 2018, Parade Recognition, October 19, 2018, On field recognition at Homecoming Game, October 20, 2018.
- January, 2017 - Named to the 2017 *Tampa Bay Business Journal* Power 100 list - # 6. The inaugural Power 100 list highlights people who have the greatest impact and influence on the Tampa Bay business community.
- "Lawyer of the Year" award recipient in the 2017 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America© Ms. Law received the highest ratings this year from her peers in a specific practice area and geographical location, making her the only attorney to receive this "Lawyer of the Year" award.
- Chosen for Inclusion in the Best of Tampa Bay book, 2017.
- Identified in top 25 most Influential Business Players in Tampa Bay (only lawyer), *Tampa Bay Times*, 2017.
- Recipient, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce Dottie Berger MacKinnon Women of Influence Award, April 28, 2016.
- Inaugural Member, Power 100, Tampa Bay Business Journal, 2016.
- Recipient, Induction into the University of South Florida Order of the Golden Brahman, October 27, 2016.
- Recipient, University of South Florida College of Pharmacy Bowl of Hygeia, September 1, 2016.
- Recipient, Most Powerful and Influential Women of Florida Award, National Diversity Council, 2015
- Recipient, Five Fabulous Females, Academy Prep Award Winner, February 3, 2015.
- Recipient, Most Powerful and Influential Woman Award, Florida Diversity & Leadership Conference, April 30, 2015.
- Recipient, Lawyer of the Year, Tampa's International Trade and Finance Law, Best Lawyers, 2014.
- Recipient, Chairs, Award for Excellence in Leadership, Tampa Bay Partnership, 2014
- Honorary Doctor of Business Administration Degree, Webber International University, 2013
- Honorary Doctor of Medicine Degree, University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine, 2013

- Recipient, Herman W. Goldner Award for Regional Leadership, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, 2012
- Recipient, Glass Ceiling Award, National Diversity Council, 2012
- Recognition, Women's History Month, 6<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing, MacDill AFBm 2011
- Recipient, President's Fellow Medallion, University of South Florida, 2010
- Awarded, Flag flown over Afghanistan and on Air Force One by General Raymond E. Johns, Commander, Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, 2010
- Selected as one of the top 50 women business leaders in Florida, Florida International University's Center for Leadership and the Commonwealth Institute, 2007, 2008, 2009.
- Recipient, Woman of the Year, Tampa Bay's Business and Professional Women, 2009 with commendation from Mayor Pam Iorio.
- Recipient, Tampa Bay's 100 Most Influential Business Leaders, CEO Council of Tampa Bay, 2009.
- Recipient, for Fowler White Boggs, Inaugural award of "Organization Most Supportive of Women", E Women Network, 2009
- Recipient, Award for Excellence in Community Service, Daughters of the American Revolution, 2009
- Inducted into the National Association of Industrial Office Properties (NAIOP) Hall of Fame, 2009, as well as Special Service Awards, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008 Presidents' Awards, 1995 and 2006 and the Spirit Award, 2000
- Recognition for Support of Global Awareness: Presented by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn – Bangkok, Thailand, 2008
- Recipient, Tampa Bay CEO of the Year, Tampa Bay CEO Magazine, 2008, and recipient of CEO of the Year for Legal Services, 2008
- Inducted, Stetson University, College of Law Hall of Fame, 2008
- Recipient, Tampa Bay Partnership, Chairs' Cup of Excellence for Regionalism, 2006
- Inducted, Business Women's Hall of Fame, St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, 2005
- Who's Who in Business in the Tampa Bay Area, Tampa Bay Business Journal, 2004 – 2005.
- Honoree for Exemplifying Ideals of Honor, Wisdom and Earnestness, Beta Gamma Sigma, University of South Florida, 2005

- Recipient, Tampa Bay Business Journal, Inaugural Businesswoman of the Year, 2004
- Recipient, Tampa Bay Business Journal, Business Services Women of the Year, 2004
- Selected as one of Florida's Most Influential People, Florida Trend, 2004
- Recipient, Lawyer in the Spotlight Award, Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers, 2004
- Recipient, Ben C. Willard Award, Stetson University College of Law, 2002
- Recipient, Volunteer of the Year, Southern Economic Development Council, 2002
- Recipient, Richard L. McLaughlin Award, Florida Economic Development Council, 2002
- Inaugural Parke Wright III Leadership Award, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, 2002
- Recipient, Service Above Self Award, Rotary Club, 2002
- Inducted, Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame, The Florida Council on Economic Education, 2002
- Knighted, Lady of the Law, and inducted into the Court of Honor, Krewe of Venus, 2002
- Recipient, Distinguished Award Winner, Tampa Bay Women in Business, The Business Journal, 2000
- Awarded, Flag Flown "Over MacDill" in Honor of Support and Friendship to MacDill AFB, 2000
- Key to the City of Tampa conferred by the Mayor of Tampa, Dick Greco, 1999
- Recognition for Outstanding Leadership and Support of MacDill, 1999
- Proclamation from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissions for Leadership, 1998
- Proclamation from the Florida Senate for work in Economic Development, 1998
- Selected by Secretary of Defense William Cohen to participate in the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference, May 1997.
- Recipient, McNeil Award, Fowler White Boggs Banker, 1995
  - Selected, Outstanding Young Woman of America, 1978