

SAVOY

A portrait of Eric H. Holder, Jr., a Black man with a mustache, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and blue tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred cityscape.

Eric H. Holder, Jr.

Former U.S.
Attorney General,
Partner, Covington
& Burling LLP

2018 Most Influential Black Lawyers

Meet Some of the Top
“Must Have” Lawyers
in the Country



John W. Daniels, Jr. What drives him? Instilling a culture where everybody counts every day

BY CAROLINE HENNESSY

John W. Daniels, Jr. has carved out a remarkable career: distinguished attorney, Firm Chair, board member, association leader, and change agent.

Daniels' impact began in earnest at the law firm of Quarles & Brady, LLP. Following graduation from Harvard Law School in 1974, Daniels was the first African-American to join the then 70-attorney firm. His astute real estate and business acumen quickly grew his client roster. Across his career, Daniels represented national, regional, local and governmental owners and investors, playing a significant role in some of the most complex real estate developments in the United States. Daniels' accomplishments were recognized by his peers and he was elected national president of the American College of Real Estate lawyers after being tapped for national office by the Real Property Section of the American Bar Association. For his legal accomplishments, he has been called one of "the 50 most influential diverse attorneys in America" by the National Bar Association.

Daniels has been and continues to be very active in the business community. His skills as business advisor and counselor have been applied on the boards of publicly-traded companies, chairing boards of the largest health system in Illinois and Wisconsin, the largest community foundation in Wisconsin and the premier organization of corporate CEOs. From 2006 - 2013, Daniels served as Chair of Quarles & Brady. Across his tenure, the firm grew to several hundred attorneys and added a Washington, DC, office. Daniels focused on talent development as a way of strengthening Quarles & Brady and the legal community at large. He constructed a sophisticated business plan, based on his corporate experience. A central component of that plan was talent development and inclusion. All business plans at the firm were required to integrate tactics to develop and grow talent.

A Daniels' phrase well known throughout the firm is: "Everybody Counts Every Day." Daniels has always been committed to the idea that each individual is important to team success; and the value each person contributes is not dictated by his or her title. Daniels helped to refine and advance the firm's legacy of



JOHN W. DANIELS JR.
Chairman Emeritus
Quarles & Brady LLP

identifying and recruiting exceptional talent. A few of the talented African-Americans who joined Quarles & Brady include: litigator Steven Hunter, who credits Daniels with providing opportunities for him to lead some of the firm's largest and most sophisticated financial service clients; corporate attorney Tiffany Presley who leads representation of one of the firm's largest industrial clients; and Kyle Williams, an honors graduate and former student president of Fisk University. Williams is interning at Quarles before pursuing law school. Daniels groomed Williams through MKE Fellows, an initiative created by Daniels, baseball great Henry "Hank" Aaron, and others, to dramatically improve graduation rates for African-American men.

Daniels' initiatives around inclusion have also had a dramatic impact on the legal profession. He and former law school classmate, Ben Wilson, chairman of Beverage and Diamond, brought together a group of African-American managing partners at major firms, as well as general counsels to help advance opportunities for diverse attorneys.

When Daniels, now Chairman Emeritus, passed the gavel of Firm Chair to Kim Johnson in 2013 (the firm's first female Chair), Quarles & Brady, along with several clients, established an American Bar Association scholarship fund in Daniels' name to promote law school graduation for diverse students. Daniels said, "It is all about talent and investing in people, just as people invested in me decades ago. It goes without saying that those of us who have been fortunate enough to operate in this profession do so because of the remarkable efforts of others. Leaders like Bill Coleman, Reggie Lewis and Derrick Bell opened the doors for me and I plan to continue helping Quarles continue that legacy. You bet I will be pushing, every day." **S**