

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

## We stand again at a crossroads

The upcoming 2024 Primerus Global Conference – set for October 16-20 at the magnificent Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina – has all the trappings of a history-making event.

For openers, the stone-clad 513-room hotel is dripping in history and stationed atop Sunset Mountain, offering a glorious panoramic view that has been enjoyed by 10 U.S. Presidents since the Grove Park Inn's christening in 1913.

Nearby is one of the top tourist destinations east of the Mississippi – the Biltmore Estate, the largest privately-owned house in the United States at 178,926 feet of floor space. The Biltmore House is a Châteauseque-style mansion built between 1889-95 by George W. Vanderbilt III, part of the prominent American family that amassed a huge fortune through railroads, steamboats, and various other business enterprises. The home is now owned by one of Vanderbilt's descendants and stands as one of the most notable examples of the U.S.'s Gilded Age, an era in the late 19th century marked by economic expansion.

The Global Conference itself will carry the history theme even further under the title, "The Next Five Years and Beyond," serving as the building block for a new five-year plan mapped out by Primerus.

The strategic planning exercise comes at a time when a leadership transition is expected to take place in Primerus over the next year as I turn over the presidential reins to a new CEO who will guide an organization that has grown

from modest beginnings to one that is international in scope. The search for a new president is under way, and the goal will be to select a dynamic and innovative leader who can further advance the Primerus mission in terms of brand, influence, growth, and global prominence.

Whoever is chosen for the leadership role will certainly face an exciting and challenging task, reminiscent of the tall order presented when we launched Primerus in 1992 during a time when the legal profession was fending off attacks from various sectors in society.

When we formed Primerus, our original focus was to highlight the important role that lawyers play in upholding the rule of law and in peacefully resolving conflict. We had other goals in mind as well, principally to restore honor and dignity to the legal profession, and to help rebuild the public's trust in lawyers and the judicial system.

At the time, those were mighty tall tasks, which seemed insurmountable, especially when we were faced with an army of naysayers bent on poking holes in the legal profession.

But slowly and methodically, we grew, branching out from a one-city, one-state entity to become a national force, eventually earning a form of "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" recognition from The Wall Street Journal that helped to put us on the map.

Our early efforts also spawned the trademarked phrase, "Good People Who Happen to Be Good Lawyers," a message



cemented by a belief in the Six Pillars. Those principles have served as our guideposts, setting us apart from the competition and helping countless clients find the right lawyer, with the right skills, in the right location, and at the right cost.

We have done so through an alliance of independent boutique law firms that are entrepreneurial and highly skilled in nature, each placing great value on the art of relationship building with clients and Primerus colleagues.

Currently, we have nearly 160 member firms, some 90 of which are in the U.S. The rest are scattered across approximately 50 other countries, including those in such regions as Latin America and the Caribbean; Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; and Asia Pacific. While we have made significant progress in making Primerus an international brand, there remains tremendous opportunities to expand further, particularly in countries where we have just a singular presence.

Growth opportunities also await in our

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North America region, which is why we plan to expand into the consumer market of law firms, those that specialize in such areas as immigration, family law, criminal law, workers' compensation, and Social Security matters.

Relatedly, we recently began offering a new Primerus license for General Practice law firms in small to mid-sized cities. Our first new member in that category is Sayer Regan & Thayer, LLP in Newport, Rhode Island, the beautiful seaside city known for the historic and opulent mansions that line its coast.

The fruits of expansion, of course, can further fuel our efforts to offer Primerus

members a broader range of services, helping them practice law more effectively and efficiently. This, in turn, ties in with our ultimate mission to become the largest and finest provider of legal services in the world.

To reach such a goal, we need to be steadfast in our commitment to the Six Pillars, recognizing their value in helping make the legal community – and potentially the world – a much better place, one where integrity, civility, and service are ingrained in our souls.

Best regards,

**Jack Buchanan, President**