

# THE BUSINESS ADVOCATE

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## Coleman Moves Into BCA Chairmanship

Business Council of Alabama Chairman Jeff Coleman was born into a family business that was founded as Coleman Transfer and Storage. Having worked in the business for nearly three decades, Coleman is president and CEO of Coleman Worldwide Moving as the 102-year-old moving and storage and relocation business is known today.

That's correct, Coleman Worldwide Moving was founded more than a century ago by Coleman's great-great grandfather, J.M. Coleman, with two horses and a wagon. World War I began that year and today Coleman and his brother John are the fifth Coleman generation to run the privately owned family business that is entering its second century.

Coleman Worldwide Moving is the largest Allied Van Lines agent in the world.

Coleman said the 2,200 associates of Coleman Worldwide Moving in Dothan and their 1,500 trucks literally move people and their belongings around the country and world from 60 offices in 20 states.

"We're pretty much in the Sunbelt states and then we're on the West Coast," Coleman said in a recent interview. "We're as far north as Baltimore and the Atlantic Coast and across the country to Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, California, Washington state, Alaska, and Hawaii. We're in so many different markets serving government, military, and corporate accounts and consumer markets."

Coleman Allied coordinates local, long distance, and international moves that incorporate all the necessary moving services. Coleman offers commercial clients specialized

**COVER:** Business Council of Alabama Chairman Jeff Coleman says business advocacy and continued good relationships with elected officials are paramount for the BCA.

**TOP LEFT:** 2016 BCA Chairman Tommy Lee, president and CEO of Vulcan Inc. in Foley, ceremoniously passes the BCA chairman's gavel to 2017 Chairman Jeff Coleman. Coleman was elected chairman by the BCA board of directors on Dec. 2. His goals for the BCA include continued advocacy for infrastructure development to ensure that adequate Alabama roads and bridges are part of the industry-seeking formula for economic developers. The BCA is an active member of the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure that is dedicated to improving the state's surface transportation system.

**BOTTOM MIDDLE:** BCA Chairman Jeff Coleman grew up in a family business that began in 1914 and is now in its fifth generation of family leadership.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** BCA Chairman Jeff Coleman says as a business leader, "the single biggest challenge we face is recruitment and development of good, motivated, committed hard-working people. We're in the people business and serving people must be done with excellence." On a personal and professional level, Coleman gives "God the praise and glory for all things in my life."



transportation services for high-value products and is committed to safe, simple moving experiences for families, businesses and employees.

Coleman started working in the business when he was in early teens "hanging out" helping his father, James F. Coleman, who spent 60 years in the business.

"My father and I have worked together about half that time," Coleman said. "I would work in every summer and as a road driver in college, actually as a regional and long-haul operator."

Coleman graduated from the University of Alabama's business school with a degree in corporate finance and investment management and earned a master's degree from Troy University. His resume includes company corporate sales in Atlanta, general manager of service in Mobile, and then back to Dothan.

"It comes down to clear and concise communication across platforms and having a good plan," Coleman said. "Always be cognizant of having a plan and do proper planning. In my business it's hard work, clear communication, and a passion for the business and continuing and understanding the heritage and always being cognizant of that legacy. It's the driving motivation to me, a driving force."

In 2016, Coleman served as BCA first

vice chairman and chairman of the BCA's political arm, ProgressPAC. In December the board of directors elected him chairman for 2017. He succeeds 2016 Chairman Tommy Lee, president and CEO of Vulcan Inc. in Dothan, who is immediate past chairman.

Coleman brings experience, contacts, knowledge of Alabama politics, and a business track record to the BCA's top voluntary leadership.

Coleman said he became involved in the BCA through a friend and community leader, Charles Nailen, a former BCA chairman. Nailen, the BCA treasurer and a member of the board of directors, is president and owner of BBG Specialty Foods Inc./Taco Bell in Dothan.

"Charles is somebody I knew and respected in the Wiregrass area," Coleman said. "He encouraged me to get involved. He was a champion for me."

Nailen said he was just getting involved in the BCA in the mid-1990s when he hosted a political event that Coleman and his wife attended.

"I remember thinking at that time that this guy needs to be involved with the BCA," Nailen said. "He would be an asset to our board and maybe later could provide great leadership to the entire organization."



Then, about 10 years later the Wiregrass needed an area representative on the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Nailen said he advocated for Coleman, who was appointed by Gov. Bob Riley.

Coleman's involvement with the BCA grew - ProgressPAC Regional Advisory Committee, ProgressPAC Board of Directors, and BCA Board of Directors. "There is no question but that Jeff knows the Business Council of Alabama inside and out and I was proud to encourage Jeff to consider getting in the rotation of the leadership chairs to become chairman," Nailen said.

Nailen said Coleman's "collaborative style will be a perfect fit for the BCA and will serve us well with a blend of staff and volunteers producing a team effect that will keep us running smoothly and accomplishing our mission."

Nailen said it's incumbent upon all BCA members to assist in perpetuating the great volunteer leadership the BCA has been blessed with since its creation in 1985 and for each generation to advocate and mentor new generations of leadership.

Coleman said "first and foremost" he will bring a commitment to membership growth.

"I will reach out to more companies and

describe the value the BCA has statewide and nationally," he said. "I call it sharing the good news of the BCA, not only to advocate but also to ensure we have a pro-business Legislature so that government regulations and laws are done in such way to support job creators, which are the small- and medium-size companies.

"We'll advocate that we put forth good policy and are pro-business and we will tie in workforce development for our state," Coleman said. "At the end of the day we are all trying to find good people to work in our businesses and this starts in pre-kindergarten through higher education."

Century old family businesses are generally five generations deep so the odds of Coleman Worldwide Moving making it to a century and a half and more are very good - Coleman's father was in the business for 60 years, twice as long as Coleman currently. And there's a sixth generation of Colemans waiting in the wings.

"I have three daughters, my brother John Coleman is a partner in our business and we are working hard for that to continue to find the sixth generation," Coleman said. "And I have a nephew working in the Texas region. We're working hard." **TBADV**



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Previous issues available at [bcatoday.org](http://bcatoday.org).

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*The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, Alabama's foremost voice for business. The BCA is a non-partisan statewide business association representing the interest and concerns of three-quarters of a million working Alabamians through its member companies, and is Alabama's exclusive representative to the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. For information on becoming a member of BCA, contact Elaine Fincannon, 334.240.8749, or [elaine@bcatoday.org](mailto:elaine@bcatoday.org). For more information, visit [bcatoday.org](http://bcatoday.org).*

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