

# SEC Welcomes New Attorney

**F**rank F. Rennie IV believes in teamwork.

From his four seasons on the United States Naval Academy football team to his 40 years of active and reserve duty in the Navy to his 32 years of practicing law at one Richmond firm, Rennie appreciates being on a team and working with others to meet common goals.

A Richmond native who lives in Powhatan County, Rennie is now part of the Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC) team, starting Jan. 1, 2016, as the new general counsel. He was selected by the Board of Directors to succeed John M. “Jack” Boswell, who retired after nearly 40 years as legal counsel to the Cooperative.

Rennie says wanting to be a part of a good organization and contribute to a team effort are core desires. He first learned about teamwork while playing youth and high school sports. He adds that teamwork became part of his personal foundation while at the Naval Academy. There, he also learned about leadership.

“As a leader, you learn that all members of a team must work together in order to achieve success. On a team, you are only as good as the people who are working beside you,” Rennie explains. “A leader must care more about the people on the team than they do about themselves.”

His teamwork and leadership lessons continued as he entered active service after graduating from the Naval Academy. He says he was put in circumstances where the lives of others depended on him making the right decisions.

“From that, I learned that making correct decisions and trusting those around me to do the right thing was essential. This is the same in the business world as it is in the military or playing on a team. Do the right thing, treat your people well and the results will follow. Hopefully, these experiences will translate into assisting SEC with moving in the right direction in the future,” Rennie adds.

He likes what he sees at SEC.

“I have seen firsthand that there is a great team here, and I am excited about being part of the team,” says Rennie, who is a senior partner with the CowanGates law firm in Richmond and county attorney for Lunenburg County. He will continue in both roles.

At Crewe-based SEC, Rennie says he will have a dual role, providing advice to the Board of Directors and President & CEO Jeff Edwards, while also offering legal assistance to the Cooperative as a whole. He will have an office in Crewe, although noting with current technology, he can work on Cooperative projects from different locations.

Besides being a member of the SEC team, Rennie adds that he was attracted to the job by the opportunity to work on electric cooperative issues and challenges. That might include dealing with federal laws and state regulations to figure out how to better serve members. He also wants to offer some leadership direction for the future.

“If I can provide some assistance in looking ahead and mapping out a proper course of action, then I feel I will have made a proper contribution,” Rennie says.

Rennie notes that his goal is to provide services and help to the members, keeping in mind that members are the reason for the Cooperative.

Since building a new home in Powhatan a year ago, he has been an SEC member. Rennie also has experience with member-owned groups through USAA, an insurance company for military members and their families.

Rennie, 63, began practicing law in 1984 after completing a law degree at the University of Richmond’s T.C. Williams School of Law and passing the bar. He has worked at CowanGates his entire legal career and now specializes in local government law, civil litigation, property rights, land use and eminent domain. He has been admitted to all state and federal courts in Virginia and the United States Supreme Court.

Since 2009, Rennie has been county attorney and chief legal counsel to the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors, where SEC serves nearly 4,000 homes and businesses.

It was while he was at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, that Rennie developed an interest in the law. Besides the required engineering classes, Rennie also took some law courses. He says he was fascinated by a constitutional law class his senior year.

After receiving his Bachelor of Science in international affairs and completing his five-year active-duty commitment in the Navy aboard destroyers and guided-missile cruisers, Rennie headed to law school, while



Frank F. Rennie IV

continuing his military career as a reservist, except for a six-month stint on active duty after the terrorist attacks in New York and Virginia in 2001.

His lengthy Navy career took him around the world, including on ships in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans, along with the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. He held command posts in Tidewater, Italy and Liberia, and helped direct operations in Europe, Russia, Israel and Africa. He retired from the Navy in 2010 as a rear admiral.

His time in uniform brought Rennie numerous honors, including the Navy Commendation Medal four times, Defense Superior Service Medal two times, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and recognition as the Top-Rated Commanding Officer in the Navy Reserves.

Rennie says his dual careers in the Navy and practicing law gave him the “best of both worlds.”

Rennie and wife Priscilla have four adult children, Sam, Anthony, Catherine and Elizabeth, and a son-in-law, Kris. Rennie is chair-elect of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation, member of the Fork Union Military Academy Board of Trustees, lifelong member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and member of West End Assembly of God Church. He is also a member of numerous law- and Navy-related associations.

His outside interests include reading, working outdoors, spending time on his Fluvanna County farm, hunting, being around nice people and football, especially the college game. Last football season, he attended eight Navy games, including the Midshipmen’s 44-28 win over Pitt in the prestigious Military Bowl.