

Inside Business 2023 Top Forty Under 40: Laura Rixey, Kaufman & Canoles



Laura Rixey (Amanda MacDiarmid/Freelance)

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By **INSIDE BUSINESS STAFF** | inside.business@insidebiz.com | The Hampton Roads
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Age: 37

Job: Partner/attorney, Kaufman & Canoles

At work: I am a partner at the law firm of Kaufman & Canoles and have worked at the firm since graduating from the University of North Carolina School of Law. I am part of our commercial section, with a focus on general corporate matters, mergers and acquisitions and health care law.

Home and family: I am married to Jay Rixey, a partner at Woods Rogers Vandevanter Black. We live in Virginia Beach with our children, Rosie, 7, and Jack, 4, and our puppy, Biscuit. I grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, and met Jay a few weeks into my freshman year at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Volunteer activities: I serve on the board of trustees for the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art and on the board of directors for the Virginia Beach Court

Appointed Special Advocates. I am also a member of the Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club, which raises funds for local beautification projects and educational programs that promote conservation and the environment.

Motivating factor: At the moment, I think my main motivating factor is the desire to make meaningful contributions to our community, whether through my professional legal work, service on nonprofit boards or volunteer engagements.

Professional goal in five years: Within my law firm, I am hopeful that I will have the opportunity to watch the youngest group of attorneys who I have recruited to our firm and mentored during their early years take the next step to become my law partners. I also hope to be in a leadership position within my firm at that time. As a trustee for Virginia MOCA, I am most excited to step foot in its new facility on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan University.

The one thing I'd change about Hampton Roads: I would love to see each city make a firm commitment to operate in a more cohesive manner by marketing our region as a whole under a singular name that is recognized outside our area. As an outsider, I initially found the term "Hampton Roads" to be quite confusing. I think the terms "Coastal Virginia" or "Tidewater" are much more recognizable outside the 757 and highlight one of our biggest assets — our area's access to the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay.

Region's biggest asset: Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters and Eastern Virginia Medical School.

Downtime: My family can often be found on the beach in the North End, regardless of the season. We love biking down the Boardwalk, relaxing on the beach or hiking through First Landing State Park. On Friday nights, we can usually be found at our weekly Pizza Friday block party in our neighborhood.

What really gets under my skin: People who complain about the status quo and fail to take any meaningful steps to make changes.