

James H. Burns

James Burns is a Partner at the law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP. Mr. Burns has a long personal history of public service. Mr. Burns served as pro bono counsel for the South Carolina Ethics Reform Commission (the “McMaster/Medlock Commission”), and thereafter, former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley appointed Mr. Burns as Chairman of the State Ethics Commission. In November 2014, Mr. Burns served as Chief of Staff for Governor Nikki Haley during the start of her second term. In response to COVID-19, Governor Henry McMaster appointed Mr. Burns to lead his COVID response and economic recovery team, AccelerateSC. He is the recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina’s highest civilian award.

Mr. Burns graduated from The Citadel in 1996, earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. Upon graduation from The Citadel, Mr. Burns was commissioned as a naval officer through the NROTC Program. He reported to USS VELLA GULF where he served as Electrical Officer and Damage Control Assistant. In 1998, Mr. Burns reported to USS BRISCOE as the Navigator. Mr. Burns attended the University of South Carolina School of Law under the Navy’s Law Education Program and earned his Juris Doctor degree in 2002. During law school, Mr. Burns served as the Editor in Chief of the *South Carolina Law Review*.

As a Navy Judge Advocate, Mr. Burns served as a prosecutor at Trial Service Office Southeast in Jacksonville, Florida. Thereafter, Mr. Burns reported to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Commander, Fifth Fleet as Assistant Force/Fleet Judge Advocate in Manama, Bahrain. In this capacity, he served as the operational law attorney for the Navy Component Commander in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. Mr. Burns reported to his final active-duty tour at The Pentagon as Deputy Assistant for Legal and Legislative Matters to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. After leaving active duty, Mr. Burns affiliated with the Navy Reserve JAG Corps and joined Nelson Mullins.

Mr. Burns is a member of the 2017 class of the South Carolina Ports Authority Ambassadors Program. Mr. Burns is married and has three children. His family resides in Chapin, South Carolina.