Mellen Named Ford’s General Counsel, Succeeding Gayton; Jennings Made Purchasing Vice President, Company Officer

- Jonathan Jennings’ new position enables Lisa Drake to focus exclusively on role as COO for North America automotive

DEARBORN, Mich. – July 20, 2020 – Ford Motor Company today announced senior leadership changes, naming a new general counsel and promoting another executive to a vice president and corporate officer role.

John Mellen, longtime associate general counsel at Ford, will become general counsel effective Aug. 1, assuming responsibility for global legal matters and overseeing the company’s legal team. Mellen, a 39-year Ford veteran, will replace Bradley Gayton, who has accepted a position as senior vice president and general counsel at The Coca-Cola Company. Gayton’s last day with Ford will be Aug. 31, affording several weeks for transition.

Also, Jonathan Jennings has been named vice president, Global Commodity Purchasing and Supplier Technical Assistance, and a corporate officer by Ford’s board of directors.

Mellen succeeding Gayton as general counsel

“John Mellen has been invaluable in advancing and protecting Ford as associate general counsel,” said Jim Hackett, Ford’s president and CEO. “His wisdom and relationships will help sustain our ambition to build trust and generate superior value for customers and other stakeholders.”

In his most recent role, Mellen managed Ford’s global litigation practice and provided counsel in areas including safety and environmental regulatory compliance, labor and employment, occupational health and safety, and insurance.

Hackett said Gayton has had tremendous, positive influence inside and outside Ford.

“Bradley is an exceptional strategic business leader and advisor, and we’re grateful for everything he’s done,” said Hackett. “His legal and administrative functions are world-class, partly because of how Bradley uses agile teams to operate most efficiently and create a rich environment for development.”

Beyond the company, Gayton and his team bolstered Ford’s longstanding tradition for providing pro bono legal services to underserved neighbors in Southeast Michigan and around the globe and established a program to introduce minority high school students to careers in law.

Gayton said leaving Ford after 29 years won’t be easy.

“Ford is deeply part of me, and it’s been an honor to make a difference at such an iconic and important global company,” he said. “There’s a lot to be proud of, particularly the programs we’ve established that could enhance diversity for generations to come.

“I’m always looking for fresh ways to think, learn, and innovate and this move will provide me and my family the opportunity for new challenges and growth on behalf of another storied brand.”
Gayton’s responsibilities for Sustainability, Environment and Safety Engineering; Corporate Services; Global Shared Service Center Operations; Security; and Ford Land, which manages company facilities and real estate, will be the subject of a future announcement.

Jennings promoted to corporate officer position in Global Purchasing

Jennings’ new assignment is part of a series of organizational moves to further improve fitness and effectiveness in the company’s purchasing division. Jennings is succeeding Lisa Drake in those responsibilities, allowing Drake to focus exclusively on her role as chief operating officer for Ford’s North America automotive business.

In the new position, Jennings will report to Hau Thai-Tang, Ford’s chief product development and purchasing officer. Jennings will be responsible for all production procurement, together with quality and launch performance of the supply base through the company’s Supplier Technical Assistance program. His assignment is effective Aug. 1.

“Jonathan has broad global experience in key purchasing and product development leadership roles,” said Thai-Tang. “He will partner with our suppliers to bring Ford customers outstanding innovation, quality and value.”

Since joining Ford in 1993 as a manufacturing engineer at the Cleveland Casting Plant, Jennings has held positions in Detroit; Chicago; Hermosillo, Mexico; Bangkok, Thailand; and Shanghai, China. Among other assignments, he was director, Supplier Technical Assistance Engineering, for Ford’s business in Asia Pacific and Africa; led Product Development teams responsible for delivering on compact-car programs; and oversaw Enterprise Product Line Management for the company’s Lincoln luxury brand.

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification; mobility solutions, including self-driving services; and connected services. Ford employs approximately 188,000 people worldwide. For more information regarding Ford, its products and Ford Motor Credit Company, please visit www.corporate.ford.com.