

## History-Making Former Military GC Opens Nat'l Security Firm

By Jack Rodgers

Law360 (September 1, 2023, 12:47 PM EDT) -- The only person in U.S. history to have served as the chief legal officer of both the Army and the Navy is leaving Ward & Berry LLP to launch his own firm, he told Law360 Pulse.

Robert Sander officially launched The Sander Group PLLC on Friday, which will focus largely on advising corporations and other clients on national security issues, including clients that work with homeland security, defense and intelligence matters.

Sander joined Ward & Berry **last** October, after holding a number of top legal roles in the U.S. federal government. He worked as principal deputy and acting general counsel for the Army and was confirmed unanimously by the Senate to serve as Navy general counsel in 2019.



Bob Sander

His practice deals with False Claims Act litigation, government contracts disputes, and other compliance-related issues. A Widener University School of Law graduate, Sander has experience working in a myriad of public service roles, including in the district attorney's office for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

In Sander's 11 years with that office, he worked as captain of its narcotics enforcement team and chief of its economic crimes unit. He also served as special assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and in the counterterrorism section of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division.

In an interview with Law360 Pulse on Thursday, Sander said he'd gotten calls for new business that afternoon and was already generating interest in his solo venture.

"It's a matter of pursuing the American dream of running your own business," Sander said. "The timing was right and the firm and I talked about vision and where we were going and it was moving in different directions, and I wish Ward & Berry the best as they pursue their way of going about business and the way that The Sander Group will go about it as well."

Sander said part of the attraction for him to go out on his own was a change in the industry after the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of those changes included new client expectations for streamlined service, something more easily achievable through his solo venture, he said.

"Clients are looking for people to be more effective and more efficient in the way that they're doing business as well as finding less expensive ways to do it," Sander said. "With going out on my own I'll have less conflicts, and I believe I'll be able to answer the mail for the clients in those regards."

Sander said The Sander Group would continue focusing on national security and government contracts, but he'd be hiring some subject-matter experts to broaden out the firm's focus in the near future. The firm will largely serve the intelligence, defense and aerospace communities, Sander said.

"Those communities encompass some of the largest budgets in the federal government and there's a wide array of issues that the government and the contracting force faces along those lines," Sander

said. "We'll be trying to address the needs of the client in the most efficient and effective manner."

While those communities and legal issues would be The Sander Group's initial focus, Sander said he'll be evaluating the national security landscape over time to see where the firm can take on additional clients and work with additional issues.

"No one would have predicted several years ago the war in Ukraine or shifts with some of our foreign adversaries from the U.S. government, so we'll continue to adjust as needed," he said.

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.