

DEFENSE BUSINESS BOARD

Hon. Deborah Lee James Chair, Defense Business Board



From December 2013 through January 2017, Deborah served as the 23rd Secretary of the United States Air Force with responsibility for 660,000 military and civilian personnel and a budget of nearly \$140 billion. She was the second woman to ever lead a military service in the United States. Prior to this role, she served as President of SAIC's Technical and Engineering sector, a \$2 billion, 8,700-person enterprise. Earlier in her career, Deborah held other P&L positions, and worked in the legislative branch of government and the Department of Defense.

Deborah has deep expertise in strategic planning, risk management, public policy, cyber security, space, logistics and innovation. Deborah is an accomplished speaker on business and government topics including issues in national security and world affairs, politics in Washington, business transformation leadership, mergers and acquisitions, cost reduction strategies, and diversity and inclusion. Deborah is the author of the new book [Aim High: Chart Your Course and Find Success](#), and she periodically appears on MSNBC, CBS, and other national news programs.

Previous Experience

- 23rd Secretary of the United States Air Force
- SAIC, President, Technical and Engineering Sector
- SAIC, Executive Vice President, Communications and Government Affairs
- SAIC, General Manager, Command and Control Business Unit
- Business Executives for National Security (BENS), Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs, DOD
- Vice President, United Technologies, International Operations and Marketing
- Armed Services Committee, US House of Representatives

Education

- Columbia University, School of International & Public Affairs - MIA, International Affairs
- Duke University - AB, Comparative Area Studies

Today's Affiliations

- Member, Board of Directors: Textron, Unisys, Noblis, Systems & Technology Research, Firefly Aerospace, Atlantic Council, Locator X, Penfed Foundation, Improbable LLC
- Advisor: Beacon Global Strategies LLC, LeanIn.org, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lincoln Laboratory, Ursa Major Tech, SOSi
- Executive Mentor, Merryck & Company
- Senior Advisor, Center for Strategic and International Studies
- Special Advisor, Bain & Company
- Special Advisor, Avascent

Deborah Lee James is the 23rd Secretary of the Air Force, former President at Government contractor SAIC, and an accomplished author, speaker, and advisor. Drawing upon 3 decades of leadership experience in both the public and private sectors, Deborah helps organizations navigate through complex strategic and tactical challenges to achieve their goals, enhance performance and transform their businesses.

Deborah provides advice on team building, organizational change management, relations with the Federal Government, cyber security, space, and transformational technology. She is an accomplished keynote speaker and enjoys working one-on-one as an Executive Mentor with C-suite level professionals. Finally, Deborah serves on various for profit and non-profit Boards of Director.

Deborah became a member and Chair of the Defense Business Board upon her appointment in September 2021.