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Angus Cooper, III, is one of the strongest business leaders in our state, driven by the simple mantra – “stay hungry and work hard.” Cooper serves as president of The Cooper Group of Companies, an Alabama-based, innovative organization employing thousands worldwide. The multifaceted, maritime firm impacts an astonishing array of industries throughout the world, from agriculture, energy and chemicals to construction, food service and tourism.

Founded by his great-grandfather in 1905, Cooper leads the 4th generation family business with a commitment to the values on which it was founded coupled with a progressive and trailblazing vision for the future.

The Cooper Group has grown with the times over the last century, continually expanding to meet the customers’ needs and industry norms. Cooper says, “The key to longevity is staying ahead of the competition and growing in the right way. Our industry is changing, and as long as

we stay ahead of the change, we’ll be here for generations to come.”

Earlier this year, the Business Council of Alabama (BCA) announced Cooper was elected as BCA’s 37th chairman, succeeding

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– ANGUS COOPER, III

Mike Kemp. Cooper is a longtime leader within BCA and has served as the organization’s first vice chairman, an executive committee member, and chairman of ProgressPAC, BCA’s political arm.

Cooper’s leadership throughout the business community and across the state comes naturally, and as he says it, “You’re good at what you enjoy – and I enjoy it.” His innate business acumen developed at a young age, working after school, summers, and holidays

for The Cooper Group, learning the complex business that was “in his blood.”

Throughout his life, he came to realize that it wasn’t just a “family business” – The Cooper Group is family. As the company expanded worldwide, competing internationally with



the biggest maritime firms in the world, the top priority always remained the same – taking care of customers.

Cooper grew up watching his family entertain customers and employees in his home, and when it came time to lead the company, keeping them first was second nature. “We know our people, and the people know us,” says Cooper.

To his point, The Cooper Group’s average employee tenure is 33 years. Many family businesses may fear plateauing as the generations pass, but after 118 years and four generations of leadership, The Cooper Group is certainly far from slowing down.

Cooper learned from his uncle and grandfather that to be a leader, you must set an example for others through your character and work ethic. These two values set the good leaders apart from the great. Additionally, while many leaders know what they are best at, Cooper argues that knowing your weaknesses as a leader is actually more important. He believes that



being able to ask for help, make strategic hires, and intentionally fill voids is crucial to the success of your team and business.

With decades of business experience under his belt, Cooper will utilize this expertise as Chairman of BCA, a non-partisan, statewide business association representing the interests and concerns of more than one million working Alabamians through its member companies and partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama.

Cooper is optimistic about the future of Alabama and the state’s business community, noting the current emphasis in Alabama surrounding economic development and investment in our state. Economic incentives and growing Alabama’s workforce are BCA’s primary focus in this upcoming legislative session. Cooper stated that BCA will always work to keep improving Alabama’s pro-jobs environment and reputation for success under his chairmanship.

As Chairman, Cooper will bring his unmatched energy and drive to the board with an increased focus on communication. He shares, “BCA is here to support Alabama business. We serve as a resource to navigate the politics of the state and support businesses across Alabama through advocacy and networking. We’re working

to connect the dots for companies already here, those trying to grow, and businesses looking to make Alabama home.”

Cooper has a unique experience with building on a strong foundation and upholding core values for the success of an organization. While many leaders may be working towards the near-sighted timelines of “quarter end,” the longevity and stability of The Cooper Group provides the opportunity to look ahead in 5- or 10-year benchmarks. This stable and strategic way of planning will serve BCA well as the state’s largest and most effective business association.

BCA President and CEO Helena Duncan remarked, “Angus is a respected and impactful business leader in our state. He has a great understanding of BCA, our issues, and our members, and has a natural ability to bring ideas and people together. We are looking forward to working with Angus this year as we continue to be a strong and meaningful voice for Alabama businesses, paving the way and taking action.”

Cooper earned his Bachelor of



Science in Commerce and Business Administration from The University of Alabama. Long before that, Cooper began duck hunting at eight years old with his father, and in that spirit, has served on the Alabama Wildlife Federation board for over 20 years, including two years as president. He has also served as



chairman of the board for UMS-Wright Preparatory School in Mobile and is past chairman of the

Alabama State Port Authority, the 10th-largest port in the United States. He also serves on several corporate and community boards including Alabama Power and Bryant Bank.

"I am proud to call Alabama home for my family and my business," Cooper reflected. "Our state is a successful -- and growing -- business-friendly environment with labor that's willing to work. We have strong colleges and universities that develop our workforce, and most importantly, Alabama offers an incredible way of life for its people, families, and employers." **BA**

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The Business Advocate is published by the Business Council of Alabama, a non-partisan, statewide business association representing the interests and concerns of nearly 1 million working Alabamians through its member companies and its partnership with the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama. For more information on the Business Council of Alabama please contact us at (800) 665-9647 or visit us online at bcatoday.org.