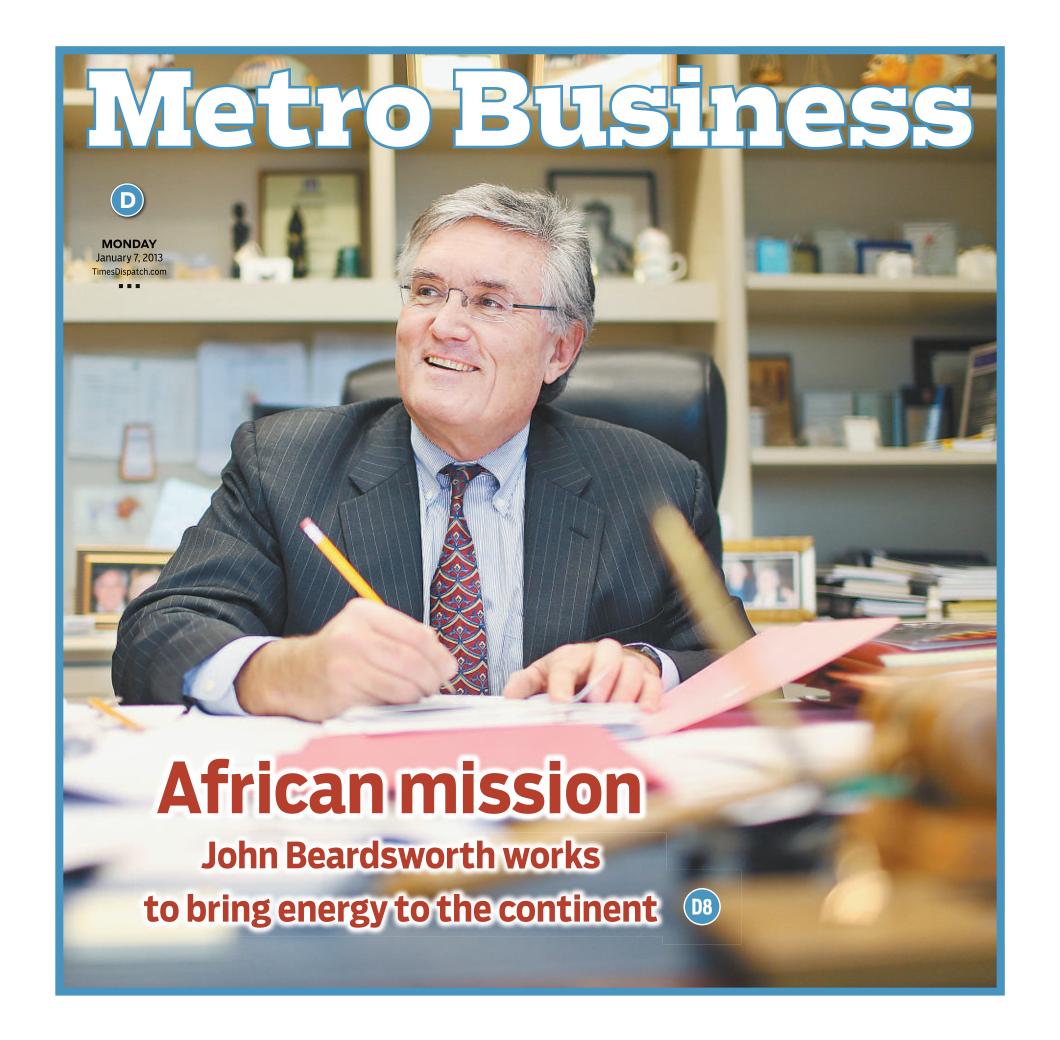
## Richmond Times-Dispatch



## A power broker for African nations

Beardsworth helps countries electric system in England, we were working on from Richmond law office

BY LOUIS LLOVIO

Richmond Times-Dispatch ohn J. Beardsworth Jr. sits in a conference of Hunton & Williams offices in downtown Rich- energy and infrastructure and many things on the mond and looks every bit the corporate lawyer. In the requisite dark suit and tie, the affable Beardsworth, 58, discusses complex, billion dollar transactions with

the casualness of someone looking over a lunch Despite the James River the World Bank who as his backdrop and his position at one of Richmond's most prestigious law firms, Beardsworth's

mind is about 7,000 miles away in the heart of Afri-Beardsworth, who didn't get a passport until Africans." he was 29, has spent a good part of his career working on complex legal cases around the globe. But over the years, he

has built a lucrative practice helping African nations develop massive energy and infrastructure The work, according to experts, is extremely difficult because of the complexity of the deals and that he is working in one of the most volatile areas in the world, where civil wars spring up on a seem-

rivalries span centuries

and masses of the population suffer from crip-Still, despite racking up over the nuclear issue and hundreds of billable hours what to do with decomroom on the 10th floor for the firm, Beardsworth missioning costs and is helping bring basic to the 1 billion people living in the cradle of

civilization. "One thing I really admired about John, and I've known a lot of law-

worked on several projects with Beardsworth. "He was always balanced and fair, and I think really enjoyed his work. And I do believe he really made a difference in his relationship with

Beardsworth began working in the international sector in the late

Margaret Thatcher, then prime minister of the United Kingdom, was working to privatize staterun industries. "I have historically done a lot of work for electric utility companies, including Dominion (Re-

sources)," Beardsworth "When (Thatcher) ana project here with an British privatization. (The adviser) said, 'You know, they are just having fits what to do with spent fuel

understand those things." The adviser introduced Beardsworth, who had yers, is that he always had at Hunton & Williams, a professional demeanor," and George C. Freeman said Karen Rasmussen, a Jr., another partner, to former financial analyst at members of the British

zation and the nuclear Freeman, who is now retired, remembers

leader who was able to the officials they met. guy (and) one of the **brightest** guys I worked with," he recalled.

ingly regular basis, ethnic nounced that they were going to privatize the

back end of the nuclear cycle.' And we said we recently become a partner vate-sector participation in a power plant in Pana-

government working on The two traveled to England to help sell their understanding of privati-

Beardsworth as a creative foster relationships with "He really is a first-rate Their trip turned into a job. They were hired by

the 12 area boards, which distribute electricity in England, to advise them on the nuclear issues. That assignment kept Beardsworth in England working exclusively for the government for a summer and put him on the path to becoming an attorney working interna-

"Having worked for the British government on its privatization put us in a was also involved with the good stead for the privatiseemed to be sweeping

the world," he said. After England, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the humanitarian and economic development agency, got the Panamanian government on bringing in pri-

His team came up with a long-term lease that accomplished what the government wanted. "It was very successful," Beardsworth said. That deal brought him

to the attention of the World Bank. At the time, Beardsworth put Washington on his business card — even though his office was in Richmond — because he was doing a lot of business with agencies there. He also had put his name and Washington address on the front page of the

Panama agreement. Soon after, "I got a call out of the blue from a guy at the World Bank (who was in charge of energy), and he said, 'Mr. Beardsworth, I've got some documents in front of me. They're very interesting. can pop by and discuss

"Right now Africa is energy-deficient," says John J. Beardsworth Jr., an attorney with Hunton & Williams in Richmond. "Only about 15 percent of people have

that is sporadic."

electricity, and even

John J. Beardsworth Jr. **Born:** Nov. 10, 1954; Bridgeport, Conn.

**Education:** University of Pennsylvania, bachelor of arts, 1975; George Washington University, law degree, 1979. Work history: Grants administrator and volunteer firefighter, town of Newtown, Conn., 1975-76; Hunton & Williams LLC, 1979-present.

> Vegetable gardening; boating; historic renovation; arboriculture; spending time at Lake Family members:

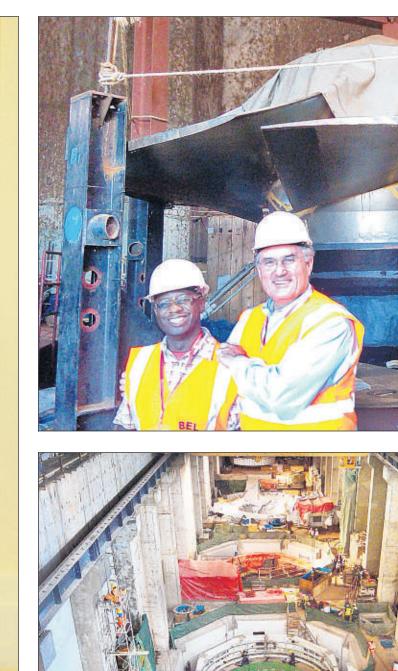
wife, Judy A. Beards-

worth

**Outside interests:** 



DANIEL SANGJIB MIN/TIMES-DISPATCH



The man, who thought Beardsworth was in Washington, asked if he

could come by the follow-Beardsworth agreed. "I went up there and discussed the documents with him. It was really the was a government coup beginning of a 20-plus

year relationship with the and the World Bank . World Bank." That was about 1989, and Beardsworth, whose first project with the

soon after he came on,

World Bank in Africa was in Nigeria, got a quick lesson on Africa: There

pulled its money out. "Fortunately, on the next big project that they wanted to do they called me again," he said.

team of about 10 attor-

**Beardsworth now runs** a

John J. Beardsworth Jr. stands near a turbine

with Innocent Kihika of **Uganda Electricity** Transmission Co. Ltd. (left), and an employee of Bujagali **Energy Ltd.** 

**Turbines are installed** in the powerhouse of the \$1 billion Bujagali Hydroelectric plant near Jinja, Uganda.

neys working from the law firm's offices in Richmond and London who handle the firm's business in Africa.

The firm represents many African nations as

they work with the private BEARDSWORTH , Page D10

## **Beardsworth**

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sector to develop and build infrastructure and energy projects. "Whenever a state and the private sector decide that they're going to work together to do something, you have to carefully document who does what, when they do it and what happens if they don't. And you have to do it in a way that ... will attract investment from international banks."

The attention to detail is incredibly important, he said, if a nation is going to attract banks that will think a project is worth funding. "There can't be any

holes. There can't be any

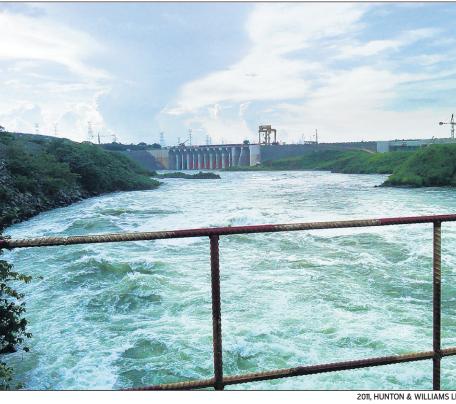
slips between the cup and lip," he said. One of Beardsworth's most recent projects was helping the Ugandan government develop and finance the \$1 billion Bujagali Hydroelectric plant on the Victoria Nile River, which opened in October.

That 250-megawatt

power plant will supply

electricity to millions of homes and businesses, which will help spur economic growth, he said. The benefits of his work are untold for a continent where the "lack of access to energy services is one of the biggest factors limiting economic growth and reducing the quality of life of the majority of Africans," according to the **ing** with the World Bank book, which is put out by has worked on dozens of the Africa Energy Forum. It's so bad that even in South Africa, with its abundance of natural assets and relatively advanced industrial development, 15 million people dam project that he calls still aren't on the power grid and don't have basic access to electricity or modern amenities, ac-

cording the forum.



The Bujagali project is expected to supply electricity to millions of homes and businesses, which will help spur economic growth.

"He's a great leader: he's a consummate diplomat; he's a team builder, a problem-solver."

Karen Rasmussen, a former financial analyst at the World Bank

who worked on several projects with Beardsworth.

"Right now Africa is energy-deficient," Beardsworth said. "Only about 15 those governments, percent of people have electricity, and even that

is sporadic. Since the fateful meetexecutive, Beardsworth projects with African na-

He's advising the Democratic Republic of Congo, net loss," he said. Burundi and Rwanda on a regional hydroelectric "Bujagali on steroids." That dam project illustrates some of the com-

Not only is it three governments, but also two of Rwanda and Congo, might in 2006. be at war with each other, he said.

"The hostilities in that part of Africa are very sad, and they've got a very true human toll. And yet each of the governments recognizes that introduction of more power into the system is a net benefit, not a

"And if for these limited purposes they have to work together, they do. It's in their own interest." Beardsworth also is plexities Beardsworth has an expansion of its into work with regularly: tegrated natural-gas-to-

electricity generation facility as well working to revise its laws to encourage deep-sea oil and gas exploration. Beyond those, he's working on two multibillion dollar-plus projects in

Nigeria.

But Beardsworth says one of his biggest accomplishments happened He worked with SEA-COM, a company-based in the Republic of Mauritius, on a project to im-

prove African broadband Internet networks. The company was looking to develop and finance a \$650 million underwater fiber-optic cable system that would connect South Africa; Mozambique; Madagascar; Kenya; Tanzania; India; and Marseilles,

The project expanded working with Tanzania on bandwidth capacity for citizens and businesses in several nations in south-



John J. Beardsworth Jr. now runs a team of about 10 attorneys working in Richmond and London who handle the firm's business in Africa.

ern and eastern Africa, and telecommunications between Africa and the rest of the world.

\* \* \* The World Bank's Rasmussen has worked on deals with Beardsworth for about 15 years. She said that an attorney with a high level of expertise is needed on deals in Africa because of the complexity and the myriad issues that are associated with these projects. Deals can take as

long as five years to com-"He's a great leader; he's a consummate diplomat; he's a team builder, a problem-solver," Rasmussen said. "I never saw a bad side to John. He always strove to find a solution and to find a consen-

Those skills are particularly critical when dealing with African nations on projects of the size and provement. scope Beardsworth and the World Bank worked

In most cases, government officials aren't accustomed to working on these types of developments. As a result, a lawyer, beyond having legal expertise, must teach and mentor officials who "re-

ally lack an understanding enhancing Internet access of commercial and legal "He had a great deal of patience. I think a normal lawyer wouldn't have that kind of patience," she

The two worked together primarily on arranging and structuring privatesector energy programs. The deals are particularly complicated given the inherent problems many African nations suffer. The big issues for anyone working in Africa are the un-credit worthiness of the countries themselves and very weak

utilities that are fraught with systemic problems, Rasmussen said. Those have long been impediments for the African nations, inhibiting growth and progress. But, Rasmussen said,

thanks to projects Beardsworth has worked on, there are signs of im-

"The macro framework is changing and improving; people are becoming more educated," she said. "They are aware that in order to grow, they have to have good basic services, like electricity, water,