

## Meet Dean Spencer

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[text] Meet Dean Spencer, William & Mary University Marketing, August 2022

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[music]

**Dean A. Benjamin Spencer:** I always knew that I wanted to practice here, be a member of this legal community. So, coming back to this area, in the law school that's really deeply rooted in the Virginia way, and the Virginia bar, and now settled here at this law school – which is, of course, the best law school in Virginia – so it's a great place to end up.

I grew up in Virginia, grew up as a Virginian, and, uh, I've always understood that Virginia is a very special place.

I've got a large family, so I'm married and I have nine children – six daughters and three sons. Uh, I spent most of my life here. Went away to Morehouse College in Atlanta. Uh, studied overseas for a little bit, but always wanted to come back to Virginia.

So that's where I've made my career. I've taught at three other Virginia law schools.

And, I joined the army – I was sworn in in 2015, and I still spend my weekends working on Army brief writing, to this day.

My great-grandmother, her grandparents were slaves. My father's mother and grandmother, she was a domestic. Her son became a federal judge. She sent him to college. He went to Harvard Law School, became a federal judge.

I can imagine that people who were working so hard under these terrible conditions would be, be proud to see someone that's *their* descendant in this position. The first African-American Dean in America's first law school.

[Music]

**Dean Spencer:** Justice is imperfect at this point. That's something that is being recognized right now, that we don't have full justice for all even though that's the promise of the country.

[Music]

**Dean Spencer:** Being a lawyer is, is not just about having a job and earning a living. But it's always been about making a difference and that's why this law school was founded.

It was founded to create people who would become citizens serving the public. And to be a lawyer with that public spiritedness is really to be an advocate. So, what this law school is about is creating *advocates* who are going to move this country in the direction of fulfilling its promise, that there *is* liberty and justice for all.

[Music]

**Dean Spencer:** Of the William & Mary values, Excellence resonates the most with me, um, because that's the number one thing that I think of when I think of William & Mary Law School. And so, Excellence really is the standard that we live by, and it's what William & Mary exudes. That's why I came here. I didn't come here to make this place excellent, I came here because it is excellent.

I want our students to have heart, to have soul, to have that commitment to community and to service.

That's what's going to be the differentiator for us, is that we have the most talented lawyers who care.

[Music]

**Dean Spencer:** So, wedding those two things, that's what's unique about William & Mary Law School that nobody else has. I think this is the best law school in the country, and the world needs to know that.

[Music]

**Dean Spencer:** It's a very bright future for this law school, and I'm excited to see it through.

[Music]