

# Doing The Right Thing

An Interview with Stokes Moore, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Investment Officer, Rockefeller Group

**EDITORS' NOTE** R. Stokes Moore is Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Investment Officer for Rockefeller Group. In this position, Moore serves as Chair of the company's Investment Committee, which is tasked with evaluating new investment and development opportunities. He also oversees all aspects of the Accounting, Tax, Finance, Treasury, and Business Analysis & Planning functions, and collaborates with key Rockefeller Group executives to develop and execute the company's investment and disposition strategies. In addition, Moore oversees the company's IT and Corporate Facilities departments, which manage the company's technology infrastructure and investment, as well as office services. He has served as Chief Financial Officer since 2018, and as Executive Vice President since 2021. Throughout his tenure, his responsibilities have increased in tandem with the company's growth in development nationally. He joined Rockefeller Group in 2013 as Vice President, Business Analysis and Planning. Prior to joining Rockefeller Group, Moore worked 14 years at Unilever, one of the world's largest consumer goods companies, in a variety of finance roles with increasing responsibility, and most recently as a Global Finance Director. He has worked as a consultant at Boston Consulting Group. Moore is a graduate of Duke University where he earned a bachelor's degree in history. He received his MBA with honors from The University of Chicago Booth School of Business.



R. Stokes Moore

exposure to business for a history major. I ended up in the corporate strategy department and concluded I should get an MBA. After graduate school, I worked in management consulting but quickly realized that wouldn't be my long-term career. I wanted to get back to the corporate side where implementation and execution was as critical as devising elegant strategies. I spent 14 years at Unilever in a variety of domestic and international roles, most of which were in finance, but also included supply chain, general management, and internal audit. When a recruiter called to discuss a role in real estate with Rockefeller Group, I told him he had the wrong guy twice. Ultimately, I took the call and now wish I had moved to real estate earlier in my career. All real estate professionals know the language of finance and investment, which was not always the case at a marketing company, and I like that we build tangible assets that improve neighborhoods and people's lives.

**How do you describe Rockefeller Group's culture and values?**

We have a collaborative and inclusive culture built on guiding principles such as quality, integrity, fairness, and a "one team" mentality. Our work is guided by having a love for the city and a love for people, so while we sometimes have to be tough on issues, we are not tough on people. We also emphasize having a growth mindset that anticipates change and strives for continuous improvement.

**What have been the keys to Rockefeller Group's leadership in the industry?**

First is the history and legacy as our company was founded almost 100 years ago to develop Rockefeller Center, still one of the most iconic urban multi-use developments in the world. We have great brand recognition, a long track record, and a reputation for doing the right thing. We also have a corporate structure and balance sheet that allows us to put meaningful equity into our projects which creates great alignment with our partners.

**Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?**

In my current role, I serve as Chief Financial Officer and Chief Investment Officer and

**COMPANY BRIEF** Rockefeller Group ([rockefellergroup.com](http://rockefellergroup.com)) develops, owns, and operates extraordinary properties across the United States. For nearly a century, the company has delivered exceptional experiences and value creation through dedication to quality in the built environment. The company's portfolio spans the development of multifamily, industrial, office and mixed-use projects across seven geographic regions and about six million square feet of world-class office space in Manhattan.

**Will you discuss your career journey?**

My first job after college was a business training program at Dun & Bradstreet when it was still a conglomerate. This was great



600 Fifth Street NW, a new 400,000-square foot office building in Washington, DC, anchored by Crowell & Moring and developed by Rockefeller Group and Stonebridge

**“I am most excited by the opportunity to create value while working collaboratively with colleagues and joint-venture partners or LPs to build high-quality buildings that improve people’s lives.”**



*Rockefeller Group Logistics Center on the Boulevard, a 657,000-square foot, two-building industrial project recently completed in Philadelphia*



*The Dupont, Rockefeller Group’s new residential rental tower near the waterfront in Greenpoint, Brooklyn*

oversee the accounting, treasury, tax, business analysis, IT, and transaction services departments. I am responsible for setting financial goals, assessing performance, and driving strategic discussions and adjustments to ensure we meet our long-term objectives. I also chair our investment committee and help define our investment strategy.

**What are the key aspects you look for when evaluating new investment and development opportunities?**

It starts with the fundamentals of location, product design, target tenants, and the competitive environment. We need to be clear about “the bet” we are making. Robust supply analysis is critical since the demand signals are apparent to all players. Finally, we review the financial projections to ensure we are being adequately rewarded for the risk we are taking and whether the underwriting can withstand a downside scenario.

**How are technology and AI impacting real estate development?**

AI is having a huge impact on what is being developed right now, such as data centers. But the bigger impact is on how work is getting done. There are incredible opportunities to improve internal processes and

extend analysis. The ability to create custom applications is astounding. AI has allowed us to undertake work including statistical analysis that would have required small consulting engagements previously.

**How do you approach your leadership style?**

Receiving information and having my assumptions challenged are critically important, so I try to be approachable and never shoot the messenger. I believe in an open environment with no surprises. I emphasize high accountability but with high support in a collaborative team environment. I try to be as clear as possible in describing what we need to achieve but then to give employees freedom to define the best process to complete the task.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

Commit to being a learner and absorb all you can. Be sure you understand the “why” behind the tasks you are assigned. Make yourself both highly competent and efficient so you can volunteer for things and take on more responsibility when opportunities present themselves. Have daily goals and complete the hardest one first.

**When you look to the future of real estate development, what excites you the most?**

I am most excited by the opportunity to create value while working collaboratively with colleagues and joint-venture partners or LPs to build high-quality buildings that improve people’s lives. These developments can take the form of multifamily projects, office buildings, logistics facilities, or mixed-use projects virtually anywhere in the United States where we have both conviction and where our regional teams can uncover the right opportunities. ●