

Rufus Yerxa

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Education

BA, University of Washington

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Amb. Rufus Yerxa, Senior Advisor, advises clients on global trade matters.

Rufus Yerxa has been a prominent figure in international trade policy for more than four decades. He served as Deputy US Trade Representative under two Administrations and spent more than a decade as Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). He has also served in the private sector as a trade lawyer and as head of a leading business association in Washington. His areas of expertise include the functioning of the WTO system and other international agreements, bilateral and regional economic relations, international investment matters and US trade law.

Ambassador Yerxa began his government career as a lawyer with the US International Trade Commission before joining the staff of the Committee on Ways and Means of the US House of Representatives, where he served as Staff Director of its Subcommittee on Trade.

From 1989 to 1995 he served as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) with the rank of Ambassador, first as head of USTR's Permanent Mission to the GATT in Geneva under President George H.W. Bush and subsequently as Washington Deputy during the Clinton Administration. He was instrumental in negotiations to replace GATT with the WTO in 1995 and to create the original NAFTA accord (now USMCA).

After leaving government service he practiced law for a major US firm in Brussels. In 2002 he was appointed to serve as Deputy Director General of the WTO. During his long tenure he helped to broaden its membership and strengthen various aspects of its rulemaking function.

From 2016 to 2021, he was President of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), a Washington-based industry association focused on expanding global markets for US companies.

Ambassador Yerxa is a native of Washington State. He holds a BA from the University of Washington, a JD from the Seattle University and an LLB in International Law from the University of Cambridge.

