



THE VOICE

The Government Lawyer Section of the Florida Bar

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Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues—



Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication to our practice as Government Lawyers. We are proud of you and commend you. This year we continue our CLE Programs, Law School Lunch & Learn Panels, and other initiatives we started working on last year. Please reach out and let us know how you want to contribute. As we continue this year, which is different for each of us, let's be considerate of others—and ourselves. We are strong lawyers who are passionate about our work. We must take care of ourselves and be kind to others. We represent a very special and important practice of lawyers.

Going forward, let's do everything with more consideration and kindness. In addition to our professional obligations, let's be nice. As always, I am here for each of you and encourage you to speak with me about what we can do for you and our community.

All my best to you,

Patyl A. Oflazian, Esq., LLM
Chair, Government Lawyer Section

PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS UPDATE

By Maria P. McCorkle, 7th Circuit Governor, YLD Board of Governors

PSLF. These Four letters are infamous to government attorneys and employees. There is no doubt that PSLF is an issue ever-present in the minds of many, especially during the COVID. There have been several changes to the program during the Pandemic.

If you are looking for information about these changes, the Young Lawyers Division offers a one-hour CLE about PSLF. You can watch the CLE here:

<https://flayld.org/2021/12/whats-new-with-public-service-loan-forgiveness-and-how-to-get-your-loans-forgiven/>

A brief summary from the federal government is below. Visit <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service> for the most up-to-date information.

Key Points: PSLF Summary of Changes

- For a limited time, you may receive credit for past periods of repayment on loans that would otherwise not qualify for PSLF.
- If you have FFEL, Perkins, or other federal student loans, you'll need to consolidate your loans into a Direct Consolidation Loan to qualify for PSLF both in general and under the waiver. Before consolidating, make sure to check to see if you work for a qualifying employer.
- Past periods of repayment will now count regardless of whether you made a payment, made that payment on time, for the full amount due, on a qualifying repayment plan.
- Periods of deferment or forbearance, and periods of default, continue to not qualify.

Note: The qualifying employment requirement has **not** changed.

GET TO KNOW A GOVERNMENT
LAWYER

THE HONORABLE GAR CHISENHALL

Administrative Law Judge

The Florida Division of Administrative
Hearings

Special to The Voice



How long have you been a government lawyer?

I have been an Administrative Law Judge with the Florida Division of Administrative Hearings since August 3, 2015.

How did you choose administrative law as your area of practice?

It would be more accurate to say that Administrative Law chose me. In the winter/spring of 2002, my clerkship at the First District Court of Appeal was coming to an end, and I was looking for my next job. I had some prior experience with law firms, but that experience was not particularly good, and I was not quite ready to give that route another try. As things turned out, I had a contact working in the General Counsel's Office at the Agency for Health Care Administration ("AHCA") who needed help with the Agency's appeals. Because I had already accumulated a substantial amount of appellate experience, I thought that handling appellate litigation at AHCA would be a relatively easy transition. With having the benefit of nearly 20 years of hindsight, I can say that it was one of the best things that ever happened to me from a career perspective. I was given a full caseload right from the start and given a lot of freedom to use my best judgment in how to litigate the cases. However, I was very fortunate to have several experienced coworkers who were very generous with their time if I had any questions. While my time at AHCA was initially divided between handling administrative appeals and Medicaid overpayment cases, I eventually transitioned into spending all of my time handling administrative appeals. Over the following years, I developed a niche practice in administrative appeals that eventually led to me landing my dream job at DOAH.

GET TO KNOW A GOVERNMENT LAWYER

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE CHISENHALL

What is your advice for a young government lawyer?

If you do not want to spend your entire career as an assistant general counsel, you absolutely have to get comfortable with networking. Doing a great job is always helpful for advancement, but it seems to be a universal truth that people like to hire people they know. Also, a lot of jobs are not advertised. Therefore, I cannot recommend strongly enough that ALL young attorneys start building their networks as soon as possible by: (a) joining and taking an active role in organizations such as the Government Lawyer and Administrative Law Sections; (b) speaking at continuing legal education seminars; (c) writing articles for the Florida Bar Journal and Section publications; and (d) getting to know the people who are doing the sort of work you want to do. Also, if you have a long-term goal of achieving a particular position (or doing anything for that matter) within a certain number of years, it is absolutely essential that you figure out what you need to do on a short-term (and even on a daily) basis to make that long-term goal a reality.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with young lawyers?

NEVER STOP LEARNING! Sometimes it seems like many lawyers stop studying the law immediately after they learn that they passed the bar exam. However, you don't learn everything about practicing law in law school, and you definitely don't retain everything you learned in law school. As a result, it is essential that you continue to study areas that you were introduced to in law school such as the rules of evidence and the rules of civil procedure. Also, the law is constantly changing, and it is also essential that you stay up-to-date on any changes that impact your practice area. A great and very inexpensive way to accomplish both of those tasks is through membership in a Section. For example, the Administrative Law Section recently held the second annual DOAH Trial Academy during which approximately 35 young attorneys spent an intensive week learning litigation techniques from a faculty of experienced attorneys and ALJs. In addition, the Administrative Law Section publishes a quarterly newsletter that notifies its membership of any developments that could impact their practices.

CELEBRATING GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY DECLARES NOVEMBER 17TH AS GOVERNMENT LAWYERS DAY

Lyndsey Siara, Senior Staff Attorney, 13th Judicial Circuit

By way of background, my co-chair, Christian Katchuk, and I proposed the creation of the Government Lawyers Section a little over two years ago. Our HCBA Board voted to create the new Section, and last year was our first year in existence. Of course, that was all virtual during COVID. We hosted four webinars last year and built up our membership base. You can see a bit more about the Section here: <https://www.hillsbar.com/group/GOV>. We have over 120 members! We've really geared up in this second Bar year now that we're mostly back in person. We host a bi-monthly "Government Gatherings" lunchtime get-together. We had "Coffee with the Chief," during which our government lawyers could enjoy a cup of coffee with our Chief Judge and his judicial colleagues. Last week, we hosted our first CLE program entitled E-Filing Exhibits: How to Do It and Do It Well. Among others! We were fortunate enough to receive a grant from The Florida Bar Diversity Committee recently, so we look forward to that program in 2022.

With respect to the proclamation, we were brainstorming [free!] ways to recognize and honor government lawyers, and decided to reach out to two county commissioners who are also attorneys. We're grateful to Commissioner Harry Cohen—who himself was a government lawyer before becoming a commissioner—for honoring all government lawyers in Hillsborough County on November 17, 2021—named Government Lawyers Day! To celebrate, on the morning we were presented with the proclamation, we partnered with our HCBA Young Lawyers Division to host a coffee truck at our bar building where members could swing by for a cup of coffee on their way to work. It was a wonderful way to kick off the season of gratefulness—we also hosted a food collection drive to benefit a local food pantry.



CELEBRATING GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY DECLARES NOVEMBER 17TH AS GOVERNMENT LAWYERS DAY

Compiled by Jacek Stramski, Esq.

The Government Lawyers Section is dedicated to the advancement of government attorneys. The goal of this new Section is to join together government attorneys from all types of government offices under one larger government sector umbrella. The Section will provide a platform for information sharing, for providing programming and messaging specifically targeted to government attorneys, and for collaboration with other voluntary bar associations to maximize government attorney involvement. The Government Lawyers Section will collaborate with other HCBA Sections and Committees, as well as other local voluntary associations, to expand the free or reduced cost program offerings for government attorneys. The Government Lawyers Section will work to reduce the financial barriers to bar association participation in an effort to acknowledge and achieve professional diversity within the HCBA. The Government Lawyers Section will provide programming and continuing legal education offerings of specific value to government attorneys. All government attorneys and friends or supporters of the government sector are invited to join the Government Lawyers Section.

From the HCBA Government Lawyer Section



CELEBRATING GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS

Proclamation

WHEREAS, government lawyers are a distinguished and unique group of attorneys who work for the various branches of local, state, and federal governments; and

WHEREAS, specialized legal professionals who have varying skills, government lawyers lend their unique talents to all types of governmental agencies, and

WHEREAS, from Public Defenders, State Attorneys, Attorneys General, and United States Attorneys, to County and City Attorneys, Law Clerks, Court Staff Attorneys, Judges, and many more in between, they serve the public in the thousands; and

WHEREAS, government lawyers are dedicated public servants who devote their lives to public service at a reduced pay that often does not reflect their value; and

WHEREAS, providing valuable and critical legal services to city, county, state, and federal governments through a multitude of governmental entities, government lawyers do important work that positively affects communities; and

WHEREAS, government lawyers are leaders in the community, offering their unique skills for the betterment of society, and are unsung heroes who often go unnoticed and unrecognized while ensuring the fair and expeditious administration of the legal system; and

WHEREAS, without the dedicated service of government lawyers, it would be impossible to ensure access to justice and the administration of it; and

WHEREAS, government lawyers deserve recognition and thanks for the valuable services they provide to their respective governmental agencies and the public at large; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Board of County Commissioners of Hillsborough County, Florida does hereby declare November 17, 2021 as

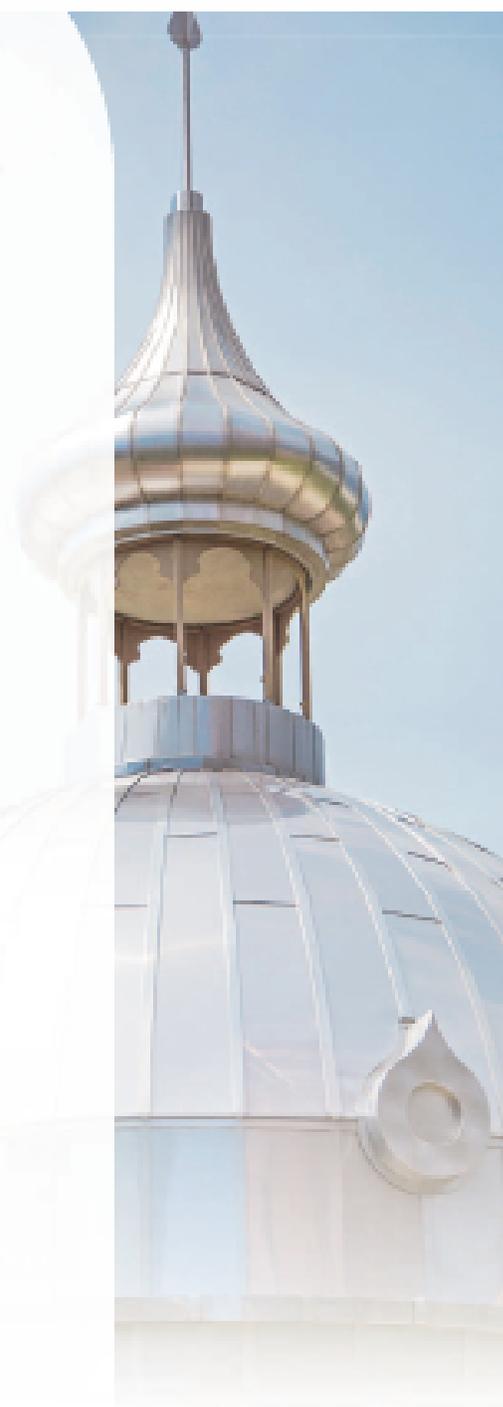
Government Lawyers Day

in Hillsborough County proudly recognizes all government lawyers serving municipal, county, state, and federal governments, and thanks them for their dedicated public service.

Executed this 17th day of November, 2021



Patricia King
Franklin Brown
Joe White
Tony Cohen
Ken Hays
Ada Myers
MARIELLA SMITH



FOR YOUNG GOVERNMENT LAWYERS



"As a former state and federal prosecutor, I know firsthand the importance of the Board of Governors Young Lawyers Division. For seven years as a government lawyer, I did not focus on anything outside of my cases and trials. When I got into private practice, I was terrified about being swallowed into the sea of anonymity that can be civil practice. I needed to feel like my work and my presence mattered because that is what I loved about my work as a prosecutor –making a difference in people’s lives. I discovered the YLD in my first year in civil practice and I realized that The Florida Bar NEEDS the perspective and representation of government lawyers. If everyone at the “table” only has one type of experience, we will not have the diversity needed to make The Florida Bar special."

- Marianna Curtis of Berger Singerman, 11th District Governor, YLD Board of Governors

Want to learn more about the YLD as a young government lawyer? Check out FlaYLD.org or on social media @FlaBarYLD

THE PETS OF GLS



Meet Raylan & Loki, the dynamic dog duo! Raylan and Loki, Chinese Crested puppies. We thank Russell Kent for sharing their cuteness with us!

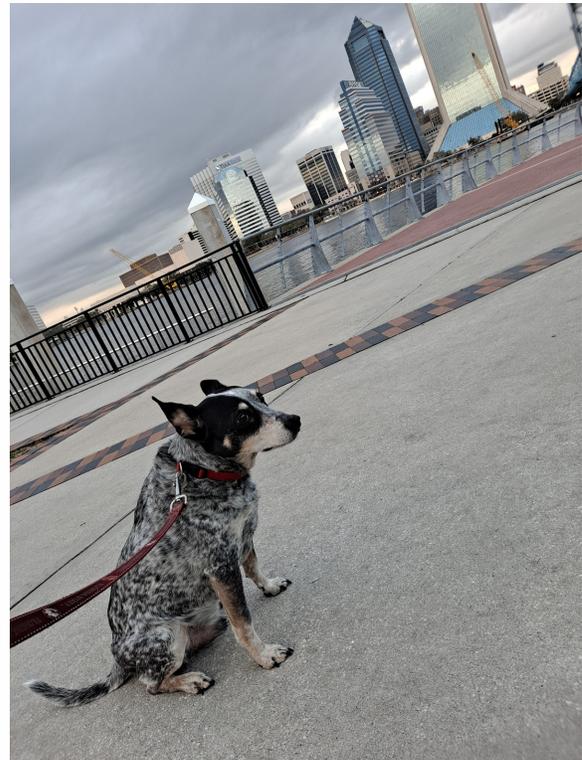
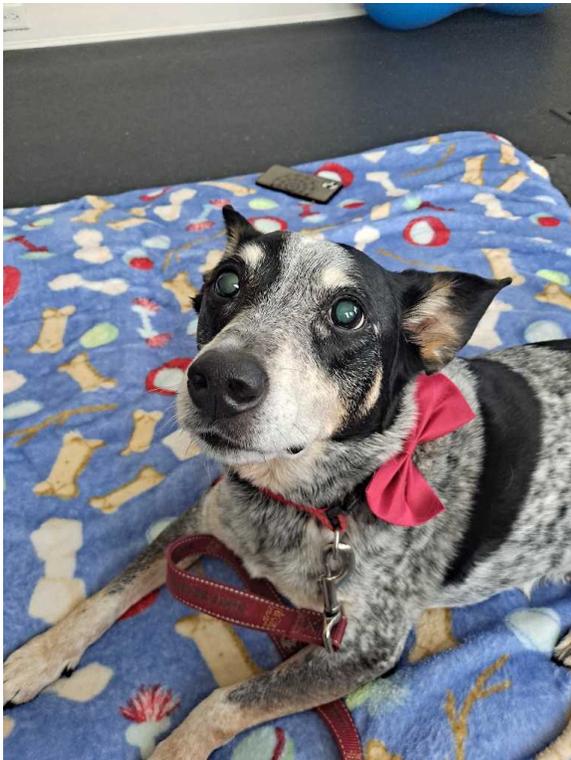


REMEMBERING MAX, A VERY GOOD BOY.

Special to The Voice

Mr. Max, who helped teach property law at FSU, helped his mom win the YLD Olympics in May. He loved the healthy habits they built and all of the walks. Mr. Max always looked forward to the weather cooling down. Mr. Max still enjoyed working with his mom from home, including occasionally sleeping under her desk.

Mr. Max crossed the Rainbow Bridge in November of 2021. He is loved and missed by his family and friends.



SAVE THE DATE

Executive Council Meeting



The Government Lawyer Section

2022 VIRTUAL WINTER MEETING

Thursday, January 27, 2022

1:00pm – 3:00pm

[Join Us Online](#)

Committee Reports Are Due On Or Before
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

AND FINALLY



The Voice

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Mission of the Section:

The Government Lawyer Section is dedicated to promoting the professionalism and competence of its members; improving the delivery of legal services to all governmental entities; improving the administration of the legal system; and enhancing The Florida Bar's and the public's understanding of the unique needs of the government lawyer.

GLS IS ONLINE



Are you social with us? Click and like today!



Have great news to share? Submit your good news to our Facebook Page and email the Voice! Let's celebrate our government lawyers!