

# CITY, COUNTY and LOCAL GOVERNMENT Law Section

A Section of The Florida Bar

## Member Spotlight

Meet **Amanda S. Coffey**, Chair-Elect of the City, County, and Local Government Law Section of the Florida Bar and Managing Assistant County Attorney with the Pinellas County Attorney's Office. Amanda is Board Certified in City, County, and Local Government Law, and in addition to managing her office's Constitutional Officers and Internal Services Section, primarily represents the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Property Appraiser. Thank you for your service, Amanda, and thank you for the interview!



**What was your first job?** I tried my hand at many different jobs before becoming a lawyer. My first formal job, in high school, was as a “reader” for a small publisher. I’ve also been a baker, a window washer, a pizza delivery driver, a bookseller (remember bookstores??), a dishwasher, office manager, and a recruiter. My most meaningful job before law school was as the executive assistant to the Pinellas County Property Appraiser. My brilliant mentor and boss at the time, Pam Dubov, encouraged me to pursue a career in the law, and I’m so glad that she recognized before I did what a good fit it was for me.

**What do you like most about being a local government lawyer?** I love the incredible scope and variety of legal challenges that local government lawyers have to tackle; there’s always something new to research or an unexpected intellectual puzzle to piece together. I am also always grateful for the truly supportive community of local government lawyers, both in my office and in the Section, willing to share their expertise and insight.

**To date, what professional achievement are you most proud of?** My proudest professional moment was when I was granted the opportunity to assume a management position in the Pinellas County Attorney’s Office, under the leadership of Jewel White. I am also very proud of having achieved board certification in City, County, and Local Government law. (If any local government lawyers out there are reading this and have not yet looked into certification, I strongly encourage looking into it; it’s a great program.)

**What is one thing someone meeting you for the first time would never suspect, or be surprised to find out?** I attended sixth and half of seventh grade in Sicily—although I’m sorry to say that my Italian has suffered from lack of consistent use since then. Next time we’re fortunate enough to have an in-person meeting, if you speak Italian, come chat me up; I need the practice! I’m also a nerd at heart, and love fantasy, sci-fi, gaming, and RPGs. (Although now that I say it, that might not be very surprising, even to those just meeting me!)

**If trapped on a desert island and were able to bring to one music album, what would it be?** OK Computer by Radiohead.

**Words to live by?** “I see no reason why I should be consciously wrong today because I was unconsciously wrong yesterday.” – Robert H. Jackson (Supreme Court Justice and chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials). I love this quote because it highlights the value of flexibility of thought. It encourages true discourse, and reinforces that there’s no intrinsic value to stubborn consistency for its own sake. You have to give yourself leeway to let your understanding evolve.

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