

Morris Richardson

April 24, 2021

Brevard County Board of County Commissioners
The Honorable Rita Pritchett, Chair
The Honorable Kristine Zonka, Vice Chair
The Honorable Bryan Lober, Commissioner
The Honorable Curt Smith, Commissioner
The Honorable John Tobia, Commissioner

Re: Brevard County Attorney Recruitment

Dear Commissioners:

Please accept my application to be your next county attorney. Having served for over ten years in the Brevard County Attorney's Office, writing this letter feels like the first step on a journey home.

I am a proud product of Melbourne High School and the Florida Institute of Technology. After graduating from Vanderbilt Law School, I returned to Florida, where I worked in private practice for two of the most respected law firms in the state. While representing a client at a city council meeting one night, I became curious about life on the other side of the dais. That initial spark of interest grew into a passion for local government law. I joined the Brevard County Attorney's Office in 2005 and never looked back.

From the beginning, I was entrusted with some of the County's most significant litigation. I successfully represented the Board of County Commissioners in lawsuits in state and federal court, in administrative proceedings, and on appeal. At the request of the State Attorney's Office, I defended a County ordinance against constitutional challenges raised by criminal defendants.

In my ten years with Brevard County, I was assigned to almost every department, from Brevard County Fire Rescue to the Valkaria Airport. For much of my tenure, I was charged with attending the Board of County Commissioners' zoning meetings, where I provided legal advice and guidance directly to the commissioners. My other longtime board assignments included the Planning and Zoning Board, the Contractor Licensing Board, and the Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency Board of Directors.

The cross-training that I received as an assistant county attorney familiarized me with most aspects of Brevard County government. Having done almost every job in the County Attorney's Office, I will be able to hit the ground running and effectively direct and supervise the efforts of its dedicated professional and support staff.

I left the County Attorney's Office in 2015 to become the City Attorney for West Melbourne. As City Attorney, I report directly to the seven-member City Council. In addition to providing every legal service required by the City Council and administration, I attend every meeting of the City Council, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Code Enforcement Board.

I endeavor to cultivate comfortable, collaborative, and mutually respectful relationships with the elected officials I serve. It is my mission to further the policy objectives of the governing body, while working together with the elected officials and management team to find creative solutions to difficult problems.

I keep elected officials well-informed. Importantly, I give unvarnished legal advice and do not hesitate to tell hard truths.

I enjoyed the privilege of working for longtime County Attorney Scott Knox and with current County Attorney Eden Bentley, and learned much from both. I look forward to discussing the future of legal leadership in the County Attorney's Office with each of you.

Very truly yours,

Morris Richardson
Morris Richardson

Morris Richardson

Objective

To provide excellent representation and legal leadership to local government clients.

Legal Experience

CITY ATTORNEY | CITY OF WEST MELBOURNE | SEPTEMBER 2015 - PRESENT

As chief legal officer for the City, provides representation, opinions, and advice to the City Council, City Manager, and City boards and departments. Prepares or reviews proposed legislation, contracts, and various legal documents prior to City Council consideration. Represents the City in legal matters, including litigation and contract negotiations. Attends all meetings of the City Council, Planning and Zoning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Code Enforcement Board. Manages Legal Department staff and budget.

ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY | BREVARD COUNTY | JUNE 2005 - AUGUST 2015

Under the direction of the County Attorney, provided legal representation, opinions, and advice to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager, and assigned County departments, boards, and agencies. Represented the Board of County Commissioners in lawsuits in state and federal courts and administrative proceedings. Attended Board of County Commissioners zoning meetings, and all meetings of the Planning and Zoning Board and Contractor Licensing Board.

SPECIAL MAGISTRATE & CODE ENFORCEMENT BOARD ATTORNEY | CITY OF PALM BAY | JULY 2010 - AUGUST 2015

On a contract basis, presided over hearings and decided code enforcement lien reduction petitions and parking citation appeals. Provided representation and advice to the Code Enforcement Board.

ASSOCIATE | LOWNDES, DROSDICK, DOSTER, KANTOR & REED, P.A. | MAY 2000 - FEBRUARY 2002, APRIL 2003 - MAY 2005 | ORLANDO

Represented private sector clients in construction, contract, real estate, land use, class action, and complex commercial litigation.

ASSOCIATE | GRAY ROBINSON, P.A. | FEBRUARY 2002 - MARCH 2003 | MELBOURNE

Represented private sector clients in contract, employment, labor, and land use matters.

Education

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW | DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE | MAY 2000

Dean's List; Best Oralist Award, National Moot Court Competition Southeast Region; National Moot Court Team; Moot Court Board.

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | BACHELOR OF ARTS | AUGUST 1996

Graduated with High Honor.