GRAYROBINSON



Thomas A. Cloud, B.C.S.

Of Counsel

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Focus

- Administrative and Regulatory
- Land Use Law
- Utilities
- Government
- Environmental and Sustainability Law

Through four decades, Tom has been a local and state government, utility, land use, and environmental law attorney. Board-certified by The Florida Bar in City, County and Local Government Law, Tom has represented over 100 Florida cities, including six as city attorney. His practice includes negotiating complex contracts, drafting dozens of city and county legislative initiatives and ordinances, creation and defense of municipal rates, fees, assessments, and charges, obtaining state and local government regulatory approvals and all matters attendant to the acquisition, development, and utilization of both real property and business acquisitions and sales. He has been responsible for the application and approval of over 25 Developments of Regional Impact throughout central Florida, as well as dozens of other complex land use matters. Tom has handled a variety of matters directly involving regional planning councils throughout Florida, including comprehensive plan amendments, DRI reviews, interlocal planning agreements, and agreements between RPCs and local governments. Tom helped create and served as the first general counsel to the Volusia Growth Management Commission, a charter-created intergovernmental entity that reviewed plan amendments within Volusia County. In addition to handling state administrative, municipal, land use, and environmental matters, Tom is one of the preeminent municipal utility attorneys in Florida, having successfully handled a wide variety of both transactional and litigation matters within the field. He has handled a variety of complex municipal, county, and special district financial transactions, including the defense of various capital and operational rates, fees, assessments, and charges. Tom has written, presented, and published dozens of articles on a variety of local government topics for various sections of The Florida Bar, *Stetson Law Review*, and other publications.

Tom currently serves as city attorney in four cities across Central Florida, and serves as general counsel to the Utilities Commission of New Smyrna Beach. He previously served as president of the Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, and has represented hundreds of cities and counties throughout Florida in a variety of legal matters since 1980.

Cities Represented:

Apopka	Malabar	Utilities Commission of New Smyrna
Atlantis	Manalapan	Valparaiso
Bartow	Marathon	Vero Beach

Belleair
Bonita Springs
Bowling Green
Bunnell
Bushnell
Cape Coral
Casselberry
Davenport
Daytona Beach
Eagle Lake
Edgewood
Estero
Fellsmere
Florida League of Cities
Fort Meade
Fruitland Park
Green Cove Springs
Groveland
Haines City
Hollywood
Howey-in-the-Hills
Jacksonville Beach
Kissimmee
Lakeland
Lake Clarke
Lake Hamilton
Lake Mary
Lantana
Longwood
Maitland
Marco Island
Melbourne
New Smyrna Beach
Newberry
North Port
Orlando
Orlando Utilities Commission
Oviedo
Palatka
Palm Bay
Palm Beach
Palm Springs
Pensacola
Pinellas Park
Plant City
Polk City
Port St. Lucie
Riviera Beach
Royal Palm Beach
San Antonio
Sanibel
Sebastian
South Bay
South Miami
South Palm Beach
South Pasadena
Space Coast League of Cities
St. Cloud
Tampa
Umatilla
Wauchula
Wildwood
Windermere
Winter Park
Zolfo Springs

Counties Represented:

Bay
Brevard
Charlotte
Citrus
DeSoto
Flagler
Lake
Martin
Marion
Orange
Seminole
VGMC

Areas of Emphasis

- City, County and Local Government (B.C.S.)
- Municipal Utilities Law
- Utility Mergers and Acquisitions
- Utility Rates Law

Background

Tom is a native Floridian hailing from Lakeland, Florida. He graduated from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, with a bachelor of arts, magna cum laude, with honors in history in 1976, and received his juris doctor with honors from Florida State University in 1979. Tom has been a

practicing attorney in Orlando since 1979, focusing on city, county, and local government law, municipal utilities law, utility mergers and acquisitions, utility rate formulation, environmental and land use law, municipal finance law, and administrative law.

Education

- J.D., Florida State University, 1979, With Honors
- B.A., Wake Forest University, 1976, *magna cum laude*

Admissions

- Florida

Affiliations

- The Florida Bar
  - Board Certified in City, County, and Local Government Law
  - Environmental and Land Use Law Section, 1990-present
    - Executive Council, 1981-present
    - Chair, 1987-1988
    - City, County and Local Government Law Section, Member
  - Governmental and Public Policy Advocacy Committee
- Florida Municipal Attorneys Association
  - President, 2015-2016
  - Executive Council, 2010-2017
- American Bar Association
- Florida League of Cities, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Legislative Policy Committee
- Florida Chamber Growth Management, Leadership Committee
- Boone High School Foundation Member, Board of Directors
- Wake Forest University National Alumni Council
- Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce Leadership Programs, Board of Directors
- Leadership Orlando Program, Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce
- Leadership Central Florida Program
- Leadership Florida Program
- Lake Apopka Restoration Council
- Music Mission Kiev, Board of Directors
- Orange County Historical Commission
- Historic Lakeland, Inc.
- Historical Society of Central Florida, Inc., Board of Directors
- Florida Chautauqua Assembly, Board of Directors

Awards and Recognitions

- *Best Lawyers in America*, 2012-2021
- *Chambers USA*, Energy and Natural Resources, 2021-2026
- *Daily Business Review*, Top Rated Lawyer, Energy, Environmental and Land Use Law, 2013
- Florida League of Cities Home Rule Hero Award, 2021

- Florida Municipal Attorneys Association Paul S. Buchman Award, 2021
- *Martindale-Hubbell,* AV® Preeminent Rated
- Florida *Super Lawyers*, 2006-2007
- *Florida Trend*, Legal Elite, 2004-2005, 2013

Articles and Publications

For 30 years, Tom has been a frequent author and lecturer in Florida on a variety of municipal, land use, and legal topics.

- "Allocating Limited Sewage Treatment Plant Capacity," *The Florida Bar Journal*, February 1982
- Co-Editor, *ELULS Manual,* Volume I and II, 1986
- "Public Facilities and Land Development Contracts," *ELULS*, 2005
- *"Birch Rods in the Cupboard: The Link Between Municipal Franchise Purchase Options and Franchise Fees in Florida," Stetson Law Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Winter 2006

Presentations and Seminars

- "Local Government Revenue Sources," Florida Municipal Attorneys Association's 39th Annual Seminar, July 8, 2021
- "Creating a Water and Sewer Utility in Florida," Lake County Board of County Commissioners Utilities Workshop, December 13, 2016
- "Celltowers in the Right of Way," Florida League of Cities 56th Annual Legislative Conference, Orlando, Florida, December 8, 2016
- "Birch Rods Revisited: An Updated Look at Municipal Franchise Fees in Florida," FMAA, 2014
- "Formation, Annexation, Dissolution and Contraction: The Florida Law of Municipal Territory and Its Boundaries," 31st FMAA Annual Seminar, Marco Island, Florida, July 2012
- "2011 Growth Management Law Changes: City Impacts," Florida League of Cities 2011 Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida, August 2011
- "500 Years of Florida Cities," 30th FMAA Annual Seminar, West Palm Beach, Florida, July 2011
- "Case Law Update: What You Need to Know About Recent Decisions and Trends," Land Use Law Conference, Jacksonville, Florida, May 2010
- "Annexation and Contraction: A Brief Essay on the Florida Law of Municipal Boundaries," Land Use Law Conference, Tampa, Florida, August 2009
- "Defense of Municipal Rates in Florida," 28th FMAA Annual Seminar, Bonita Springs, Florida, July 2009
- "Standing to Sue and Florida Cities," 27th FMAA Annual Seminar, Key Largo, Florida, July 2008
- "Turf Wars 2005: A Brief Study of Water and Sewer Service Area Authority and Disputes in Florida," 24th FMAA Annual Seminar, Amelia Island Plantation, Florida July 2005
- "Birch Rods in the Cupboard: Municipal Franchise Purchase Options in Florida," 22nd FMAA Annual Seminar, Amelia Island Plantation, Florida, July 2003
- "Turf Wars: A Brief Study of Water and Sewer Service Area Authority and Disputes in Florida," 18th FMAA Annual Seminar, Amelia Island Plantation, Florida, July 1999
- "A Brief Overview of Florida Municipal Franchise Law," 11th FMAA Annual Seminar, Amelia Island Plantation, Florida, July 1992

Media Mentions

- "Approves Massive Solar Farm Near Florida Polytechnic University," *Lakeland Now,* December 18, 2023
- "Lake Wales Commissioners Expected to Vote on Code Revision, Clearing Way for Pipe Plant," *The Ledger,* April 17, 2023
- "Fla. Town Says City Breached Water Services Contract," Law360, April 4, 2023
- "Importance of a Feasibility Study for City of Pensacola," *Pensacola News Journal,* February 10, 2022
- "Pensacola inches closer to creating electric utility amid anger toward FPL rate increase," *Pensacola News Journal,* January 27, 2022

Insights

- "John Moses Cheney's Impact Throughout the Orlando Region," Reflections From Central Florida, March 1, 2022