

Justine Thompson Cowan, J.D.
P.O. Box 533507 | Orlando, Florida 32853
(407) 506-4109 | cowan@cowannonprofits.com

EDUCATION

Duke University School of Law

J.D. 1995, *with honors*

Editorial Board, *Duke Law Journal*

University of California, Berkeley

B.A. 1988, Economics, *University Honors* (Spring 1986 & 1988)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Owner, Cowan Consulting for Nonprofits, PLLC, Orlando, Florida (2014-present)

Provide consulting and legal services to nonprofits on a range of issues including start-ups, 501(c)(3) compliance, fundraising laws, board training and development, organizational development, executive coaching, and all aspects of compliance with laws governing nonprofits. Serve as a consultant and trainer for the Edyth Bush Institute for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Consulting at Rollins College.

Director of Legal Resources, Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida, Orlando, Florida (2012-2014)

Developed a fundraising and outreach program for Central Florida's oldest and largest legal aid organization that provides free legal services to low-income residents. Managed rebranding, overhaul of existing website and online resources, development of database and donor management protocols using eTapestry, media outreach and more. Successfully engaged Board of Directors in a fundraising campaign where there had been no prior board involvement in development. Increased giving from individuals and law firms by 82%.

Executive Director, GreenLaw, Atlanta, Georgia (1999-2012)

Served as Executive Director of Georgia's oldest public interest environmental law center for more than 12 years. Directed and implemented advocacy programs focused on water quality, air quality, environmental justice, and open government. Built GreenLaw into a financially stable organization with a state and national reputation for being well-managed, lean and highly effective. Primary responsibilities included:

- **Personnel Management:** Managed and motivated attorneys, consultants, administrative staff and interns. Developed comprehensive office procedures and personnel policies. Oversaw all aspects of human resources management.
- **Board Development:** Engaged in extensive board development, training and strategic planning.
- **Budgeting and Finance:** Oversaw all financials including the development of annual budgets and comprehensive financial protocols, annual audits and compliance with all tax and reporting requirements for nonprofits.
- **Fundraising:** Created and implemented a successful development plan raising more than \$5 million. Increased giving from individual donors from less than one percent to approximately twenty-five percent of annual giving. Managed all aspects of foundation giving including identifying potential targets, drafting grant proposals and reports, and developing and maintaining relationships with foundation staff. Created and implemented annual signature event that raised more than \$100,000 each year. Developed and oversaw the management of donor database using DonorPerfect. Managed board fundraising efforts and development staff.
- **Public Relations:** Routinely engaged in public relations, including speaking engagements, writing for publications, and providing commentary for print, television and radio news outlets. Developed and implemented press protocols and outreach plans.

- **Marketing:** Developed and maintained a comprehensive marketing plan that includes web, social media, television and radio. Took the organization through a highly successful rebranding process.
- **Nonprofit Management and Legal Services:** Routinely provided nonprofits with legal and strategic counsel on a range of nonprofit management issues including compliance with IRS requirements as well as state and federal regulations pertaining to nonprofits, development of marketing and fundraising plans, board development, human resources and more.
- **Advocacy:** Routinely advocated for improvements to water and air quality regulations and permits through administrative and legal processes. Launched one of the first environmental justice legal programs in the Southeast that focused on the connection between poverty, race and the environment. Lobbied members of the state legislature, provided testimony before legislative committees and analyzed proposed legislation.
- **Legal Work:** Managed all aspects of litigation including supervising attorneys, budgeting, client communications and development, public relations and strategy development. Served as lead counsel on complex cases including Friends of the Chattahoochee v. Dr. Carol Couch In re Longleaf Energy Station (defeating a coal-fired power plant which, if built, would have emitted 500 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over its lifetime), Sierra Club v. Georgia Power, (securing an agreement from a major utility company to spend more than \$40 million to prevent excessively heated discharges that were causing massive fish kills), Complex Environmental v. TCAL (defeating a controversial thousand-acre landfill that would have stored massive amounts of waste in an impoverished minority community), and Altamaha Riverkeeper v. Amercord (obtaining the largest judgment in Georgia at the time under the federal Clean Water Act for illegal discharges of cyanide and other toxins into a river).
- **Teaching:** Guest lecturer at Emory University, University of Georgia, Georgia State University and Mercer University law schools. Served as an adjunct professor for the *University of Georgia Institute of Ecology* Costa Rica law program (Monte Verde, Costa Rica).
- **Land Use:** Drafted model ordinances adopted by counties to address development concerns; addressed issues from construction activities with respect to erosion and sediment control measures; created comprehensive training activities on erosion control.

Associate Attorney, Southern Environmental Law Center, Atlanta, Georgia (1998–1999)

Worked to protect water quality in Georgia and Alabama. Led efforts that secured regulations governing industrialized farming operations that were among the strongest in the nation. Work also included hydropower relicensing, water quality permitting, and analysis of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint and Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa interstate compacts.

Litigation Attorney, Chorey, Taylor & Feil, Atlanta, Georgia (1997-1998)

Drafted and filed pleadings, prepared affidavits and interrogatories, and researched and drafted memoranda on a range of civil litigation topics.

Judicial Clerk, Honorable Robert L. Echols, United States District Court, Nashville, Tennessee (1995-1997)

Conducted legal research and drafted court orders and opinions for the Judge's review on a range of issues including employment, bankruptcy, civil rights, criminal law, intellectual property, and more.

National Chapter Coordinator, Student Pugwash U.S.A., Washington, D.C. (1990-1992)

Coordinated national educational program for high school, college and graduate students that addressed critical global problems thorough the responsible use of science and technology. *Student Pugwash USA* furthers the mission of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning *Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs*.

Project Assistant, National Wildlife Federation, Washington, D.C. (1990)

Worked on national campaign for passage of bipartisan legislation to reduce federal subsidies of shorefront development. Tasks included lobbying and preparation of background briefing materials.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Contract Attorney, *Animal Legal Defense Fund* (2012-present)
- Volunteer, *Florida Audubon Center for Birds of Prey* (2011-2013)
- Field Captain, *Election Protection* (2008)
- Founding Board Member, *Georgia Poultry Justice Alliance* (1999-2001)
- Summer Associate, *Boult, Cummings, Conners & Berry* (1994 & 1995)
- Summer Associate, *Kennedy, Covington, Lobdell & Hickman* (1994)
- Summer Clerk, *Honorable Adolpho Birch, Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals* (1993)
- Teacher, *AEON*, Japan (1989-1990)
- Co-Director, *Cal in the Capital* (1987)
- Intern, *Department of State, Bureau for Refugee Programs* (1987)
- Intern, *Sierra Club* (1986)
- Field Captain and Chapter Coordinator, *California Public Interest Research Group* (1985-1986)

AWARDS

- *Ogden Doremus Award for Excellence in Environmental Law*, GreenLaw (2012)
- *Award of Appreciation*, Friends of the Chattahoochee (2012)
- *Recognition of Achievement*, Beyond Coal Movement (2010)
- *Outstanding Contribution*, Sierra Club (2008)
- *Champion for Clean Water*, Ogeechee Riverkeeper (2006)
- *Award of Appreciation*, T.C.A.L. (2005)
- *Green Team Award for Top Georgia Environmentalists* (GreenLaw), Creative Loafing Newspaper (2003)
- *Award of Appreciation*, South DeKalb Neighborhoods Coalition (2003)
- *Award of Recognition*, Altamaha Riverkeeper (2002)
- *Award of Appreciation for Outstanding Achievement*, Sierra Club (1999)

PUBLIC SPEAKING

- *Strategic Giving: How to Make Your Gifts Count!*, Women's Giving Alliance, Clermont, FL (2015)
- *Building a Board that Works: How to Make Your Board More Effective*, 10th Annual Neighborhood and Community Summit, Orlando, Florida (2015)
- *Fundraising Legal and Ethics Checkup: How to Impress Donors and Stay out of Trouble*, Association of Fundraising Professionals, First Coast Chapter, Jacksonville, Florida (2015)
- *Fundraising Legal Checkup: How to Impress Donors and Stay out of Trouble*, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Central Florida Chapter, Winter Park, Florida (2015)
- *Fundraising Legal and Ethics Checkup: How to Impress Donors and Stay out of Trouble*, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Nonprofit Business Council of the County Chamber Economic Partnership, Ocala, Florida (2015)
- *Nonprofit Governance: The Legal Landscape*, Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals Conference, Orlando, Florida (2015)
- *Keeping it Legal: An Overview of Fundraising Laws and Regulations*, Space Coast Association for Fundraising Professionals, Space Coast Chapter, Viera, Florida (2014)
- *How to Keep It Legal: An Overview of Key Legal and Ethical Issues for Nonprofits*, Featured Speaker, Assistance League National Conference, Orlando, Florida (2014)
- *What Every Nonprofit Needs to Know to Comply with Florida's New Laws on Fundraising*, Rollins Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Center, Winter Park Florida (2014)

- *Legal & Ethical Issues for Nonprofits*, Rollins Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Center, Winter Park Florida (2014)
- *Roundtable Discussion: Is Title VI a Viable Tool for Protection of Environmental Justice Communities?* Moderator, Florida A & M University Law School: Orlando, Florida (2013)
- *Pro Bono Panel: Why Helping the Community Helps your Bottom Line*, Moderator, Orlando, Florida (2013)
- *No More Dumping in Dixie! Using the Law to Promote Environmental Justice in the South*, Florida A & M University Law School, Orlando, Florida (2011)
- *Georgia's Energy Future: Are We Looking Forward or Backwards?*, Columbus Bar Association, Columbus, Georgia (2011)
- *Litigating in the Office of State Administrative Hearings*, Georgia Public Interest Environmental Law Coalition, Atlanta, Georgia (2010)
- *Water Quality Permitting in Georgia*, Georgia Water Resources Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia (2009)
- *Working for Environmental Justice*, Advancing the Consensus: 60 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Conference, Emory University School of Law, Decatur, Georgia (2008)
- *The Impact of Coal in Georgia*, EcoFocus Film Festival, Athens, Georgia (2008)
- *The Role of the Law in the Struggle for Environmental Justice*, Tribute to Martin Luther King, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia (2006)
- *Combined Animal Feeding Operations*, Georgia Water Resources Conference, Athens, Georgia (1999)
- Frequent guest speaker at law schools, community events, business clubs, and other public forums.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Patterns of Pollution: A Report on Demographics and Pollution in Metro Atlanta* (2012) (co-author)
- *Putting the Law to Work in Our Communities: A Citizen's Guide to Environmental Protection and Justice in Georgia* (2008) (co-author)
- *State Administrative Appeals: A Valued Public Forum for Environmental Decision-Making*, Environmental Law Newsletter, reprinted in Air & Waste Management Association Newsletter (2003)
- *The Clean Water Act NPDES Program: How Citizens Can Use the Law to Protect Their Watershed*, Proceedings of the 2001 Georgia Water Resources Conference (2001)
- *A Citizen's Guide to Fighting Water Pollution in Georgia* (2001) (co-author)
- *Regulating Confined Animal Feeding Operations in Georgia*, Proceedings of the Georgia Bar Environmental Law Summer Seminar (1999)
- *Threats to Georgia's Water Quality: An Analysis of EPD's Proposed CAFO Rules*, Proceedings of the Georgia Water Resources Conference (1999)
- *Who is Right About Responsibility: An Application of Rights Talk to Balla v. Gambro, Inc. and General Dynamics v. Rose*, 44 Duke L.J. 1020 (1995)