

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 11

V. Lynn Whitfield

*Fort Pierce City Attorney
Candidate Report*

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Resume

Section 11

- Legal matters coming before the Council; responsible for Providing for the representation of the City in litigation Filed by or against the City; monitor work done by outside Counsel; supervise legal staff and support staff; review City Code and recommend appropriate changes; work with other City departments and provide legal advice; assist in Developing legal department's budget; training public servants in testifying in court; and performs other Duties as requested by the Mayor and City Council
- December 2, 2002-December, 2005 **Associate-** Walton Lantaff Schroeder & Carson, LLP
Concentrating in General Liability Defense, Municipal Law And Criminal Defense
- City Attorney-City of Pahokee, Florida-**Responsible for Advising the City Commission on all legal matters coming Before them. Providing legal advice to department heads. Providing representation of the City in litigation filed by or Against it.
- August 1, 1992 – December, 2002 **Private Practice-Law Offices of V. Lynn Whitfield, P.A. Whitfield & Mosley**
Concentrating in Criminal Defense, Civil Litigation and Municipal Law.
- March, 1987-July, 1992 **Deputy City Attorney, Chief Litigator-City of West Palm Beach**
Responsible for the defense of the City of West Palm Beach in all types of litigation including Personal Injury, Eminent domain, police brutality and federal cases. Over 20 civil jury trials. Handled all municipal issues including Zoning, land use and annexation
- September, 1985-March, 1987 **Assistant Public Defender – Palm Beach County**
Responsible for the defense of indigents charged with Criminal offenses throughout the county.
- August, 1983-March, 1985 **Law Clerk-Municipal Court-East Cleveland, Ohio**
- August, 1981-July, 1983 **Sole Practitioner –** Handled criminal defense cases along With personal injury and domestic cases.
- 1978-1981 **State Attorney's Office-Miami-Dade County, Florida**

Started as legal intern assisting the attorneys; became a Certified legal intern trying cases and advanced to Assistant State Attorney trying felony cases.

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Offices held:	2006-2008	Board Member at Large-National Bar Association
	2004-2005	President-Craig S. Barnard American Inn of Courts
	2001-2005	Director-Palm Beach County Bar Association
	2002-2003	Chair-Board of Directors-Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
	1998-1999	President – Palm Beach Association Of Criminal Defense Lawyers
	1997-1998	Regional Director Region XI-National Bar Association
	1996-1997	President-Florida Chapter National Bar Association; Affiliate Representative-National Bar Association
	1995-1999	Vice President-Board of Directors Florida Rural Legal Services
	1986-1987	President – F. Malcolm Cunningham Bar Association, Palm Beach County

Memberships: Palm Beach County Bar Association; F. Malcolm Cunningham Bar Association; Life Member-National Bar Association; Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter National Bar Association; Life Member – NAACP; Florida Rural Legal Services Board

TEACHING:

2016 Local Government Lawyer’s Legal Summit: Make Law your Profession not your life

Section 11

- 2012 Ethics and Orientation for New Commissioners
Ethics training for all City Boards
- 2011 Forfeiture, Search and Seizure, and Testifying in Court – Internal training for City of North Miami Police Department
- 2009 South Florida Chapter National Forum of Black Public Administrators-"Ethics Jeopardy"
- 2008 South Florida Chapter National Forum of Black Public Administrators – Public Records and Sunshine Law
- 2006 South Florida Chapter National Forum of Black Public Administrators-"How to balance Tightrope, Live in a Fishbowl without upsetting your moral Compass"
- 1997 Florida Chapter National Bar Association Trial Advocacy Seminar-"From Teachin' to Preachin'-Direct Examination of Witnesses
- 1993 Faculty member-Southern Regional Trial Advocacy Seminar-National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA)

LEGAL COMMENTARY EXPERIENCE:

- 1998-2005 Legal Commentator for WPBF Channel 25-
Handled gavel to gavel coverage of State v. Brazill; Interview of Gary Condit; coverage of President Clinton's Investigation and impeachment; numerous other stories
Covered by WPBF-Channel 25

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- 2013-Present Martindale Hubbell AV Preeminent rating

Section 11

2012 Strathmore's Who's Who for leadership and achievement in the occupation, industry and profession

2009 Named one of the most accomplished in the legal field ICABA in their Inaugural Edition

2007 Named one of the 25 most prominent & influential Black Women by Success South Florida Magazine

Recipient of the Presidential Award for Outstanding Service-National Bar Association

2000 Who's Who in Executives and Businesses

1997 Nelson Mandela Award-University of Miami School of Law Black Law Students Association

- Eligible to sit for board certification examination

Candidate Introduction

V. Lynn Whitfield

Hello, I am Vennie Lynn Whitfield. I practice under the name V. Lynn Whitfield. I'm a graduate of the University of Miami School of Law, class of 1980. I received my undergraduate degree in Sociology from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts.

After graduating from law school, I was an assistant State Attorney working for Janet Reno. I have also served as an Assistant Public Defender, an assistant City Attorney, and a deputy City Attorney. My career has included owning my own private law practice and working for a medium sized law firm.

In 2006, I accepted a position as Deputy City Attorney for the City of North Miami and five months later I was named City Attorney. I worked there for approximately five years before accepting the position as City Attorney for Hallandale Beach. I left Hallandale Beach, November 29, 2016.

Hallandale Beach has a population of approximately 38,000 permanent residents. The population grows to approximately 50,000 during the season. Hallandale Beach is a coastal city and is the home of two casino facilities. The city employs just under 500 full-time employees. The City Attorney's office is made up of two other attorneys and a legal assistant. I supervised all the employees of the City Attorney's office. In Hallandale Beach our staff handled the majority of the legal needs of the city. When I first became the City Attorney the budget for outside counsel was over a half a million dollars. During my tenure we reduced the amount to under two hundred thousand dollars.

Hallandale Beach is a city very involved with development and it does not utilize impact fees so we had to be creative in figuring out ways to provide upgraded parks and recreation facilities for the residents. We entered into a private public partnership with a developer which resulted in the refurbishing of one of the city's beach parks. The projected included the building of a \$8 million dollar restaurant/spa facility which the city was a party to the operating agreement receiving a share of the profits. We also utilized development agreements on other projects to assist the city in providing services to the residents.

I consider myself to have a teaching management style. I believe it is important that everyone work together as a team and I'm only as good as those who work with me and for me. I like to acknowledge the good things my staff does and help them to learn what they might have done better. Ft. Pierce is a city with a lot of potential and that is why I'm interested. I've had the occasion to handle federal cases in Ft. Pierce in the past so I've watched it. I enjoy using my experience to help a city which is looking to grow and even rebrand itself. I was a part of the rebranding of both North Miami and Hallandale Beach.

I believe it is important that the City Attorney is able to effectively communicate to the City Commission the legal position of any issues facing the city. Also, the City Attorney should be able to think outside the box and assist the City Commission on finding ways to accomplish their objectives within the constraints of the law.

V. Lynn Whitfield

I have a lot of litigation experience so when a lawsuit is filed against the city I represent I first do an analysis of the case. I would have already discussed the facts with the administration so I know whether or not we could resolve the matter prior to the lawsuit being filed. I believe cases which should be settled should be done so early, but if they should not be settled, they should be defended vigorously.

Not all communication with elected officials should be in writing. I have an open door policy for all elected officials and most department heads. The City Attorney's office is a service department of the city and we are there to serve the needs of the elected officials and administration. The elected officials should be kept abreast of any and all legal issues which they might have to encounter as a commission. As City Attorney I work for the entire commission and not any one commissioner alone. That being said I also believe it is important to maintain the confidentiality of what one commissioner says to me.

One thing I have learned in life is that not everyone is going to like you. I believe the majority City Commissioners who have worked, with me even when I was at the City of West Palm Beach as an assistant city attorney, will say that I'm a good, honest, hardworking attorney who always had the best interest of the city in mind. There will be one or two who will speak negatively of me, but if you look at the work I did it will show what type of attorney I am. I had good working relationships with all the City Managers I worked with and together we accomplished a lot.

I believe my strengths are my good memory and my ability to analysis an issue and see the big picture. I am also going to give you the best legal opinion I can. I believe in being impeccable in my word and always doing my best.

My weakness is that I sometimes get impatient. I sometimes forget that others may take longer to grasp a concept than I do. I have learned to take the time and break things down so that everyone can understand what is being said and done.

My greatest accomplishment is my being an attorney at all. I come from a family where I am the first college graduate and first graduate of a professional school, then I suffered an early setback in my career which resulted in a 6 month suspension from the Florida Bar. The fact that I was able to rebuild my career and have a successful one in government, says a lot about my determination and it is something I'm proud to have accomplished.

As I mentioned, I suffered an early setback in my career. In 1981, while I was an assistant state attorney I told my secretary that she was going to be arrested for dealing drugs. They said I interfered with the administration of justice because they were only able to charge her with 14 counts. I accepted a 6 months suspension from the Florida Bar which was actually about 19 months. It was a very trying time in my life. As a result of that experience I cherish my right to practice law even more. I will not let anyone or anything put that in jeopardy again. I also learned that just because others may count you out, don't count yourself out.

V. Lynn Whitfield

Fortunately, I have not had to fire too many employees in the past. I believe that you work with the employee first to help them improve. If after all your efforts you are not able to get the employee to a level which is acceptable then termination is the only option. I believe you terminate with as much compassion as possible. It's important to me that I not strip the person of their dignity. I let them know that they would be better suited somewhere else. I know that it is not easy being fired and it is not a pleasant task to perform. While at North Miami I had to terminate an assistant city attorney and two secretaries. Before terminating them I documented the issues and discussed ways they could improve.

During the first 90 days I would do a review of the legal issues and the status of litigation in the City. I would implement an Internal Service Request system which has worked well in the other cities I have served as City Attorney. This allows us to track the type of work we are doing for the other departments and the Commission and provides a method of reporting to the City Commission what is occurring in the City Attorney's office. I would also meet with each member of the staff to determine their strengths and weakness and to find out what their goals are individually and as a member of the staff. The next 90 days would be spent putting together a plan to ensure that the office is working effectively and addressing the needs of the city. Of course, we would be also addressing all the current legal issues which would come up daily in a city. I would also look at what training we could provide to other departments to reduce future litigation. At the end of the six months I would present a report to the City Commission of the goals of the City Attorney's office.

As City Attorney it is not my position to be a spoke person for the city unless I'm asked to do so. However, I do have a lot of experience with media in that I was a legal commentator for WPBF for several years. I believe that all media contact should go through the City's public information officer. I respond to the public information officer.

I love to read murder mystery books and to write. I'm an avid golfer. I love professional sports especially football. Everyone that knows me knows I'm a diehard Cleveland Browns fans.

I believe I have told you already about my suspension from the Bar. I have not done anything else which would be an embarrassment to the City or myself. I'm involved or will soon be involved in litigation against the city of Hallandale Beach for discrimination and retaliation. I filed with EEOC and they determined that I was retaliated against when I was fired from there. I'm not embarrassed by the actions I took because I believe I did the right thing.

Former Commissioner Keith London and Commission Michele Lazarow, might contact you about me. Also, Former Fire Chief Daniel Sullivan, during the discrimination investigation of Commissioner London, who is upset because I headed the investigation which lead to his termination has made some negative comments about me discriminating against people. His comments were not substantiated. I believe everyone else will have good things to say about me and my work.

V. Lynn Whitfield

I was terminated from my position at Hallandale Beach in retaliation for my accusing one of my commissioners of discrimination when he attempted to threaten me and intimidate me into allowing them to fire me so I could get my severance. When he was able to get a new commissioner elected, the next day I was terminated for pretextual cause. EEOC has determined that my termination was an act of retaliation.

The six adjectives or phrases I would use to describe myself are hardworking, funny, dedicated, compassionate, intelligent and honest. I am currently unemployed. My salary when I left Hallandale Beach was \$203,000.

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CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
VENNIE LYNN WHITFIELD**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

BA – Brandeis University
Confirmed

JD – University of Miami
Verifications Pending

Employment

VLW Enterprise (2016 – Present)
Hallandale Beach (2011 – 2016)
North Miami (2006 – 2011)
Confirmed

Walton Lantaff Schroeder & Carson
(2002 – 2005)
Verifications Pending

**Background Check Summary for
VENNIE LYNN WHITFIELD**

Florida Bar Number

Member in Good Standing
Bar # 314021

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern.

**Background Check Summary for
VENNIE LYNN WHITFIELD
Personal Disclosure**

11/05/2018 14:09

561--691-4436

FEDEX OFFICE 1076

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Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

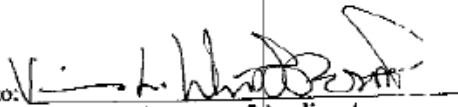
Name of Applicant: _____

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and need to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No I'm in the process of filing a discrimination lawsuit against a former employer.
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No there is nothing which would cause me embarrassment, but my termination from Hallandale Beach was very public. Also, at the beginning of my career I was suspended by the Florida Bar for six months. That was over 30 years ago.
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
See below

Attested to:



Signature of Applicant

Property of Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

Jennifer Warren– Deputy City Attorney, City of North Miami, FL 305-895-9810

Ms. Warren has known Ms. Whitfield since 2006 when she came to North Miami. They began working together in 2007 and enjoyed that relationship until Ms. Whitfield left for Hallandale Beach. They have continued to stay in contact.

One of the biggest strengths Ms. Warren admires in Ms. Whitfield is how well she communicates. At the City the Commissioners came from a variety of backgrounds and levels of education about the law and she always had a superb way of breaking down the legal concepts and strategies so they could understand them. They always felt confident in their choices because she explained everything to them so well.

Ms. Whitfield is well rounded and has all of the necessary skills of an outstanding lawyer. She was also quite good at managing the office as well as handling the legal affairs of the City. She was good at hand holding when necessary, but she also kept the case load moving.

As an attorney, Ms. Whitfield's biggest strength is her trial skills. She and Ms. Warren worked on developing trial strategies, jury selection, and anything else that pertained to litigation. When Ms. Warren needed direction in that area she always looked to Ms. Whitfield.

Ms. Whitfield consistently gave the Commission excellent recommendations. She was also good about giving them in-depth explanations of the law and any historical ramifications. Ms. Warren does recall instances when the elected officials did not heed the advice of Ms. Whitfield and decided to do something different. Although she could not speak to any specific examples, she does recall that those decisions usually ended up being quite costly to the City and if they had gone with Ms. Whitfield's analysis it would have been better.

Ms. Whitfield is the type of attorney who finds solutions within the parameters of the law. She always came up with solutions and did not always merely say no. Her answers may not have been what people wanted to hear, but she gave alternatives and directions that fell within the law. She went the extra mile to please the client as long as what they wanted was within the scope of the law.

In terms of Ms. Whitfield's experience with the law, she is highly experienced in several areas. Many of the cases that she oversaw in North Miami were constitutional law claims where some even went through the appellate. She is well versed in contracts and oversaw about 5 to 7 departments and their contracts. Additionally, during the time she was with North Miami she worked on a big project developing a large parcel of land that had previously been a city dump, thus using her expertise in environmental law. Furthermore, she is well versed and experienced in utilities, labor/personnel issues, development, redevelopment, and land use.

One of Ms. Whitfield's gifts is working with the public. She is good at taking the most disgruntled residents and making them her best friends. She was also just as good at dealing with the elected

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

officials. She was one of the few City Attorneys who gave equal attention to the Mayor and Council treating them all the same.

Ms. Warren is not aware of anything controversial involving Ms. Whitfield. She has no knowledge of any embarrassing or questionable behavior from Ms. Whitfield's past or present conduct that would be of concern. If she were looking for a City Attorney, she would definitely hire Ms. Whitfield.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Exuberant,
- Outgoing,
- Dynamic,
- Attentive,
- Savvy, and
- Integrity.

Strengths: An experienced professional who excels at communication and is confident in her command of the law.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Brett Schneider – Attorney, Weiss Serota, Boca Raton, FL 954-812-2760

Mr. Schneider first met Ms. Whitfield in the City of North Miami in 2007. He worked with her as the Labor Attorney in North Miami as well as at Hallandale Beach. They continue to stay in contact.

Ms. Whitfield is a hardworking, very smart, competent, and experienced attorney. She has an excellent command of the law and is extremely responsive with Mr. Schneider. She has experience in several areas of law including constitutional law, contracts, development, redevelopment, and land use. She also has dealt with a homeless population in some of her municipalities. When it comes to labor and employee matters, she handled employee complaints and would involve him when litigation was imminent.

Ms. Whitfield is the type of attorney who tries to find solutions to problems, but is also a straight shooter. She does what she can to stay a-political and give good legal advice regardless of the person asking the question. Mr. Schneider is not aware of any specific instances where the elected body went against her advice. However, in Hallandale Beach she had to deal with an extremely divided political environment where she may have not been well liked by one of the minority commissioners. Even if she was giving the right legal advice it always made someone upset.

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

In terms of interacting with the public, Ms. Whitfield does fine. Mr. Schneider has seen her at commission meetings interacting with citizens on occasion and she seems to do well. No one can be a City Attorney for as long as she has without having experience in that area.

Mr. Schneider suspects that Ms. Whitfield left Hallandale Beach because of the highly charged political environment. She made a complaint against one of the commissioners and an outside investigator was hired to look into the complaint. Nothing was found other than the commissioner was being overly hard on her. She has nothing in her background or conduct that would be considered embarrassing. The only person who might disagree with him might be the elected official who did not like her.

If Mr. Schneider were looking to hire a city attorney, he would certainly strongly consider Ms. Whitfield. She has the confidence and experience to do that job well.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Strong,
- Hardworking,
- Thorough, and
- Tough.

Strengths: A bright and competent attorney who is direct and gives excellent advice.

Weaknesses: Sometimes overextends herself because she is concerned with the bottom line and keeping the costs down.

Renee Miller – Former City Manager, Hallandale Beach, FL 786-253-8436

Ms. Miller first met and became acquainted with Ms. Whitfield prior to 2011 but they did not work together until 2012. They worked in Hallandale Beach for four years.

Ms. Miller greatly appreciated Ms. Whitfield's problem solving abilities. It was different having a City Attorney that was comfortable with problems and who understood the business challenges and issues. She always helped Ms. Miller find solutions to management problems and was very much a partner, but was also clear about who was her client.

Ms. Whitfield was not political; she gave her legal opinion; and then stood by it. She would tell people when she did not agree with them and would consistently represent that. In this area she was extremely dependable. However, sometimes her forthrightness and directness was taken the wrong way, but Ms. Miller valued that aspect of her personality.

In terms of legal experience, Ms. Whitfield is well versed in several areas of the law including contracts, development, redevelopment, land use, utilities, and labor/personnel matters. She is a highly capable attorney who is called upon by several other City Attorneys in South Florida for

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

advice. She always gave Ms. Miller good advice, but also knew when she needed to refer out cases to specialty attorneys. She was responsible in the way she managed her department.

When it came to the elected officials, Ms. Whitfield worked hard to protect all the commissioners. Whether they took her advice is a completely different matter. It is common knowledge that the environment was difficult and they were working with some challenging personalities. She did an outstanding job navigating those waters. Unfortunately, the elected body did not always heed her advice and they did, on occasion, go in a different direction. They were incorrect in those choices and the City was the worse for wear in those instances.

In Ms. Whitfield's duties at Hallandale Beach she did not report to Ms. Miller, but they had shared bosses in the Commissioners. As colleagues they had an excellent working relationship and they made a point to speak and collaborate weekly sharing information and keeping each other abreast of what was happening in their perspective areas.

With the public Ms. Whitfield has experience and is excellent at dealing with people in the community. She never shied away from constituents' complaints or speaking with them about their legal questions. She operated with an open door policy and spoke to people when it was appropriate.

Ms. Whitfield was very responsive to the commission and worked well with the reasonable commissioners. It was not for her lack of trying and she treated each one the same staying out of their squabbles, but some were quite difficult. She did eventually leave based on the shift in politics.

Ms. Miller is not aware of anything in Ms. Whitfield's background or conduct that would prove to be disconcerting. Ms. Miller would absolutely hire Ms. Whitfield if she were looking for a City Attorney.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Leader,
- Intelligent,
- Analytical,
- Persuasive,
- Integrity, and
- Good litigator.

Strengths: An experienced city attorney who is direct with communication and who is a problem solver.

Weaknesses: Sometimes her compassion for her staff may have given them more leeway than she would have liked.

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

Nydia Rafols– Interim City Manager, Hallandale Beach, FL 954-457-1338

Ms. Rafols met Ms. Whitfield in 2011 when she came on board in Hallandale Beach. They worked together as colleagues until Ms. Whitfield left the City in 2016. They have had no further contact since that time.

Ms. Whitfield was very smart and had an excellent grasp of the law especially in terms of constitutional law, contracts, and some minimal experience in development, redevelopment, and land use. She was strong willed and sometimes it was her way or no other way. That did make it challenging to work with her at times, but she was usually willing to come to the table and discuss issues. She tried to find solutions and even though she was strong willed, she did an excellent job representing the City as its attorney.

Ms. Whitfield did extremely well working with all of the commissioners and had excellent relationships with them until she filed a complaint against the Mayor for a hostile work environment. An investigation was conducted by an outside attorney and nothing was found to warrant the complaint. As far as working with Ms. Rafols, the two worked well together in various aspects of City business and never experienced any issues.

Ms. Whitfield always did her homework and made fine recommendations to the elected officials. She challenged others to ensure that things were being done right and according to the law. Ms. Rafols is uncertain if the Commissioners ever went against her recommendations and decided to do something else.

When it came to dealing with the public, Ms. Whitfield would pick and choose with whom she wanted to interact. She was the attorney for the City and not the general public and Ms. Rafols does not recall seeing any kind of interactions with the public, but she was not around Ms. Whitfield on a daily basis.

Ms. Rafols is not aware of anything in Ms. Whitfield's background or conduct that would be of concern to a reasonable person. She left the City because of the change in Commission. Ms. Rafols is not certain if she would hire Ms. Whitfield as a City Attorney if she were looking to hire one. As the City Manager she would be interacting with her as a colleague and it might prove to be a different experience than just another employee.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Smart,
- Strong willed,
- Excellent writer,
- Challenging to work with, and
- Challenged others to ensure what was being presented was correct or right.

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V. Lynn Whitfield**

Strengths: A smart professional who did a fine job of representing the City.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Anthony Sanders – Former City Commissioner, Hallandale Beach, FL 954-540-5100

Mr. Sanders has known Ms. Whitfield since 2011. He did know of her before that time, but started working with her when she came on board at the City. They worked together until she left Hallandale Beach and have remained in contact since that time.

Ms. Whitfield was a creative professional who knew what she was doing. Mr. Sanders always had confidence in any advice she gave. She helped them avoid many lawsuits at the City. She was very responsive which had much to do with the structure that she put into place in her department from the beginning. She was quite responsible in terms of her budget and her staff. Everyone in her office worked at being efficient. She managed her staff well as well as the workload as the City Attorney.

Their City was very difficult to work in because along with Ms. Whitfield being the first African American City Attorney it was the first time they also had an African American Police Chief, Clerk, and City Manager. Even though Mr. Sanders was glad to see some diversity in the City, not everyone felt the same. Unfortunately, that created some problems. She always did what was fair when it came to giving her recommendations to the Commission, but a few of the Commissioners made things difficult in spite of her professionalism. Having said that, he is not aware of the elected body ever going against her recommendations with a majority vote.

Ms. Whitfield is an attorney who is solutions oriented. she looks for ways to get things accomplished, but at the same time she kept it right and tight legally. She looks to solve problems and then gives ideas of how they can be accomplished within the parameters of the law.

When it came to communication, Ms. Whitfield always kept Mr. Sanders informed of what was happening in the City. As an elected body they were informed either in their executive sessions or her office was keeping them abreast of the different situations going on within the City. He also had a running monthly meeting with her and the City Manager in regards to projects they were working on together.

Unfortunately, the political environment at the City was a toxic one laced with hatred and controversy with some of the Commissioners attacking Ms. Whitfield personally on the dais. Much of that negative attention was directed towards her and the City Manager for various issues. She lodged a complaint against one of the Commissioners regarding race, gender, and one other problem that Mr. Sanders could not recall. This particular Commissioner's behavior would sometimes lead to manipulation and intimidation, especially with women one on one and she would not buckle to that. That is when it spilled over into the dais. The Commissioner was

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V. Lynn Whitfield**

investigated and the findings were that his conduct was not flattering, but not illegal. Mr. Sanders suspects that others were too scared to come forward and speak to his pattern of abuse because of fear of retaliation. In a nutshell, that is why Ms. Whitfield left the City.

Some of Mr. Sanders former colleagues would take everything that he has stated and reverse it even though the legal community would completely disagree with those colleagues. The City is a divided community. It is a black and white issue, or an East/West part of town issue. Ms. Whitfield, the City Manager, and other staff members brought the City's resources to the West side of the community for the first time in over forty years. Because she did that and because she is African American she was attacked. It was not an issue of her capabilities as an attorney.

As far as Mr. Sanders knows Ms. Whitfield has nothing in her background or conduct that would be construed as problematic or embarrassing to a reasonable person. He would, without a doubt, rehire her if he were still at the City.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Strong,
- Smart,
- Timely,
- Spiritual, and
- Quick on her feet.

Strengths: A knowledgeable and creative attorney who offered excellent legal advice and treated everyone fairly.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Kathy Schanz – Parks and Recreation Director, Hallandale Beach, FL 954-457-1409

Ms. Schanz first met Ms. Whitfield in early 2012 and worked with her until 2016. They have had some, occasional contact since then.

Ms. Whitfield is a thorough individual and explains legal concepts in an understandable manner depending upon her audience. She is a highly capable attorney who has a good command of the law. If a topic is complex and she does not know everything about it she will do her research so that she is fully informed.

Ms. Whitfield is a solution finder. She helped them to write the Parks and Recreation ordinances that never before existed. They wanted to accomplish some particular things and they needed to figure out a way to accomplish them, but keep them within the constraints of the law. She did a fine job of guiding them through that process.

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

Ms. Whitfield was definitely responsive and her responses were timely, but she did have some challenges with the Commission. Ms. Schanz could not think of any situation off hand where the elected officials did not take her advice and went in another direction. However, considering their environment she would not be surprised if it did happen.

Hallandale Beach has controversy on a regular basis. Ms. Whitfield handled her share of them being the City Attorney and unfortunately she also experienced numerous issues with the Commission. Ms. Schanz does not know of anything that would be of concern from Ms. Whitfield's background or in her conduct. She would hire Ms. Whitfield as a City Attorney if she were looking for one.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Thorough,
- Communicative,
- Polite,
- Knowledgeable with the law,
- Supportive, and
- Willing to share her knowledge.

Strengths: An extremely thorough individual who is a capable attorney that finds solutions to issues.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Pamela Ryan – Retired City Attorney, Riviera Beach, FL 561-686-8700

Ms. Ryan first met Ms. Whitfield in approximately 1995 in a social for the Florida Bar Association. Ms. Whitfield has acted as a mentor for Ms. Ryan over the years. After her retirement from Riviera Beach Ms. Ryan continued to practice law and still represents several municipalities in South Florida. Ms. Ryan has hired Ms. Whitfield as a special magistrate for her clients and that is where she continues to keep in touch with Ms. Whitfield.

Ms. Whitfield is very gregarious, smart, and a go-getter. She is quite adaptable and easily switched from the criminal side of the law to the municipal side. She is a tough, but fair attorney who is beloved by the staff and citizens with whom she works as a magistrate. Ms. Ryan cannot say enough good things about her.

In terms of communication, Ms. Whitfield is straightforward and tells people what they need to hear even if they do not like the message. She is good at spotting issues; seeing the pitfalls; then communicates them excellently.

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

Ms. Whitfield's knowledge of the law is top notch. She is tremendously smart and knows what she is doing. She is solutions oriented. The only way to survive in their line of work is to solve problems whether it is for the City Manager, the Commissioners, or the citizens. The only reason she has lasted as long as she has in her field is because she is a problem solver.

Ms. Ryan is not aware of any instances of the elected officials going against the advice of Ms. Whitfield. She does know that much controversy came out of a situation in one of the cities where she worked regarding some issues she addressed directly with the Police Chief. The Commission asked her to deal with the problems directly when they should have and they took some heat from that from the public.

In Ms. Whitfield's dealings with the public she has performed quite well across the board. She is a well rounded person who people like. She is a motivational speaker who often is asked to speak to the Florida Bar and is very active in her community.

In Hallandale Beach Ms. Whitfield may have aligned herself too closely to one side of the elected officials and Ms. Ryan is not sure how she got so far from maintaining her independence from the politics. She became close with the now indicted Mayor which may have caused some issues. She ended up having a conflict with one of the elected officials who decided to go after her. They wanted her to leave and they came up with some ridiculous reasons for terminating her. Some comments were out of line alluding to the fact that she could not do her job because she is a female.

If Ms. Ryan were in the market to hire a City Attorney she would definitely hire Ms. Whitfield. However, if any municipality has the same dynamic as Hallandale Beach she may not be the person for the job. If a municipality wants someone to straighten them out while being straightforward and upfront, she is the right one for the job. Ms. Ryan supports Ms. Whitfield 100%. Once any potential employer meets her, they will see that she is a quality person whose talents go beyond the resume.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Smart,
- Well-rounded,
- People person,
- Motivating,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Candid.

Strengths: A straightforward and direct communicator who easily adapts and solves problems.

Weaknesses: At times her strength of being straightforward can be a weakness if it rubs people the wrong way.

**Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield**

Sonja Dickens – City Attorney, Miami Gardens, FL 305-622-8000

Ms. Dickens has known Ms. Whitfield since 1998. She has mentored Ms. Dickens over the years and they have also been colleagues in various capacities in a few South Florida municipalities.

Ms. Whitfield is a highly experienced and knowledgeable attorney. She has most likely touched upon every issue that one can as a City Attorney. She has such a good command of the law that she could go to the dais of any city and handle just about anything thrown her way.

Ms. Whitfield is direct and straightforward in her advice and is a by-the-book lawyer who makes good decisions in terms of the law. She is flexible enough to get her commission where it wants to go and always stays within the parameters of the law. Ms. Dickens is not aware of any time where the elected body did not follow her advice and went in a different direction.

Ms. Whitfield is excellent at working with the people in the community. In North Miami they have a number of residents who like to antagonize the elected officials. She always took the high road in those instances and ensured to get along well with everyone. She is equally well liked and beloved by her staff and colleagues. Unfortunately, she has been the victim of political scapegoating. Ms. Dickens suspects that the Mayor used her as a way to deflect some of his negativity onto her. Sometimes that is par for the course in their line of work and it was not a reflection of her job performance.

At Hallandale Beach Ms. Whitfield felt that she was being discriminated against and had some issues with one of the Commissioners. Because of the controversy there she was asked to leave. Keith London, a former commissioner, might be one person who might have some things to say to the contrary of Ms. Dickens.

Ms. Dickens is not aware of anything embarrassing from Ms. Whitfield's background or in her conduct about which any future employer should be worried. She would definitely hire Ms. Whitfield as a City Attorney. She will come right in and take care of business with little to no learning curve.

Words or phrases used to describe Lynn Whitfield:

- Smart,
- Kind,
- Nurturing,
- Intelligent,
- Outgoing, and
- Fun.

Reference Notes
V. Lynn Whitfield

Strengths: A very knowledgeable individual who is direct, straightforward, and extremely experienced in her field.

Weaknesses: Very direct and straightforward which is not always welcome by some politicians.

Prepared by: Heather Linares
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Redbroward.com

July 19, 2018

Faux Outrage? Hallandale Beach Mayor Keith London Knew About City Attorney Recording For Eight Months Before Calling “Emergency” Meeting For Her Removal

Author: Tom Lauder

On November 1, 2016 WPLG Local 10 investigative reporter Bob Norman dropped another political bombshell on the City Of Hallandale Beach. The story, “Secret Audio Implicates Hallandale Beach City Attorney In Alleged Improper Conduct,” detailed a conversation between then-Vice Mayor Bill Julian and City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield**. The conversation surrounded a March 2016 robo-call attacking Julian. A recording left by Julian related to the robo-call was the subject of Bob Norman story in August 2016.

In his November 2016 story, Bob Norman said he, “obtained an audiotape of an inadvertently recorded conversation [**Whitfield**] had with Bill Julian, in which she clearly provided Julian campaign advice and guidance.” Norman stated **Whitfield**’s actions could be a violation of the law which prohibits public officials from “using their authority to interfere with elections in their own cities.” On the audiotape, **Whitfield** allegedly told Julian, “I can’t advise you on personal stuff and definitely I can’t advise you on election stuff, ok?” But later in the three minute recording, **Whitfield** said, “When they do stuff to you, my advice, personally, is to plan....Plan out, list out, ‘this is how they are going to come after me.’”

According to Bob Norman, Commissioner Keith London was “livid” after listening to the audiotape. He said **Whitfield** “doesn’t know the basics of the city charter that says you work for the City. It doesn’t say you work for Bill Julian.” London said, “She gave personal and campaign advice to Bill Julian, she’s got to go.” Four weeks later, Keith London called for an “emergency” meeting to fire **Whitfield**. According to a WPLG story, London used the audiotape as a cause to fire her. Bob Norman said Keith London “is now the City’s de facto leader.” **Whitfield** was fired.

Once again, an outraged Commissioner Keith London portrayed himself to the local media as the corruption fighter at Hallandale Beach City Hall. However, sworn testimony given to the Broward State Attorney’s Office shows Commissioners Keith London and Michele Lazarow knew about **Whitfield**’s action for eight months and never said anything.

LOBBYIST EVAN ROSS PLAYED **WHITFIELD TAPE FOR KEITH LONDON**

As REDBROWARD reported, lobbyist Evan Ross, a close ally of Hallandale Beach Mayor Keith London, gave sworn testimony to the Broward State Attorney (SAO) in March 2017. The Broward SAO was investigating whether Bill Julian accepted bribes as alleged in an August 2016 report by Bob Norman. A recording of Julian was provided to Norman by Ross after Keith London gave him the “green light.” Even though the recording was made in March 2016, Keith London testified they kept the tape under wraps until August 2016 for “politically expedient”

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

reasons. London was the campaign manager for Julian’s opponent in the November 2016 election. In his sworn testimony, Evan Ross stated Bill Julian left ten recordings on his system. The night the robo-call went out, Ross noticed a voicemail in “the system.” When he listened to the call, Ross “quickly identified it was Bill Julian’s voice talking to someone.” The following day, Ross claimed he found more voicemails. He testified there were ten recordings, including the **Whitfield** tape. Evan Ross stated he told Commissioner Keith London about the Julian recordings the same day he discovered them. Ross testified he “advised Commissioner London and Commissioner Lazarow...to come to my home and told them that I felt it was of great importance.” Both Commissioners came to Ross’ house. Once there, he played ten recordings of Bill Julian.

Ross said three agreed not to do anything with the recordings. Ross stated, “[W]e all agreed that we should not make a decision on what to do with it sight unseen. And that we should take a little time.” Ross said the recordings contained, “conversations with people who I believe to be city employees, some of them I could identify potentially.” Ross told Assistant State Attorney David Schulson he still had all ten recordings. Schulson asked if he gave all ten to Bob Norman. Ross said, “At a later time, I gave [Bob Norman] the remainder of them, one which he used in a story, which was between Vice Mayor Julian and the city attorney.” Ross described the contents of that recording in political terms. He said, “The city attorney was on that tape giving him political advice and saying less than flattering things about some of the other commissioners, most notably, Commissioner London.

ANOTHER POLITICAL DIRTY TRICK?

Keith London has a well documented adversarial relationship with **Lynn Whitfield**. In February 2015, a special counsel was hired to investigate **Whitfield**’s allegations of racial discrimination against Keith London. In February 2016, London was cleared of charges of discrimination and creating a hostile work environment. According to the Sun-Sentinel, “While investigators cleared London, they took him to task for rubbing people the wrong way. They quoted his critics, who accused him of being aggressive, intimidating and rude.”

The meeting of two sitting Hallandale Beach Commissioners at the home of a lobbyist occurred on or about March 3, 2016. Just one month after London had been cleared. But they took no action when they heard the Hallandale Beach Vice Mayor talk about a potential crime. They took no action when they heard the city attorney possibly commit a violation of law. They waited. They waited for the election to be closer. As Keith London testified, he did not want the news to get “buried.” Did London and Lazarow ever document the March 2016 meeting with lobbyist Evan Ross? Did London ever document his numerous conversations with Ross about the release of the Julian tape? Did London and Lazarow document discussions with Ross about the **Whitfield** tape?

Did London and Lazarow document their discussions about **Lynn Whitfield**? The Florida Sunshine Law covers discussions between elected officials about matters that may come before them for a vote. Didn’t Keith London and Michele Lazarow vote to fire **Lynn Whitfield** in November 2016?

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

May 24, 2017

MAJOR v. HALLANDALE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Rayfield MAJOR, Appellant, v. HALLANDALE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT, Appellee.

No. 4D16–1714

Decided: May 24, 2017

Rayfield Major, Miami, pro se. **V. Lynn Whitfield**, City Attorney, and Andre Mckenney, Deputy City Attorney, Hallandale Beach, for appellee.

The defendant appeals from the circuit court's order denying his petition for writ of mandamus, which sought to direct the police department to comply with his request for public records relating to his conviction of attempted robbery with weapon. We affirm the denial of the petition, but without prejudice to the defendant filing a new petition attaching a document which he filed in this appeal, but did not attach to the petition at issue.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:
<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/fl-district-court-of-appeal/1861766.html>

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Weekly

March 23, 2017

Lawyer to offer insights on persevering against the odds

Author: Eunice Baros

Are you feeling like you are on a constant obstacle course and you don't know if you have what it takes to get through it? Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield**, 62, of West Palm Beach asks the probing question in the introduction to her autobiography, which explores the many highs and lows in her own life, including a sudden brain surgery a few years ago for a subdural hematoma (brain bleed) which left her paralyzed.

After four days in ICU following seizures in the recovery room and realizing the left side of her body would not move, Ms. **Whitfield** remembered back to when she was a 6-year-old riding in her aunt's car in a Cleveland rainstorm. Some people had stopped their cars and pulled off under an overpass to wait for the rain to stop, she says. But "Auntie" kept driving and explained to her curious niece "what we need to do in the storm is to keep driving through it. We don't pull over. Eventually, you will come through the storm on the other side."

Throughout her life, that message has stayed with Ms. **Whitfield**, who proudly boasts of being a scholarship recipient and graduate of Brandeis University in Boston and then earning a University of Miami law degree in Coral Gables in 1980. "Sometimes in life things will happen which knock you down and cause you to question whether or not you will be able to go on," she writes. "It can be the loss of a job, the loss of a loved one, an arrest, or the news of a terminal illness. It doesn't have to happen to you directly; it can be happening to someone close to you and thereby affecting you," she observes. "These are the things which I refer to as 'life storms.'"

For example, as a young lawyer, Ms. **Whitfield** lost a job as an assistant state attorney in Miami more than 30 years ago and she rebuilt her career step by step, leaning on her deep religious faith and convictions. She has many awards and honors to her credit. In those "storm" situations she writes about in her book, "The Party's Not Over Until God Says So" (Professional Woman Publishing, 2015, \$15 through amazon.com), it is easy to look at the problem as hopeless, Ms. **Whitfield** explains. "Enemies and those without faith may be quick to say it's all over for you."

But not for Ms. **Whitfield**. Once a ward of the state of Ohio and an orphan by the age of 18, she has persevered through some very good times and some very challenging and desperate days. She will bring her message of hope to others who yearn to hear her inspirational presentation as co-emcee for a one-day Women's Conference on March 25 at the Hilton West Palm Beach. Topics include leadership, healthcare, finances, legal issues and politics. (For more information, visit www.empowherofthepalmbeaches.org or call Geanine Wester at 336-0498).

"**Lynn Whitfield**'s story of struggles — in her legal career, with disease and day-to-day life — and with her sense of overcoming through religion the many challenges she's faced will engage the many readers who hold similar beliefs," says author John Katzenbach, who once wrote about

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

her in The Miami Herald. “In clear cut and direct prose, she tells of pitfalls and stumbles and how her connection with church and Bible got her through many difficulties,” he writes on the back of her book. “When adversity visits, many people cower and seek cover,” says Ms.

Whitfield’s longtime friend and colleague, local attorney F. Malcolm Cunningham Jr. “**Lynn** does her best work in the face of adversity. She owns her condition and focuses all of her energy on returning to productivity. She did this in Miami when she had the incident as a prosecutor. She did it in the face of her illness. She’s done it in her business and in her employment. Never count her out – maybe down for a moment but never out. She is a fighter with a lot of heart!”

Delray Beach Assistant City Attorney Lawonda Warren, who is president of the F. Malcolm Cunningham Sr. Bar Association, adds, “**Lynn** is truly inspirational. Nine out of ten people could not have overcome many of **Lynn**’s obstacles. Through her faith, tenacity, intellect, and humor she inspires us all to drive through our storms to get to the other side, to achieve happiness and success.” “I think I am very blessed,” says Ms. **Whitfield**, a former city attorney in Hallandale, North Miami and Pahokee, “Over the years I have learned it is not what others do or say about your life that matters, but what you do or say when you find yourself in that apparent hopeless situation — that ‘life storm’. Do you buy into the hopelessness or do you pull yourself out of it?”

Ms. **Whitfield** says she was compelled to write her book to help and encourage people. “If others tell you there is no hope, laugh at them or don’t respond at all.” She teaches. “If you must respond all you need to say is “the party’s not over, until God says so.”¹

— Eunice Baros is a lawyer and mediator in Palm Beach County and served on the board of directors when **V. Lynn Whitfield** was president of the local Craig S. Barnard American Inn of Court.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
March 16, 2017

Judge: Parents in neglect case must have counsel
Author: Jorge Milian

A judge Wednesday morning ruled that a couple accused of living inside a car with their five malnourished children for two months cannot represent themselves. Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer rejected the requests of Donell Barron and Rikki Hart, who refused to acknowledge their names during a 20-minute hearing. In court documents, Barron refers to himself by the name El Rahmaat-Shuu and states that he is a sovereign citizen and member of the Yamasee Amazigh nation. Barron and Hart, both 34, responded to Feuer's questioning Wednesday with a volley of bizarre answers.

Barron told the judge that he was an "authorized representative" for himself, but would not identify himself and said that "Barron is a corporation." "Because you are not intelligently answering my questions ... I am finding you not competent to represent yourself," ruled Feuer, adding that Assistant Public Defender Nicolas Stebinger would continue to represent Barron. Hart's responses were equally strange. She began her testimony by referring to herself as a "living woman" and appeared to exasperate Schosberg with her refusal to logically answer simple questions.

Ade Griffin, Hart's court-appointed attorney, asked Wednesday to be removed from the case, citing her client's lack of cooperation. After speaking to Hart privately in the courtroom, Griffin complained to the judge that Hart repeatedly asked her to define the state of Florida. Feuer ordered Griffin to remain as Hart's legal counsel, adding that it was unlikely "any other lawyer would have less difficulty" representing Hart. "Do your best," Feuer advised Griffin. **V. Lynn Whitfield**, who previously represented the couple, asked in January to be removed from the case because of "irreconcilable differences" that made working with Barron and Hart "impossible." After his arrest in December, Barron also made a series of head-scratching comments to Palm Beach County sheriff's deputies, including a statement that he practices law "but not as a lawyer."

Barron and Hart are each facing five counts of child neglect after a Palm Beach County sheriff's deputy found the couple and their five children -- ages 14, 8, 6, 5 and 4 -- living inside a Toyota in a Wal-Mart parking lot in Greenacres. The 14-year-old boy weighed only about 50 pounds and was "severely underweight to the point that his bones were clearly visible," according to the arrest report. The 14-year-old weighed only 5 more pounds than his 8-year-old sister, the report said. Barron told sheriff's officials that the children bathed irregularly at Okeeheelee Park west of Greenacres and had never enrolled in school. Instead, he said the children were home-schooled inside the vehicle, according to the report. The couple is being held in the Palm Beach County Jail in lieu of \$5,000 bail for Barron and \$6,000 for Hart. The children are in foster homes, according to a spokeswoman for the Department of Children and Families.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Local10.com
November 29, 2016

Hallandale Beach fires city attorney; mayor walks out of divided meeting
City Attorney V. Lynn Whitfield gives emotional farewell
Author: Bob Norman

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. - The first City Commission meeting in Hallandale Beach since a contentious election didn't disappoint those expecting drama, coming complete with the firing of a top official, an emotional breakdown on the dais and the mayor storming out at the midway point. "I will leave this meeting because I believe we are operating against our charter," Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper said as she walked off the dais, not to return. At that point, the city's newly christened Vice Mayor Keith London walked over, grabbed the mayor's gavel and kept going.

It wasn't just a symbolic gesture. After this month's bitterly fought, big-money election, London is now the city's de facto leader, controlling a majority of votes on the commission. London called the emergency meeting in order to fire not only City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield**, but also City Manager Daniel Rosemond, another of his longtime foes who was loyal to Cooper. Cooper was the lone "no" vote against firing **Whitfield**, saying the move to fire **Whitfield** with cause -- and without a compensation package -- would lead to litigation that would cost taxpayers "an abundant amount of money." "If you stand up to Commissioner London, you have a huge target on your back," Cooper said.

Voting to fire **Whitfield** were London and Commissioners Michele Lazarow and Anabelle Taub, the trio that now forms a majority bloc on the commission. Taub beat longtime Commissioner Bill Julian in November, who was caught on audiotape agreeing to accept secret gifts from a developer before a vote. Julian also admitted to agreeing to accept the gifts in a Local 10 News interview in a report that sparked an ongoing criminal investigation by the state attorney's office. **Whitfield** was also caught on audiotape offering Julian campaign advice shortly after admitting that her city position did not allow her to give the commissioner such advice.

London offered that tape -- along with the hiring of a recruitment company that London claimed was improper -- as causes to fire **Whitfield**, who broke down during her farewell speech. Curiously, **Whitfield** said that her signature on the contract with that recruitment company was made by another lawyer and that she had no knowledge of it. London said that presented more problems, including possible forgery. "I gave myself permission to be emotional today," she said before breaking down in tears. "To my friends on staff: We shared good times and rough times, but we will make it through it."

It was after that emotional speech that Cooper walked off the dais, saying that the firing left the commission without an attorney, in violation of the city charter. But shortly after she walked out the door, London and his two allies immediately installed an interim city attorney, as well as outside counsel, and continued the meeting. There was no vote on firing Rosemond after the

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

outside counsel, Gray Robinson attorney Steven Zelkowitz, said the move required a resolution. Rosemond did not attend the meeting, but his attorney, Freddy Perera, called the proceedings a "sham" and told the commission that Rosemond was prepared to engage in costly litigation should the commission go forward with firing the city manager with cause. The commission voted to go forward with a resolution to fire Rosemond, but both parties left the door open to come up with a negotiated exit in the meantime.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Getnews.info

November 26, 2016

Popular Motivational Speaker’s New Book Has Been Selected as Bronze Winner of National Literary Habitat’s Book Award

VLW Enterprise Inc.- Inspirational/Motivational Speaker/Author’s Book “The Party’s Not Over Until God Says So” has been selected as Bronze Winner of National Literary Habitat’s Book Award in the Spirituality-Inspirational Category Fall 2016. **V. Lynn Whitfield**, a motivational speaker and the founder of VLW Enterprise, Incorporated, is pleased to announce her new self-help book “The Party’s Not Over Until God Says So” has won an award. The new self-help book, which has been described as inspirational, motivational and honest, has been selected as a Bronze winner of National Literary Habitat’s Book Award. It is no surprise to many that **V. Lynn Whitfield**’s new book won the award in the Spirituality-Inspirational category after receiving positive reviews from book reviewers and those that have bought the book to improve their lives.

V. Lynn Whitfield said of the award: “I was delighted to be considered, but to have won it, is overwhelming.” The Party’s Not Over Until God Says So, is not just another self-help book, it is a book that was written from personal experience to help people understand that no matter what life throws at you, you can overcome the problems and come out on the other end. **Lynn** takes you through her personal journey and shares with the reader intimate details of the problems she faced and overcame. The book is not only inspirational, it is also a book that will leave the reader with smiles and tears.

The award-winning book has been described as one of the most important self-help books of 2016, and with all the positive reviews it has received on Amazon, it’s no wonder that it continues to receive worldwide acclaim. This book will benefit everyone that wants to achieve more out of life. Its words will encourage those who are currently facing a challenging life and who don’t know how to drive through the storms or who are thinking of pulling over to the side and giving up.

Margaree King Mitchell, a renowned author herself, offered this review on Amazon: “love this book! The author is very transparent as she shares her challenges on the journey of life! She doesn’t let anything keep her down. She gets right back up and keeps on moving forward. This book is great for anyone going through challenges and is thinking about giving up.” To learn more about “The Party’s Not Over Until God Says So” and find out why it has become one of the most talked about self-help books of 2016, please visit <https://www.amazon.com/Partys-Not-Over-Until-Says/dp/0996580964>

About **Lynn Whitfield**

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

V. Lynn Whitfield is the founder of VLW Enterprise, Incorporated, who inspires and encourages people not to quit when faced with the storms of their lives instead to turn those storms into triumphs.

Distributed by In2town Public Relations

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Local10.com

November 01, 2016

**Secret audio implicates Hallandale Beach city attorney in alleged improper conduct
Commissioner Bill Julian can't seem to hang up his phone**

Author: Bob Norman

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. - After a recent commission meeting, Hallandale Beach City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** vehemently denied playing politics with commissioners in her city. "I don't give campaign advice. I don't give election advice," said **Whitfield**, who has held the post since 2011. "I don't do elections." That's a good thing since **Whitfield** engaging in campaigning in her own city would constitute not only a clear conflict of interest, but could also possibly be a violation of law, as Florida statutes make it a misdemeanor for public officials to use their authority to interfere with elections in their own cities.

What **Whitfield** didn't know when she made that denial is that Local 10 News obtained an audiotape of an inadvertently recorded conversation she had with her city's vice mayor, Bill Julian, in which she clearly provided Julian campaign advice and guidance. In the audiotape, **Whitfield** is speaking with Julian after they had both just listened to a robocall attacking him for his vote to approve a \$450 million high-rise development at the Diplomat Golf & Tennis Club in his city. "Vice mayor let me say this, I can't advise you on personal stuff and definitely I can't advise you on election stuff, OK?" she tells Julian on the recording.

But then she immediately turns around and gives him campaign advice. "When they do stuff to you, my advice, personally, is to plan, because you are going to do a lot of speaking for this election," she tells Julian. "Plan out, list out, 'This is how they are going to come after me.'" "I have to be ready for that," Julian replies. "Be ready for that and just smile," **Whitfield** said.

Whitfield also explains to Julian how he can politically attack fellow Keith London, a fellow Hallandale Beach commissioner and a longtime Julian foe, telling London also voted for the development and that "technically" he too voted against forcing the Diplomat developers to provide additional money for parks, a fire truck and other amenities for residents. After hearing the recording for the first time, London said he was "livid."

"Obviously, she doesn't know the basics of the city charter that says you work for the city," London said. "It doesn't say you work for Bill Julian. She's not here to give personal advice to Bill Julian, and she's certainly not here to give election advice to Bill Julian, and that's what she's doing." The recording is sure to add yet more bitterness to the politically divided city -- and it is just one of many that Julian inadvertently left behind when he called a number to listen to the negative robocall attacking his vote.

At the end of the robocall was a beep, signaling that it was going to a voicemail recording. On no fewer than 10 of his calls, the vice mayor apparently failed to hang up his phone properly and inadvertently left behind audio recordings of private conversations that have been obtained by

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Local 10 News. "She gave personal and campaign advice to Bill Julian, she's got to go," Commissioner Keith London said. The first recording released was a bombshell: In it Julian admitted that he had agreed to accept secret gifts from the Diplomat -- including a van for his favorite charity and 300 workers to help with his campaign -- before his vote for the development. On the **Whitfield** recording, the city attorney tells Julian that she's certain is yet another commissioner, Michele Lazarow, whose voice is on the robocall. "That's Lazarow's voice," **Whitfield** said on the recording. "I know her voice."

Lazarow is a close ally of London and the two of them have called for **Whitfield** to be removed from her job several times in the past. When London threatened to terminate **Whitfield** last year, **Whitfield** accused him of racial discrimination and hired special counsel to investigate him. London was cleared in the investigation. Lazarow said that not only is it not her voice on the robocall, but that she had absolutely nothing to with the call whatsoever and had no advance knowledge of it. "I'm filing a bar complaint (against **Whitfield**)," Lazarow said after hearing the recording. "It's really a vile accusation, considering it's a political agenda." At a recent commission meeting, **Whitfield** refused to listen to the recording and wouldn't comment on it. "I'm not listening to that," she said. "I don't know how you have my voice on anything. I'm not answering your questions."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
October 20, 2016

Hallandale officials host forum on race relations
Hallandale Beach Town Hall meeting looks for solutions to police, race relations crisis
Author: Helen Wolt

Hallandale Beach recently hosted its second Let's Start Talking town hall meeting. A panel of 16 city officials, law enforcement officers and community leaders met to find solutions to police and race relations crisis. Hallandale Beach City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** opened the forum at the city's Cultural Center with a recap from the first gathering that took place back in August. "The two major problems we identified were how police perceive and interact with citizens, and likewise, how the community perceives and reacts to police. The third is police transparency and accountability of misconduct," **Whitfield** said.

Panelist Brian Stewart, an attorney and community activist, suggested a community service requirement would provide a natural setting to help police interact with the public. Yushika Florence, a Task Force on Law Enforcement and Community Relations member, said in her past experience as a police officer she saw the benefits of getting out of the patrol car and talking to residents. The need for police training met with pros and cons from panelists. Skills in de-escalation, cultural competency and handling special needs populations are critical areas. Broward County Public Defender Gordon Weekes said the issue that he hears repeatedly from families is "the fear children have in encountering law enforcement." Youth don't know how to navigate an encounter and may react if an officer is aggressive.

"An officer should be removed from the force if they don't have the proper level of tolerance when dealing with the public," Weekes said. "It's difficult to train someone on something that should be embedded in their person." Attorney Ronald Book questioned training and referred to the difficulty of removing failing officers from duty. "Police unions have a very strong lobby," Book said. "It's unlikely the state would put more money to training." B.J. Jordan, a retired Hallandale Beach officer, said: "A police officer has got to earn respect. Nobody's going to give it to you. You have to treat people like you want to be treated."

After a two-hour dialog and many heartfelt remarks from the panel, Book said appointing a sub group will spur progress. Commissioner Sanders agreed having an action plan in place will lead the city to a solution. "It's baby steps," said Hallandale Beach Assistant Police Chief Miguel Martinez. "One-fell-swoop answers aren't possible, but moving toward an answer little by little is possible."

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Broward Palm Beach New Times

June 24, 2016

Hallandale Fire Battalion Chief Fired for "No Bitch Tuesdays" Says He's Totally the Victim Here

Author: Jerry Iannelli

Jeff Lyon, an ex-Hallandale Beach Fire Rescue Battalion chief fired for a laundry list of sexist, racist comments — like admittedly calling a black employee a "token" and allegedly referring to male-only shifts as "No Bitch Tuesdays" — filed a petition in Broward County Court earlier this month claiming that he's totally the victim of discrimination in all this mess. According to a June 13 petition for writ of certiorari filed against the city of Hallandale Beach and the city's Civil Service Board, Lyon claims he was never offered a chance to rebut any of the claims the city made against him, that the charges against him weren't made according to the Florida Firefighters Bill of Rights, and that, since City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** had allegedly called for "a change of culture" at the fire department — apparently due to rampant sexism — that meant she was too biased to handle Lyon's case.

"That comment indicates to me that she had a preconceived idea where the investigation was going to go," Lyon's lawyer, Mark Berkowitz, told New Times. "This was obviously not impartial." Lyon is now asking for his job back, with back pay. Per the Sun Sentinel, Lyon was fired on October 30 after a departmental investigation accused him of operating a culture of intimidation and routine sexism at the Fire Rescue department. In addition to the aforementioned claims, Lyon, then 48, was also accused of asking women what their sexual orientations were and claiming that female employees had no business working in the fire department.

According to Lyon's recent legal complaint, he'd also been accused of telling two female employees to "coordinate their forthcoming pregnancies" so as to not inconvenience the department too much, and being overly harsh in criticizing female employees. Lyon had also been accused of making a "national origin epithet" at an employee of Hispanic descent. So yeah: Great guy to bring to a family dinner. He'd reportedly been working at the department for 13 years, making \$106,654 in his final year on the job. Lyon's conduct on the job was apparently so egregious he also helped bring down his boss along with it: Former Fire Chief Dan Sullivan was suspended in April 2015, and ultimately fired the following October, for tolerating "discrimination" and spawning a "good old boys' environment that belittled minorities and women." Sullivan had been chief for 18 years and was pulling in a \$167,000 salary.

Lyon then appealed his firing to the city's Civil Service Board, hoping to have his job reinstated. Instead, the board backed the city's decision last March. Lyon is now claiming in court that his firing only came after the city violated scores of due process rules before yanking his job. He claims he wasn't warned that he was under investigation when **Whitfield** asked to interview him — and, as such, wasn't able to bring a lawyer with him during the exchange. He also claims the charges he was later presented with were too "vague" to comply with state law: The state Firefighters Bill of Rights, Chapter 112.82 of the Florida Statutes, states that "No firefighter shall

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

be subjected to interrogation without first receiving written notice of sufficient detail of the investigation in order to reasonably apprise the firefighter of the nature of the investigation. The firefighter shall be informed beforehand of the names of all complainants." Lyon says that at first, he wasn't told who had filed a complaint against him or what the specific charges against him were.

Importantly, Lyon also maintains he was never given a "pre-determination hearing" to refute the claims against him. While Lyon admits he called a black employee a "token" — an offensive term for a person of color who's only been hired because of diversity laws — Lyon says he only used the term because he didn't know the employee was around to hear him. He then says he apologized to the employee and that everything's totally cool now. "One example," Berkowitz explained, "was that one of the alleged charges was that he gave an improper ride to an investigative interview of a co-worker. The fact is that a superior ordered him to do that because of operational needs in the department." But, Berkowitz said, his client wasn't given the chance to defend himself.

He has denied belittling female employees, including using the phrase "No Bitch Tuesdays." The city, however, maintains that multiple witnesses corroborated the events in question. Lyon also alleges there were massive conflicts of interest in his firing: In addition to what he saw as clear bias on the part of the city attorney, Lyon says it was Hallandale Beach City Manager Renee Miller who filed a formal complaint against him, rather than any of the employees he supposedly wronged. Asked whether Lyon was implying the entire investigation was some sort of vendetta against him, Berkowitz responded: "I don't want to say that. All I can do is comment on the pleading, and you can draw your own conclusions." As to why it took the city manager to step up and file a complaint against him, Lyon might have answered that question himself in his legal complaint, which says the employees in question kept quiet "allegedly for fear of retaliation."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
February 16, 2016

Hallandale commissioner cleared of bias claims
Yearlong investigation clears Hallandale commissioner of racial discrimination claim
Author: Susannah Bryan

Commissioner Keith London this week was cleared by an outside law firm of accusations of racial and gender discrimination. City Attorney **Lynn Whitfeld**, who is black, leveled the allegations in February 2015, after learning London planned to push for her termination. At the time, London said he had lost confidence in **Whitfeld's** ability to give impartial advice to her commission bosses. London declined comment Tuesday, saying he had not yet read the report. "I'm happy he's been vindicated," Commissioner Michele Lazarow said. "I expected him to be. I have never heard an accusation like that before about Commissioner London."

The year-long investigation, released Tuesday and handled by the Bryant Miller Olive law firm, cost taxpayers more than \$100,000, city records show. "There is no factual support to find that Commission London's action in wanting to place Ms. **Whitfield's** contract on the commission agenda was motivated by race or gender," the report said. Investigators also found London had no reason to terminate **Whitfield** for cause. **Whitfield**, who had also accused London of creating a hostile workplace, declined comment. She has been Hallandale's city attorney since December 2011.

While investigators cleared London, they took him to task for rubbing people the wrong way. They quoted his critics, who accused him of being aggressive, intimidating and rude. The report urges London to express his opinions in a professional manner. Mayor Joy Cooper says she plans to hold a special meeting Feb. 29 at 6 p.m. to discuss the report. "The report does not find discrimination based on gender or race," Cooper said. "But it does show a pattern of breaching our city charter."

In Hallandale, the commission hires and fires the city manager and city attorney, but is forbidden by the charter from giving direction to their staff. In the report, former City Manager Renee Miller alleges London spoke directly with staff rather than coming to her – a claim denied by London. "We can not remove a commissioner," said Cooper, a longtime rival of London's. "We can censure a commissioner. That is something we will have to discuss."

Sun Sentinel
January 8, 2016

Some seeing red over blogger's request for upside down cross

Some seeing red over blogger's request for upside-down cross

BY SUSANNAH BRYAN
Staff writer

HALLANDALE BEACH — Chaz Stevens, the atheist blogger who made national news for putting up a Festivus pole at the Florida Capitol, now wants to erect an upside-down cross at City Hall.

The cross would say "In Satan We Trust, All Others Pay Cash."

"I would prefer to accommodate [him] rather than risk a lawsuit," Commissioner Keith London said during a meeting Wednesday.

Before granting the request, City Manager Daniel Rosemond and City Attorney Lynn Whitfield told commissioners they wanted to make sure Stevens' message contains no obscenities.

The message on the cross

will not contain offensive language, Stevens assured Rosemond in an email this week.

"All of our public work for viewing is ALWAYS rated G," Stevens wrote. "We have children ourselves and understand the need to maintain proper decorum."

City Commissioner Michele Lazarow also expressed concern about the city leaving itself open to a lawsuit.

"Are we going to be leaving ourselves open to a lawsuit if we don't address this?" she said, referring to a string of emails Stevens began sending to City Hall on Dec. 29.

Rosemond told the commission he planned to review the matter with the city attorney.

"It is obviously a very delicate matter," he said.

Stevens wants to display the cross at City Hall the week of Jan. 18. He put in his request after learning a Nativity scene, Christmas tree and menorah had been put up at City Hall for the holidays.

"They are saying that area is a free speech zone," Stevens said. "It's all or none."

Some people were not amused by Stevens' request.

One man sent an email to the Sun Sentinel saying Stevens should "burn in hell since he dedicates his life to Satan."

Richard Alianiello, a Catholic from Margate, was incensed by the plan.

"That is shameful to put a cross upside down when we just celebrated Christmas," he said Thursday. "That really disturbed me. Atheists have a right to do what they want to do. But don't

take our religion and turn it upside down."

Arguing for separation of church and state, Stevens has made it a mission to end prayer at public meetings by asking several local cities to allow him to perform a satanic prayer at commission meetings.

In his requests, he cites a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that determined prayer is allowed at government meetings provided it applies to all religions, including Satanism, Stevens argues.

Dania Beach, Deerfield Beach, Coral Springs and Delray Beach have all dropped prayer before government meetings to avoid the spectacle.

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Broward Palm Beach New Times

June 8, 2015

Hallandale Shooting: Witness Who Called 911 Disputes Cop's Story

Author: Ray Downs

On a January evening back in 2012, Willis Morgan, a retired pressroom supervisor at the Miami Herald, was trying to get a few winks in at his Hallandale Beach home before heading to his part-time concierge job. But the 64-year-old was jolted awake when he heard the startling screams of someone begging not to get shot. “I heard somebody screaming, 'Don't shoot! Don't shoot!’” recalls Morgan. “I thought it was a woman begging for her life and her husband was gonna kill her.” Morgan jumped out of bed and called 911. He told the dispatcher that there was a confrontation outside and it sounded like a woman was begging for her life and a man with a gun was about to kill her.

Morgan says he thought it was a domestic dispute between a couple that was about to turn deadly. Turns out, Morgan was witnessing a confrontation between Hallandale Beach police officer Edward McGovern and shoplifting suspect Gregory Ehlers Jr., a 34-year-old Tampa native who had fled police after swiping some electronic items from a Best Buy. Ehlers tried to hide on top of a one-story roof in the tiny beachside city but was found and then surrounded by police. His story follows a now-too-familiar arc: a scared, aggressive police officer kills an unarmed man for a minor offense. In this case, police investigators' efforts to track down a witness were too little too late, and in a subsequent legal battle, city officials sounded more eager to be absolved of responsibility than to determine the truth.

At some point during the standoff, Ehlers was shot to death. In a video deposition after the killing, McGovern claimed he saw Ehlers reaching toward what he assumed was a gun and verbally warned Ehlers several times not to reach for it. No gun, however, was found on the scene, and the shiny object must have been either a cell phone or a mini laptop computer. Morgan, who lived next door to where the shooting took place, watched the video deposition of McGovern giving his account of the shooting, which was obtained by New Times. And Morgan says McGovern's story doesn't match up with what he heard that night. ““As far as [McGovern's] verbal account goes, everything he says is exactly what a police officer should say, but none of what he says is correct,” says Morgan. “In the minute that led up to the shooting, never did I hear anyone say, 'Get your hands up, get your hands up.' Nor did I hear anyone say, 'Do not reach, do not reach down, don't reach.' Had I heard an exchange like this, I would have never thought this was a domestic dispute with a very angry male.”

There were several calls from the immediate area of the shooting that were similar to Morgan's that night, according to 911 dispatch logs. Morgan's 911 call is summarized as: “HEARS SOMEONE SCREAMING FOR THEIR LIFE.” However, the actual call recordings have since been destroyed. BSO's policy is to hold call recordings for only 30 days unless they're requested for evidence by police. A homicide investigation is one reason why a call would be saved,

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

according to BSO public information officer Keyla Concepcion. But Hallandale Beach Police didn't bother following up until it was too late.

Hallandale Shooting: Witness Who Called 911 Disputes Cop's Story

Ehlers family filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the city in 2012, which was eventually settled for \$150,000 in October 2014. About one month prior to the settlement, the city council held a meeting to discuss the case, which was being handled by Hallandale Beach City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield**. **Whitfield** claimed that after the shooting, police internal affairs investigators had tried to obtain the 911 calls in a timely fashion but couldn't because the Broward Sheriff's Office had made a mistake in logging the calls under the wrong case number. "Once we found out there was a mistake, it went back. Of course, the 90 days had passed," she said, apparently unaware that BSO 911 call policy is to keep them for 30 days.

Whitfield explained to the city council that a probable witness' 911 call had been noted in a log but that investigators initially thought it was unrelated to Ehler's death because it mentioned a woman, not a man, begging for life, even though the call records matched the location and time of the shooting. Morgan says that a private detective hired by Ehlers' father managed to track him down to be interviewed about six weeks after the shooting. He wasn't approached by Hallandale Beach Police detectives until at least six months after the shooting. Officer McGovern claimed he shot Ehlers because he feared that Ehlers had a gun and could have shot him or fellow officer Miguel Mirabal, who was on the side of the house facing Ehlers' right side. But in a deposition, Mirabal said he had eye contact with Ehlers for nearly the entire 20 seconds between the time McGovern confronted Ehlers and shots were fired – yet Mirabal never drew his weapon (although he claimed in the deposition that he was in fear for his life when he saw Ehlers' head).

"So although you just testified that you were in fear for your life as you stared at his head, you never drew your firearm?" asked the Ehlers family attorney, David Heffernan. "That is correct," answered Mirabal. In the city council meeting, Mayor Joy Cooper asked **Whitfield** if an outside department should be hired to investigate the shooting. "Even though it's our internal investigation, would it behoove us to do another?" Cooper asked. "No, no, it would not," answered **Whitfield**. "I would leave it alone at this point. Because you don't want them saying, 'Oh, look, they're trying to, you know...'" Cooper interrupted **Whitfield** and said: "Yeah, [they've] already gone through the process in terms of it's not required. I never asked that question." The shooting investigation by the State Attorney's Office is still pending. Morgan says he hasn't been contacted by anybody in that office.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Broward Palm Beach New Times

May 26, 2015

Why Hallandale Beach Paid \$150,000 to Family of Unarmed Man Shot by Cop

Author: Ray Downs

On a cool winter evening on January 8, 2012, 34-year-old Gregory Ehlers Jr. exited a Best Buy in Aventura with a few items he didn't pay for. Aventura cops chased him at first, but that store is located just a few blocks from the line that divides Miami-Dade from Broward County, and Ehlers soon found himself in Hallandale Beach. Aventura cops didn't bother pursuing an iPad thief across county lines, so they let their Hallandale Beach counterparts know that there's a white male in their town with some electronics he shouldn't have. They also said on the APB that Ehlers didn't have a gun.

Hallandale Beach Police, eager for action in the tiny city, brought out several squad cars and at least one dog to pursue the shoplifting suspect. Ehlers, a Tampa man with a history of drug problems, ran through alleyways and hopped fences to elude the police. Eventually, he decided to climb on the roof of a one-story home in the city's northeast section, about 1.5 miles from the Best Buy. Officer Edward McGovern, a corpulent, ex-Miami Beach bouncer from Philly with 12 years on the force, drove up to the house. Twenty seconds later, he shot Ehlers three times, missing once. But the two bullets that hit Ehlers' arms were enough to bleed him to death. It took at least ten minutes for paramedics to get on the roof. By the time Ehlers was taken to the hospital, he was pronounced dead.

McGovern says he saw an object in Ehlers' hands and told the suspect to put it down. Ehlers obeyed at first but then reached back down, according to the cop's story. That's when McGovern says he fired. The only object found near Ehlers' body was a cell phone. The case is still being reviewed by the State Attorney's Office. But in October of last year, the City of Hallandale Beach paid out \$150,000 to the Ehlers family in a wrongful-death lawsuit. New Times obtained copies of the civil case documents to find out why. On August 20, 2014, the city leaders of Hallandale Beach met to decide what to do about the Ehlers case, which by then was more than 2 years old and apparently not very important on their agenda.

City Manager Renee Miller thought the State Attorney's Office had already cleared McGovern, but that wasn't true, and City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield** had to correct her. “[The State Attorney's Office] had a crowded grand jury when they were going to take it, and our four witnesses are in Canada,” **Whitfield** explained. “You've got to be kidding me,” Miller replied. “No. So they have not gone to the grand jury,” said **Whitfield**. “The State Attorney's Office here is terrible, as far as I'm concerned.” “I can't believe this has gone on since 2012,” chimed in City Commissioner Michele Lazarow.

But it had, and **Whitfield** described the case. McGovern shot an unarmed man, she said. But the city had prepared a defense: Although Ehlers didn't have a gun, it's possible he could have found one in the bushes, which makes the shooting justifiable. “Our theory of defense is that the

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

suspect was a fleeing felon who fled from the police more than once,” **Whitfield** said. “Hid from the police and then got on the rooftop, which gave him the advantage if he was armed. Although the BOLO [be on the lookout] did not go out that he was armed, he could have gotten a weapon while he was hiding in the bushes or anywhere else along the way.” **Whitfield** explained that the Ehlers family was not only arguing that shooting an unarmed man on a rooftop was excessive force but that several 911 calls indicate that Ehlers was screaming for help and urging police not to shoot.

However, **Whitfield** said those 911 calls are irrelevant because they no longer exist. When Mayor Joy Cooper asked what happened to them, **Whitfield** explained there was a mix-up at BSO and because Hallandale Beach Police waited more than three months to get the calls, they were destroyed. “Well, we asked for the 911 calls from BSO when our detective was getting all the evidence. BSO gave us the dispatch calls and gave us our radio transmissions but did not give us the 911 calls of the people calling in because they had logged them on under a different case number. So once we found out there was a mistake, it went back. Of course, the 90 days had passed, and those calls had been – we do have the CAD report. The printout of the call. We have contacted the individuals who called in. They do not substantiate that they heard him asking for – calling for help.”

Whitfield doesn't say who didn't substantiate the calls, but the printout of a call log indicate that at least two people called 911 and described hearing somebody plea for help. Although **Whitfield** told city leaders their defense case was strong, they should be prepared to settle for at least \$75,000 out of a \$200,000 state maximum for excessive force cases, especially because a trial would happen around Christmastime. “I don't like Christmas cases. People like to give on Christmas. I don't like it, though,” **Whitfield** said. Furthermore, offering a low settlement would be a good idea because she knows the judge and mediator involved with the case. “Our mediator is former Judge Norman Gerstein, who I know very well,” **Whitfield** said. “Also, our judge is Robert Scola, who I know very well too. We actually started in the State Attorney's Office together. I think he is a very fair judge. I think he is going to really do what he can.”

Whitfield was asked if Ehlers had ever had any violent criminal charges or weapons charges, and she said no — just drug and theft charges. Miller asked if Ehlers had ever been a registered gun owner, and **Whitfield's** answer again was “no.” The city leaders authorized a minimum of \$75,000 to pay. But after mediation, the final settlement was for \$150,000. Gregory Ehlers Sr. tells New Times that he would have gone to trial for the \$200,000 but was convinced to accept the \$150,000 after attorneys for the city and police union warned that they would fight if he didn't settle. “They said there wouldn't be anything left of the settlement if I went to trial because of attorneys' fees and that it wouldn't be worth it,” Ehlers Sr. said from his home near Atlanta. The elder Ehlers is still very angry about his son's death. But the 68-year-old retired computer engineer explained he wanted to secure some financial stability for his grandson.

Although the civil case is over, the criminal investigation is ongoing — a rarity, says Ehlers family attorney David Heffernan. “Oftentimes, the criminal end is resolved before the civil end, but we were able to develop some things from the civil end and gave the state attorney

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

everything we obtained in hopes of assisting them in the criminal process," says Heffernan.

"The family is still very perplexed that the criminal investigation is still ongoing, and there hasn't been a conclusion there."

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
February 18, 2015

**Hallandale city attorney alleges racial discrimination after commissioner threatens her job
Hallandale city attorney accuses commissioner who wants to fire her of intimidation**

Author: Susannah Bryan

In the wake of Commissioner Keith London's threat to push for the termination of City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield**, she has accused him of discrimination based on gender and race. **Whitfield**, who has hired an attorney to represent her, also accused London of creating a hostile workplace. In light of **Whitfield's** allegations, Mayor Joy Cooper called a special meeting Wednesday to hire special counsel to investigate the matter. "This is a very sad, sad day for Hallandale Beach," Cooper said. "It weighs heavy on my heart."

After a spirited discussion, commissioners agreed to hire labor and employment attorney James Crosland to handle the investigation. London told the Sun Sentinel he planned to push for **Whitfield's** termination due to his loss of confidence in her ability to provide unbiased advice to the commission. Commissioner London to debate firing Hallandale city attorney on Wednesday But on Wednesday, London said he would delay the discussion until the end of the investigation. **Whitfield**, 60, has been Hallandale's city attorney since December 2011. She watched from the back row as her five commission bosses debated hiring the outside attorney. "I find it interesting that up until yesterday there was no allegation of racial or age discrimination until I told her I was going to put an item on the agenda to discuss her employment," London said. "I find it very convenient."

Cooper commended **Whitfield** for standing up for her rights. "I want to publicly apologize that you have been put in such a situation," Cooper said. "We will step out and investigate any discrimination. We will see where the investigation takes us." Review of police use of force urged by chief, backed by elected officials in Hallandale Commissioner Michele Lazarow came to London's defense. "He made a comment," Lazarow said. "She filed a memo. It's a he said, she said. I'm disappointed to hear there are accusations of discrimination. I don't know how this is going to go. I haven't heard his side yet." When the discussion ended, **Whitfield** returned to her seat on the dais.

Crosland told commissioners City Hall has a legal obligation to investigate the allegations. "I will be interviewing the city attorney," Crosland said. "I will be interviewing other people. In the course of investigating her allegations, it may be that other people come forward and make allegations against Mr. London or maybe someone else." Crosland advised the commission that retaliation or harassment of any employee who makes allegations of discrimination could be costly for the city should a court award hefty damages down the road. Crosland said he was not sure how long the investigation might take or how much it might cost. "No matter how this plays out, it's going to cost us thousands of dollars," Commissioner Bill Julian said. "I'm really disgusted. This is an embarrassment. But we'll deal with it."

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 29, 2014

Next step for ethics reform in Broward

Author: Sun Sentinel Editorial Board

The Broward Office of the Inspector General needs help. So do local politicians who want to attend community events while staying on the right side of the county's ethics code. Inspector General John Scott is calling for the addition of an ethics official or commission to ensure government leaders get consistent advice about accepting gifts or trips — and an impartial review when rules might have been violated. Scott is working on such a proposal for the November ballot. And he is on the right track.

Already, some politicians are objecting, decrying another level of bureaucracy. Some fear an independent body might call out those who are simply trying to do the public's business. They should look to history and remember how we got to where we are today. Two years ago, voters demanded a new ethics code after watching far too many elected officials hauled off in handcuffs, charged with bribery and public corruption. The headlines continue even today, as readers of the Sun Sentinel well know.

To enforce the ethics code, commissioners tasked the inspector general's office with investigating and prosecuting potential violations. However, since the referendum's passage, Scott and his staff have discovered problems that need addressing. For example, for advice on accepting a gift or free trip, local officials now mostly turn to their city or county attorneys. The result is a plethora of local opinions about what politicians can accept as a freebie. In the past two years, some 900 legal advisories have been served up countywide, the inspector general's office reports.

These advisories can put government attorneys in the awkward position of having to tell their bosses bad news about taking free stuff — or how to find a way around the law's intent. They also provide cover to politicians who may be seeking personal gain. After recently reviewing legal opinions from Weston to Sunrise to Fort Lauderdale, Sun Sentinel reporter Brittany Wallman found politicians are accepting questionable gifts and perks. In Miramar, for example, city attorney Jamie Cole told Commissioner Winston Barnes he couldn't accept 10 free tickets to the circus last year, but suggested the circus could provide "promotional" tickets to the city that could then be given to Barnes guilt-free.

City attorneys similarly told the mayors of Miramar and Hallandale Beach they could accept free trips to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, though it's hard to see the public benefit there. Hallandale city attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** told Mayor Joy Cooper the trip was allowed if it somehow promoted "the exchange of ideas between, or the professional development of, governmental officials or employees." She even said Cooper could bring along her husband, all expenses paid, so long as she reported it as a gift. Cooper went, but did not take her husband along.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The vast majority of local politicians work to do the right thing, no question. But a recent report shows public corruption in Florida continues to rank among the worst in the nation. Between 1998 and 2007, 824 Florida officials were convicted on public corruption charges at the local, state and federal level. The New York Times says the totals may be worse than in any other state. Ironically, in the face of this news, Florida lawmakers are considering a proposal to loosen the ethics reins. Legislation filed this month by Sen. Jeff Clemens, D-Lake Worth, would strip many gift-reporting requirements for public officials and officially protect them if they have a legal advisory in hand.

Meanwhile in Broward, the person responsible for investigating ethics complaints says that to improve the process, the system needs to be tweaked. We encourage county commissioners and the Broward League of Cities to embrace his goal and ensure that public officials countywide play by the same rules and definitions. Given our history with public corruption, it's time we got this right.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 15, 2014

Hallandale police to test out body cams for one year

Author: Susannah Bryan

Body cams may be the next high-tech tool for officers on patrol in Hallandale. Commissioners have given initial approval to a yearlong pilot program that would arm the department's road officers with video cameras small enough to clip onto their uniforms. The cameras are expected to cut down on complaints against cops and help improve relations with the public, Police Chief Dwayne Flournoy told commissioners Monday. "We're not looking to be punitive," Flournoy said. "We want to improve our officers and our police department."

The technology is becoming popular with agencies throughout the country, including departments in Boynton Beach, Daytona Beach and Orlando, the chief said. Hallandale would be the first agency in Broward County to use it. Most officers are reluctant to wear the cameras at first, Flournoy said, but change their tune when they realize the footage can show whether an officer acted properly in the event a citizen files a complaint with Internal Affairs. The system would cost an estimated \$95,000 in the first year. If the program is a success, it would cost \$290,000 over a five-year period. Commissioner William Julian said he didn't think it was right to put a "video leash" on the city's cops. "The officer's judgment might be slowed because of the cameras," Julian said. "I think it shows a lack of trust in our officers by putting a video leash on them."

Flournoy assured him the cameras would help with officer training and improve accountability with the public. City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** says the cameras may cut down on police-related lawsuits against the city and help her determine whether to go to trial or settle a case. "It's much easier to defend a lawsuit if I have something I can see," she said. In December, a federal jury awarded \$82,000 to a man who accused a Hallandale officer of punching and pepper-spraying him during a traffic stop in 2009. Fort Lauderdale attorney Gary Kollin, who represented the plaintiff, praised the department for its willingness to use technology that can bring the truth to light.

If a recording shows misconduct by the officer, it can help clear the victim of criminal charges, Kollin said. If it shows misconduct by the suspect, it can exonerate the officer and help the prosecution at trial. Commissioner Alex Lewy said he was worried about officers entering a home with cameras rolling and violating a citizen's right to privacy. "Anyone could pull it as public record and post it on You Tube for the world to see," Lewy said. The cameras won't always be on, Flournoy said. City officials plan to come up with a set of guidelines determining which calls should be recorded, with input from the rank and file. "We're not going to capture every single incident," Flournoy said.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bulldog

July 11, 2013

Defiant Hallandale commissioners reject call for new legal opinion on CRA spending

Author: William Gjebre

Hallandale Beach city commissioners have shot down a request from a legislative committee that it seek a new opinion from the Florida Attorney General on how community redevelopment funds can be spent and abide by the ruling. Sitting as directors of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), commissioners voted 3-2 Wednesday night to approve telling the Florida Joint Legislative Joint Auditing Committee that the CRA "cannot at this time advocate seeking the requested" Attorney General opinion. The action raised the likelihood that state legislators could order an audit of the city's CRA spending. "I'm not concerned if they order an audit; they can do that regardless," CRA Attorney Steven Zelkowitz said after the Wednesday meeting.

The state committee got involved after reviewing a highly critical report by the Broward Inspector General's Office that found Hallandale's CRA had "grossly mismanaged" and misspent millions of tax dollars. The Inspector General's report relied heavily on a 2010 Attorney General's opinion that said CRA funds should be used for "brick and mortar" projects. City officials, however, have questioned that interpretation of state law and said that the use of CRA funds for things like handouts to local nonprofit groups and city fireworks displays are legitimate expenditures. Hallandale's defensive posture appears to have prompted the legislators to suggest the city seek a new legal opinion that it would agree to live by.

The city's resistance to that idea was clear in a four-page report to the legislators that was submitted to the CRA's board – Hallandale's five commissioners for their approval. "The questions the committee has requested to be posed to the Attorney General will have an impact on (CRA's) on a statewide basis," the report said. "The city and (its CRA) cannot legally bind themselves to abide by a yet to be issued [opinion]." Zelkowitz, City Manager Renee C. Miller and City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** wrote the report. "I'm very disappointed," said Commissioner Bill Julian, who with Commissioner Michele Lazarow favored seeking the Attorney General's opinion but were outvoted. "I'm not surprised" by the vote, Lazarow said.

Mayor Joy Cooper, who attended via phone, Vice Mayor Alexander Lewy and Commissioner Anthony Sanders voted for the report. After the meeting, Lewy said the city has made numerous improvements to the CRA recently. In response to several other matters raised by the state committee, commissioners agreed to reply that is their position that state law and a few case rulings do not prohibit the questioned expenditures. "In fact, the statutes and case law provide a broad framework for the expenditure of CRA monies," the report said. On another issue, the city's report to the legislature noted that while Hallandale had co-mingled city funds with CRA money in the past — which the Inspector General said was improper — it established a separate CRA trust in May, 2012 and reported the fund balance is approximately \$15 million at present. At the meeting, commissioners also unanimously approved an eight-page report outlining the

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

city's response to recommendations made by the Inspector General. The report – a copy of which will be sent to the state audit committee – said Hallandale has:

*Stabilized CRA staff by naming City Manager Miller executive director and hiring a new Deputy City Manager to serve as CRA director and supervise key departments that interact with the CRA.

*Provided training to top city officials regarding provisions of the state law, Chapter 163, governing CRAs, and established a process and standards for awarding funds/grants to nonprofit groups, as well as on-going performance evaluation.

*Trained staff on policies and procedures for all CRA programs; established legal and financial reviews of loans and other financial funds, and implemented controls to monitor all CRA expenditures.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bulldog
April 23, 2013

Broward Inspector General: Hallandale leaders don't know what they're talking about
Author: William Gjebre

The Broward Inspector General's final report on the "gross mismanagement" of millions in tax dollars by Hallandale Beach is sharply critical of city leaders it says have shown a "basic misunderstanding" of what's gone wrong. Hallandale Beach city managers past and present, the city attorney, the mayor and other city officials defended the handling of funds of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency in formal responses included in the 56-page report released last week.

The Inspector General, after a year investigating, determined that from 2007 to 2012 city leaders used the CRA like a piggybank to improperly pay for the city's general expenses and other pet projects, including donations to favored charities and loans to local businesses. By law, CRA is a limited purpose special district whose funds are only to be spent to address slum and blight conditions within a defined area. It receives 95 percent of the taxes collected on the appreciated value of properties within its boundaries, or about \$70 million since it began in 1996. Some of the report's bluntest words rebut claims by Mayor Joy Cooper and City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** that the Inspector General had no authority to investigate the CRA's activities.

Whitfield's "assertions ignore the fact that the OIG (Office of Inspector General) has authority over all municipal officials in identifying mismanagement of public resources," the report says. "A municipality cannot avoid OIG oversight by spending taxpayer funds through an agency that is independent in name only." Likewise, the report ripped "another common theme" of the city's defenders that the Inspector General mistakenly relied on a Florida Attorney General's advisory opinion that the Inspector General said precluded the city from spending CRA funds as it had.

City Attorney **Whitfield's** arguments "reflect the basic misunderstanding that is at the core of the gross mismanagement identified in this report: the city has failed to comprehend that the CRA has a limited purpose and that the powers of the CRA to expend CRA...funds is not equal to the power of the municipality to expend general funds." The report urged Hallandale Beach's leaders to ask the Attorney General for another opinion if they don't like the original one.

CITY MANAGER MILLER CRITICIZED

The report also criticized City Manager Renee Crichton Miller, who it said made "unsupported" arguments to support Cooper and **Whitfield's** erroneous claims that the Inspector General had incorrectly determined that CRA funds were improperly used to repay city bond obligations for park improvements in other parts of the city. City officials contended that it was always the city's intention to repay any CRA funds spent on parks outside the CRA boundaries. The report, however, says those arguments failed to "address the plain fact that \$416,365 in CRA funds – deemed 'negligible' by (Miller) – have already been expended on parks outside the CRA boundaries" without any repayments or any plan for repayment.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miller, hired last summer and not identified in the report as being responsible for past mismanagement, stuck by her arguments in an interview after the report's release, saying the city has every intention to repay funds owed the CRA. She said it does not have to do so now because those projects have yet to get underway. "We have a difference of opinion with the Inspector General," said Miller. "I would not disparage their view." Asked for comment, Mayor Cooper referred a reporter to her statements in the Inspector General's report.

Said former City Commissioner Keith London, who lost a race for mayor to Cooper last November, "I hope the State Attorney's office will look into this further." BrowardBulldog.org first reported the Inspector General's preliminary findings last month. Last week's final report incorporated the responses of city leaders. Investigators found at least \$2.2 million in questionable CRA expenditures, including inappropriate loans to local business and grants to local non-profits. The city improperly also spent \$416,000 in CRA money for parks outside the CRA boundaries, the report said.

The report also said there is "probable cause" to believe that Dr. Deborah Brown, the founder and director of the Palm Center for the Arts engaged in criminal misconduct. In one case, the center allegedly spent nearly \$5,000 to make a payment on Brown's timeshare at the Westgate Resort in Orlando, and make payments to Brown and her brother. The matter was referred to the Broward State Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution. In her response to the Inspector General, Brown provided a document of expenditures and details of youth activities that she said provided "positive, measurable results" at her Palm Center for the Arts. The report, however, said there was a lack of supporting documentation for those expenditures. "Her submission does not alter our determination that there is probable cause to believe that Dr. Brown may have engaged in criminal misconduct," the report says. Brown could not be reached for comment.

CITY LOANS DEFENDED

In their responses, Cooper and former city manager Mike Good defended various CRA loans to local businesses, including a \$75,000 loan in 2009 to Digital Outernet Inc., a startup firm that planned to earn income from advertising on televisions screens it hoped put in local businesses. Digital Outernet closed a short time later when its principal owner died. But the city failed to secure a guarantee of repayment from other investors and waived a provision in the deal that would have given it some collateral for the loan. Cooper said the Digital Outernet loan was "not gross mismanagement" because it attempted to help establish a minority-owned business, according to the report. Good said the loan was "properly made," adding that at it was "unfortunate that some paperwork had not been signed," the report said.

Good, too, defended a \$50,000 loan to the South Florida Sun Times weekly newspaper, saying it was "justified" because the newspaper needed assistance. The 2009 loan, under terms so favorable that half of it need not be repaid, was made under a new program Good had established for assist struggling businesses. At the time, the two top executives of the for-profit newspaper reported to the IRS that they'd paid themselves \$469,000 in salaries in the two years before

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

receiving the loan. Cooper told the Inspector General that the salaries of those seeking loans are now part of the loan evaluation process, the report said.

But the Inspector General’s report said Hallandale Beach’s failure until recently to take any steps to empower the CRA as an independent body that might “act as a check on the improper use” of CRA tax funds is problematic. “While we are encouraged by the remedial steps taken by the city and the CRA in the last year, the OIG remains concerned that the city has not acknowledged the statutory limit on the use of TIF (tax increment financing) funds diverted to the CRA,” says the report, which makes a number of recommendations it said would ensure the CRA’s independence.

Hallandale Beach is not the only Broward city to have misspent CRA funds. Within the last year, the Inspector General found \$2.5 million misspent by Lauderdale Lakes and the Florida Auditor General identified “several significant expenditures” by Hollywood that did not follow state law. “It is becoming increasingly apparent that the gross mismanagement of CRA funds by a Broward County municipality is not a unique occurrence,” the report says. “The OIG will continue to examine the expenditure of CRA funds by municipalities.” The report also recommends the county assess its legal options “to prevent the ongoing abuse of the CRA process and recover those funds that may have been misspent.”

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bulldog

June 27, 2012

Broward Inspector General hits first legal hurdle; Hallandale CRA says hands off

Author: William Gjebre

Hallandale Beach’s Community Redevelopment Agency, run by the city’s five elected commissioners, has sent a message to Broward’s new Inspector General’s Office – you can’t touch us. Numerous questions have been raised about the business dealings of the CRA, in which city commissioners also serve as directors of the agency. But now the agency has called into question the IG’s authority to delve into its management practices, declining to have commissioners answer county investigators’ questions about their actions as CRA directors. The move is the first significant challenge to the authority of the year-old criminal justice agency whose job is to investigate possible fraud, corruption and gross mismanagement.

“It is our opinion that the authority of the Inspector General does not generally extend to a community redevelopment agency (CRA) and its board members,” CRA attorney Steven Zelkowitz wrote in a June 18 letter to Inspector General Counsel Jennifer Merino. “As we both know, the individual Hallandale Beach CRA board members and the city commissioners are each one in the same person. However, in these separate capacities they wear separate hats and are guided by separate legal requirements.” The Hallandale CRA’s bottom line: the IG’s auditors and agents can talk to the five commissioners about their actions as commissioners, but not as CRA board members.

INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

Zelkowitz’s legal opinion is rooted in the CRA’s status as a special district, a distinct legal entity under Florida law. According to him, board members are public officers regulated by Florida’s Code of Ethics for Public Officials, not the recently updated, and more stringent, Broward County Code that covers all officials and employees of the county and its municipalities. The CRA uses property tax dollars collected within the district to promote businesses and redevelopment.

What may happen next is unclear, but the Inspector General’s Office is not expected to back down from continuing its probe in the face of a challenge that could impact its authority over the many other special districts in the county. They include large the North and South Broward Hospital Districts and smaller ones such as the Performing Arts Center Authority or the Hillsboro Inlet District. Inspector General John Scott declined comment.

Robert Jarvis, a professor of constitutional law at Nova Southeastern University, said this is the first big test of the IG’s authority, and that Zelkowitz may have a point. He cited a recent decision by the Fourth District Court of Appeal in West Palm Beach that limited the jurisdiction of the Attorney General to investigate foreclosure mills. “I think the CRA may be right,” said Jarvis. “I think this has to be decided by a court.” Last week’s letter is the second push back from Hallandale Beach. Several weeks ago, City Attorney **V. Lynn Whitfield** informed the IG that

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the City Manager’s Office would not voluntarily schedule meetings between city commissioners and county agents investigating city management practices, including those at the CRA.

In last week’s letter to IG counsel Merino, Zelkowitz allowed that the IG has the authority, under county code, with respect to the same city commissioners in their city functions – but not those concerning the CRA. He also stated that the IG may have the authority to review any goods and services that CRA provides to the city. However, Zelkowitz, stated, “In such case, the Inspector General would have authority, but solely with respect to the provisions of such goods and services.” Zelkowitz declined comment.

City Attorney **Whitfield** also declined comment. In her June 13 letter to the IG, she said her office wants to know whether the probe is targeted at commissioners as a whole or to actions of individual commissioners to determine what type of legal representation they may require. The IG is a watchdog agency established in the wake of recent county scandals. It can investigate, but not arrest. It is a member of Broward’s Public Corruption Task Force – a specialized group of federal, state and local investigators and prosecutors – that in April was designated as a “criminal justice agency” by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

CITY WANTS MORE INFO

Renee Crichton, Hallandale’s newly appointed city manager, said when the office received a call from the IG it contacted the city attorney and the CRA attorney to discuss the IG’s request to interview commissioners. She declined to comment on whether any member of the city commission was involved in the discussion at some point. “The CRA and the city commission has not taken any position” on the dispute, Crichton said. “On our part, we need more information as to why the Inspector General wants to interview commissioners. There needs to be some structure; what do they want to discuss.” “We are not saying we will not cooperate,” Crichton said, adding the city has done so by providing many of the documents requested by the IG.

A call to Broward County Attorney Joni Armstrong Coffey resulted in a callback from Assistant County Attorney Anthony Myers. Asked about the IG’s authority in the matter under county law, Myers said he does not have “sufficient knowledge” to comment. He added it is possible the matter could end up in a court of law. At least one city commissioner disagrees with the CRA’s position. “The IG does have jurisdiction,” said London, who is running for mayor against incumbent Joy Cooper. A part of the state law, he said, speaks to the mingling of city and state funds and that would give the investigators authority.

If called by the IG, London said, “I’ll go; I look forward to it.” Commission members Dorothy Ross and Anthony Sanders both said they would be guided by the city legal counsel on whether to be interviewed. As Broward Bulldog reported last week, the IG has requested city documents about several community-based groups associated with Sanders or his wife Jessica. The complaints made to the IG, Sanders said, are “coming from the negativity of people. I’m not saying who specifically. It is what it is; it’s a part of the politics.” When and if he speaks to investigators, Sanders said, “I’ll be glad to talk to them in any capacity, as a city commissioner

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

or a CRA director.” Mayor Joy Cooper and Commissioner Alexander Lewy could not be reached for comment.

In his letter, Zelkowitz asked the IG to restrict his questioning of city commissioners “to their actions as city commissioners and not as HBCRA Board Members. In this regard, we defer to the City Attorney as to the direction of your investigation with respect to the City and Commissioners. “Notwithstanding the foregoing, the HBCRA is ready, willing and able to comply with all public records requests of the Inspector General as the records of the HBCRA constitute public records under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.”

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
November 2, 2011

Hallandale Beach hires North Miami's city attorney
Author: Carli Teproff

Hallandale Beach will soon have a new city attorney. On Wednesday, the commission unanimously agreed to hire **Lynn Whitfield**, who currently serves as North Miami's city attorney. **Whitfield**, who was with North Miami for nearly six years, will make \$180,000 and begin Dec. 5. Her last day in North Miami is Dec. 2. **Whitfield** will fill a spot that was left vacant when former attorney David Jove resigned in July.

She's leaving North Miami at a time when the city is negotiating with Michael Swerdlow over Biscayne Landing, a massive development near Florida International University. She also leaves at time when several longtime department heads lost their jobs at the hands of the Interim City Manager Steve Johnson. Also, last month, North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre made a motion to fire **Whitfield**, saying only that he had no confidence in her. The motion was shot down.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
October 25, 2011

North Miami fires two department heads; city lawyer may leave, too
The city manager fired the city’s information technology and finance directors Monday for what the mayor called “performance reasons.”

Author: Perry Stein

North Miami’s newly appointed interim city manager unexpectedly fired two department heads this week, citing “performance reasons.” But both were longtime city employee who said they have consistently earned outstanding marks on their evaluations. “It was totally unexpected,” said former information technology director Hortensia Machado, who was fired on Monday. “My last performance evaluation was outstanding — in all the categories it was outstanding.” Machado, who has worked with the city for more than 13 years, was fired along with Finance Director Carlos Perez, a 22-year veteran of the city.

Interim City Manager Stephen Johnson said he would not comment on personnel matters, but Mayor Andre Pierre said Johnson told him it was because of “performance reasons.” Johnson, the city’s former police chief, has been on the job for less than two months, prompting Perez to question how the manager even had enough time to judge his performance as finance director. “It makes no sense. I don’t understand how he can judge performance in that short period of time,” Perez said. “I gave my heart and soul to the city for 22 years and I think everyone knows that.” The two employees did not receive a severance package but will be able to cash in their unused sick and vacation days.

City Councilman Scott Galvin said the firings were unexpected, and said he had heard no word of the employees’ poor performances until Monday. “Perez surprised me the most because he has been such a highly regarded member of the staff for so long,” Galvin said. Johnson also fired the building and zoning director, Jacqueline Gonzalez, two weeks ago to consolidate her department with the community planning and development department. The city may also lose its lawyer if city attorney **Lynn Whitfield** accepts another position at the city of Hallandale Beach, a departure that would likely not upset the mayor.

In September, the mayor tried to oust **Whitfield**, saying he had no confidence in her. He received no backing from the City Council. But the city of Hallandale Beach said it is negotiating a contract for **Whitfield** to serve as its city attorney. George Amiraian, the personnel director for Hallandale Beach, said the City Commission approved **Whitfield** as the city attorney, and that she is expected to accept the contract. **Whitfield** would not comment on the matter.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
February 15, 2009

**NORTH MIAMI Disruptive behavior may be banned from North Miami meetings
Anyone who disrupts a public meeting in North Miami soon might be escorted out after the council gave preliminary approval to a civility and decorum ordinance.**

Author: Carly Teproff

Like children in a classroom, anyone who goes to a North Miami public meeting soon might have to follow some basic rules -- no stomping your feet, screaming or speaking out of turn. North Miami City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield** said she believes that public meetings need order, so she proposed a decorum and civility ordinance. The council Tuesday unanimously approved it on first reading. Final approval will come later this month. "There is a way to express anger without being disruptive," **Whitfield** told the council and a handful of residents and staff who were left at the end of a long meeting. "This ordinance doesn't prohibit you from saying anything; it's how it's said."

The ordinance prohibits anyone who attends a meeting or the board or council to disrupt the proceedings. If a person does disrupt a meeting, they can be removed, after a warning, by the police chief or his designee. The ordinance applies to council or board members and the audience.

Though **Whitfield** didn't cite a specific incident that sparked the new law, the proposal came weeks after David Levin, a frequent critic of North Miami government, spoke out of turn at a meeting. Late last year, Levin told the council he felt that a meeting should be canceled because he believed it wasn't properly advertised. Mayor Kevin Burns asked him to sit down several times, but Levin continued.

Levin and several other residents say the law is an infringement on First Amendment rights. "I have never, ever, threatened anyone," said Levin, who acknowledges he often speaks passionately about city issues. "But I have said what you've done wrong and I've called you to task." Resident Judy Feldman says she is not comfortable with being told how she must act when she goes to a council meeting. "I think it's a reaction to some of us that are loud mouthed," Feldman said. "It's subject to tremendous abuse by you all, not us."

Whitfield used a PowerPoint presentation to explain her proposal. Citing case law and other local cities with similar ordinances, **Whitfield** said her proposal is nothing new. At Miami-Dade County meetings, those attending cannot clap; they must wave. Coral Gables, Surfside, Sweetwater and Palmetto Bay also have civility ordinances. "Coral Gables will arrest you if you fail to relinquish the podium," **Whitfield** said. At least one resident agreed with needing order in council meetings. "I don't think this council which governs my city should have to put up with insults at the time of a meeting," said James Tracton. "I think perhaps maybe we do need this ordinance."

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bar News
September 15, 2006

Florida will be well.(Appointments of personnel to National Bar Association)(Brief article)

FLORIDA WILL BE WELL represented in the National Bar Association this year. Along with newly sworn-in NBA President Linnes Finney of Port St. Lucie, **V. Lynn Whitfield** of West Palm Beach will serve as an at-large member of the NBA board; Cynthia Everett of Coral Gables will serve as Regional XI director; Justice Peggy Quince and Judge Sheree Cunningham of West Palm Beach will sit on the NBA Judicial Council's executive board; Detra Shaw-Wilder of Miami is the corresponding secretary of Women Law Division's executive board; June C. McKinney Bartelle of Tallahassee will serve as the recording secretary of the Women Law Division board; and Edrick Barnes of West Palm Beach was elected treasurer for the Young Lawyers' Division of the NBA. Pictured at the NBA convention, top row from the left, are Judge Cunningham, Justice Quince, and Evett Simmons of Port St. Lucie, a past president of NBA. Sitting from the left are Bartelle and **Whitfield** at the Detroit Gala where Finney was sworn in as NBA president.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jet
September 11, 2006

V. Lynn Whitfield.(People)(appointed as city attorney)(Brief article)

V. Lynn Whitfield, North Miami's deputy city attorney, has been sworn as city attorney for the city of North Miami. **Whitfield** is past president of the Craig S. Barnard American Inns of Court. She earned her juris doctorate from the University of Miami School of Law and specializes in municipal law, civil litigation and criminal defense.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Westside Gazette

July 20, 2006

V. Lynn Whitfield takes oath as City Attorney in North Miami

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **V. Lynn Whitfield** is listed below]

NORTH MIAMI, FL- **V. Lynn Whitfield** was sworn in as the new City Attorney for the City of North Miami on Tuesday, June 27, 2006 after serving as the city's Deputy City Attorney for six months. **Whitfield's** first boss as a young lawyer, former US Attorney General, Janet Reno, administered the oath of office. "Having Janet Reno administer the oath of office was very special to me. It afforded me an opportunity to publicly thank her for giving me my start as a lawyer," described **Whitfield** after the meeting. "Working for her is the foundation which led to me being the attorney I am today."

Whitfield began her legal career as an Assistant State Attorney in Miami-Dade County in 1978. Her background also includes serving as an Assistant Public Defender in Palm Beach County, Deputy City Attorney for the City of West Palm Beach, City Attorney for the City of Pahokee and many years of private practice with specialization in municipal law, civil litigation and criminal defense. **Lynn Whitfield** earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Miami School of Law. She is a member of the Florida Bar and many professional organizations, including her most current post as president of the Craig S. Barnard American Inns of Court.

[Sidebar] **Whitfield's** first boss as a young lawyer, former US Attorney General, Janet Reno, administered the oath of office.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
October 1, 2005

Minority students intern at law firms

Author: Missy Stoddard

When Cesar Alvarez first became a lawyer in the 1970s, he said, minorities and women were not considered equal to their white counterparts. And though **V. Lynn Whitfield** gained valuable experience as a prosecutor in Miami-Dade County fresh out of law school 25 years ago, she was greeted less than warmly when applying to private law firms afterward. "I can recall interviewing with a large firm in Palm Beach County after being referred there by a judge, and I was just totally blown off," **Whitfield** said. "This was after years of practice. I wasn't a new lawyer."

Today Alvarez, who is Cuban, is the president and chief executive officer of Greenberg Traurig, the country's eighth largest law firm. He said he never let others' opinions or expectations affect his goals. "I may not have been born here and I didn't speak the language perfectly. I just worked very hard," he said. "It just evolved along the way." **Whitfield** is a senior associate in municipal law and criminal defense in the Palm Beach County office of Walton, Lantaff, Schroeder & Carson, a statewide firm. Both Alvarez's and **Whitfield**'s firms are participating in a Palm Beach County Bar Association program offering internships to South Florida minority law students at firms and agencies historically recognized as prestigious. Eight students from schools including the University of Miami, Nova Southeastern and St. Thomas universities are the recipients.

"These are the cream of the crop, silk-stocking law firms which only take a very limited number of students," said Meenu Sasser, a shareholder at the Gunster Yoakley firm in West Palm Beach. "These are most highly sought-out positions." The goal is to provide minority students a mentoring atmosphere as well as exposure to the legal community they might not otherwise get. The hope is that the experience will increase the students' chances for success in the real world. "If you bring people in and don't have anyone who's going to mentor them as they would their white counterparts, the chance of them staying and remaining in the firm is less," **Whitfield** said. "It's important when they come in to be paired with someone who is going to nurture them and take them under their wing and explain how it works. How you do billing to get your hours, how you make contacts to get clients, how to do client development."

Whitfield's protM-igM-i is Patrick Johns, a second-year law student at the University of Miami. The 23-year-old from Richmond, Va., hopes to one day do criminal defense work. He has already been struck by the dearth of black lawyers. "This program helps you get your foot in the door in places that are difficult," Johns said. "It's tough to get interviews when you're an unconnected person not at the top of the class, but you still have skills." The youngest of six children raised by a single mom who supported the family by babysitting other children, Shelly Springer is a Cornell University grad and a second-year law student at the University of Miami. Though her family may not always have known where the next meal was coming from, the children were always expected to attend school and study hard. "My mom instilled good values in us," said Springer, 23, who is working 10 hours a week at Gunster Yoakley.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Judge Matthew Stevenson of the 4th District Court of Appeal in West Palm Beach hopes the program will broaden the talent pool and attract more minority recruits to the area. Since beginning his law career decades ago, Stevenson said he has tried to offer a helping hand to other minority lawyers. "I think the worst thing anybody can do is shut the door behind them," he said. "I feel an obligation to assist those young lawyers that are coming up. It takes a village and it takes everyone involved in the process to make sure doors are opened. It's an important part of me being in the position I am."

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bar News

July 1, 2005

Leopold to lead PBCBA.(Legal Roundup)

Leopold to Lead PBCBA: Theodore (Ted) J. Leopold was recently named president of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. Other new officers and board members include Manuel Farach, president-elect; Scott Murray; Bryan Poulton; Richard Schuler; Meenu Sasser; Michelle Suskauer; **V. Lynn Whitfield**; North County Section President William Fleck; Young Lawyers Section President Wade Bowden; and South Palm Beach County Bar Association President Jeffrey Mark,

Florida Trend

April 1, 2005

Turning point: will Henry Latimer's death be another setback to integrating the Bar's leadership ranks--or will it spur African-American attorneys to step into the void he leaves?(Florida Bar)(Biography)

Author: Pat Dunnigan

When Fort Lauderdale lawyer Henry Latimer died after a car crash Jan. 24, an opportunity that black lawyers throughout the state had awaited for decades died with him. Latimer, a widely respected former circuit court judge who joined the elite rank of partner at the Greenberg Traurig law firm, was positioned to become the first black president of the Florida Bar. Leadership roles at the Bar have consistently eluded black lawyers. Latimer got there, according to friends and colleagues, by building a career of accomplishments while quietly mentoring black lawyers and prodding the legal establishment to expand opportunities for African-Americans.

"His biggest accomplishment was to have been able to achieve distinction and prominence in the law and in the judiciary according to the rules of engagement or whatever the rules of the game are," says Miami lawyer George Knox, a former city attorney and law school classmate of Latimer's at the University of Miami, where they were members of the school's first class of black law students in 1973. Latimer agreed to run for the Bar presidency only reluctantly, Knox says. "He was not ambitious in that way."

But after years of pushing for greater representation in the Bar, black lawyers saw real prospects for change in Latimer, who had established respect and credibility on both sides of the color line. A brokered deal within the Bar put Latimer in line to run unopposed for the position in 2007, his colleagues say. "I don't think it had been settled, but the greatest chance for them (Bar members) to demonstrate that kind of openness and inclusion would have been Henry Latimer," says Knox.

History of frustration

Such optimism stands in sharp contrast to the frustration among black lawyers eight years ago. Then, the state's most prominent black lawyers group, the Florida chapter of the National Bar Association, resigned its seat on the Florida Bar's board of governors after 17 years of occupying a special, non-voting seat. The decision followed months of dissension within the Bar over a proposal to designate a black-lawyer seat on the board with voting power. The Bar's decision to reject the proposal particularly rankled black members because the Bar had just voted to create a fourth seat on the board for out-of-state members. "As long as we are second-class citizens, we don't want to sit at the table," said **Lynn Whitfield**, the chapter's then immediate past president.

The frustration was compounded by a pattern of black board members and candidates losing seats to white opponents in contested elections. Last year, the pattern repeated itself when Don Horn, a Miami prosecutor whose success had earned him a job offer and partnership at one of the city's most prestigious firms, lost his seat after one term. This year, both **Whitfield** and her successor at the National Bar, Allison K. Bethel, were seeking election to the board of governors.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

At press time **Whitfield** was running in a contested race for a board seat in Palm Beach County. Bethel, director of civil rights prosecution for the Florida Attorney General's office, is running to fill the vacancy left by Latimer in Broward County. Plantation trial lawyer Bradley Winston had also qualified to run for the seat. Voting closes April 21.

Depending on the outcome of those two races, Latimer's death could leave the board of governors with no black lawyers among its members. A seat reserved for public members is held by a retired African-American educator. It also leaves the state's black law association leaders with an opportunity--and a quandary. Does it honor or dishonor Latimer to suggest that this is an opportunity for the Bar to make room for more black lawyers in its leadership? "Whether or not (Latimer's) position is vested or designated or a position of entitlement ... that's subject to debate," Knox says. Latimer, says Knox, "would want to ensure that no rules were broken ... no preferences to the exclusion of others in an unfair way."

At the same time, Knox says many African-American leaders have a sense that the rules have not always been applied in their favor. The last time this issue was debated before the Bar, "the Bar pulled out the rule book, and it was absolutely impossible for an African-American to win a seat in a contested election," Knox says.

Creating a buzz

If nothing else, Latimer's death has reignited interest in the Florida Bar among black lawyers. "Many African-American lawyers like myself have been inspired by the void that he leaves to get more involved in the Florida Bar," Knox says. Now, he says, there's "a sort of buzz" about who might be recruited to run for open seats in future elections. Whatever happens, Knox says the acknowledgement that Latimer was in line to become Bar president is a huge step forward. "I think the discussions will get more and more serious," he says. "The pressure to recognize that this is a person who is first among equals is a major breakthrough--a stereotype buster."

Miami lawyer H.T. Smith, a past president of the National Bar Association and another member of the UM law school class of 1973, says Latimer would have made a huge impact as Bar president, particularly in improving the Bar's credibility with its black members. "For the past five years, the Bar has been really reaching out to minority lawyers, but minority lawyers have not been responding," Smith says. Smith, a sharp-tongued advocate for racial equality who helped lead a two-year tourism boycott of Miami-Dade County to protest inequality in the tourism industry, says Latimer also had the ear of the state's big law firms in a way that could have been very effective in pressing for more opportunities. "It took me a long time to realize," Smith says, "you really need a person on the inside for the person outside to be effective."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
December 12, 2002

Justice differs for mothers in sons' deaths

Author: Emily J. Minor

Lynn Whitfield has been making her living lately as a defense attorney - a black, female defense attorney - which means she sees the world from a different perch. Like that time in court not so long ago. The judge went on and on about how well-spoken she is. "He kept saying, 'Oh, you're so articulate,'" says **Whitfield**, who most recently represented accused lookout Otto Wright in the Nicholas Megrath murder case. "Whites just don't have those experiences. They don't understand why blacks tend to think that everything has to do with race. If you live through it all the time, after a while, you get the point."

The point? Two women have been in the news recently - mothers who were in court because their actions endangered their children. Neither mother beat her child. Or drove the car drunk. Indeed, by all accounts, each mother loved her son deeply. In the case of Dora Chong, she left her sleeping toddler and went shopping. In the case of Marguerite Saccone, she left her toddler son with a boyfriend she knew was abusive. Chong's son drowned in the pool while she was gone. Saccone's son was beaten to death while she was gone. The Asian woman's staying home. The black woman's going to prison. More than race at play

I called **Whitfield** this week because something was bothering me. Mainly, did the Asian woman get off because her skin is white? Is Saccone going to prison for three years because she's black? In **Whitfield's** mind: Yes, and no. In **Whitfield's** mind: It has more to do with money and influence than race alone. After her son's brutal murder, Saccone gave up her job as a hospice aide and moved in with her mother in a small apartment along 45th Street in Riviera Beach. The places she haunted before her son's death were Jamaican nightclubs along the railroad tracks in a section of the city I wouldn't party in at night. For that matter, **Whitfield** probably wouldn't either.

Chong, on the other hand, lives in a big home along Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach. Her front yard looks out at the water. Her neighbors are white. The baby's father, Chong's married former lover, is a prominent Palm Beach businessman. In court, Chong's supporters wore expensive suits and nice jewelry. During Saccone's trial, the supporters wore long skirts, kept their hair in braids and skipped lunch to save money. Dora Chong's sentencing hearing wasn't even on the docket, suggesting someone wanted it hush-hush. But we found out about it, and the Chong story appeared across the top of the front page in The Post the next day. Saccone's sentencing was on the docket, and her story was printed in the Local section. Both mothers left their children

Whitfield said all these incongruities occurred to her before I called - of course. "One of the things that's interesting is that both of them actually did the same thing," says **Whitfield**. "They left their children. If you're going to give one probation, why wouldn't you give the other probation?" It's the kind of question **Lynn Whitfield** has asked herself all her life.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Florida Bar News
August 15, 2002

Dade Bar elects Pennekamp

Tom Pennekamp, Jr., was recently installed as the president of the more than 4,000 member Dade County Bar Association. “The Dade County Bar has much to celebrate and much more to be proud of as we enter our 84th year as the leading voluntary local bar association in Florida and I am honored to serve this tremendous organization,” Pennekamp said. Pennekamp is a member of the ABA, the Cuban American Bar Association, the Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the Broward County Trial Lawyers Association, and he is a volunteer special assistant state attorney in Dade County. Pennekamp lives in Coral Gables and has been a resident for the past 38 years. He received his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth University and graduated with honors from the University of Florida Levin College of Law in 1990. The association also recently swore in John H. (Jack) Hickey as its president-elect. Hickey is a Board Certified Civil Trial Lawyer and has practiced in Miami for over 22 years.

GREGORY COLEMAN was recently installed as the 80th president of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. Coleman joined the association in 1990, and is also currently a member of the Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, The Florida Bar Standing Committee on Professionalism, The Florida Bar Council of Sections, Student Education and Admissions to the Bar, and Speakers Bureau committees. He previously served as president of The Florida Bar’s Young Lawyers Division. Lisa Small will serve as president-elect. Additional Board members serving two-year terms are: Ted Leopold, **Lynn Whitfield**, and JoAnn Kotzen. Board members serving a one-year term are: Manny Farach, Stanley Klett, Darryl Kogan, Scott Murray, Meenu Sasser, and Scott Zappolo. Amy Smith will serve as immediate past president. Seated from the left are Sasser, Small, Justice Major Harding, JoAnn Kotzen, and **Lynn Whitfield**. Standing from the left are Klett, Kogan, Zappolo, Smith, Coleman, Murray, and Farach.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bar News

July 15, 2001

Smith to lead Palm Beach Bar.

The Palm Beach County Bar recently installed Amy Smith as its new president. Smith, a resident partner in the West Palm Beach office of Walton Lantaff Schroeder and Carson, is a graduate of Nova University School of Law. Other new officers include Greg Coleman, president-elect, and board members Manny Farach, Stanley Klett, Lisa Small, Jo Ann Kotzeno, Yvette Trelles, and **Lynn Whitfield**. The Palm Beach County Bar Association currently has 2,460 members. For more information about the PBCBA log onto www.palmbeachbar.org.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
February 2, 2001

Court: Parents can sue over burial of son
Author: S.V. Date

The parents who were not notified that their 23-year-old son had died in West Palm Beach and had been buried by city and county officials will have an opportunity to sue after all, thanks to a Florida Supreme Court ruling Thursday. "I'm ecstatic," said **V. Lynn Whitfield**, the West Palm Beach lawyer for John and Betty Crocker. "They've given us another shot." Jay Crocker was found dead without any identification in a city alley in December 1995. A few days later, investigating officers from West Palm Beach police found his personal belongings and tracked down his parents in Miami Shores but made little attempt to contact them beyond an initial call to the Miami Shores police.

The body was later released to Palm Beach County for burial in a pauper's grave - even as the still-unaware Crockers started a search for their missing son, which included filing a missing person's report with police in West Palm Beach. The couple learned of their son's death six months later, at which time they had him exhumed for burial in Miami and began legal proceedings against the city and Palm Beach County. The lawsuit was thrown out by a trial judge, a decision upheld by an appeals court. But the state's highest court decided that both lower courts had erroneously applied an earlier case involving the removal of eye tissue for organ donation. "Florida case law has long recognized the right to possess a loved one's remains for purposes of burial or other appropriate disposition," wrote Justice Barbara Pariente.

She and five of her colleagues wrote they did not know whether the Crockers, having conceded that they haven't been able to show malice on the part of the police, can successfully pursue a claim that their civil rights were violated. The seventh justice, Chief Justice Charles Wells, wrote in a separate opinion that he believed the Crockers would not be able to win a civil-rights claim. **Whitfield**, though, said she was undeterred by the court's language. In any event, the case must first return to the 4th District Court of Appeal in West Palm Beach and then back to the trial level before it can be decided.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

February 1, 2001

Supreme Court of Florida.

John CROCKER, et al., Petitioners, v. Richard PLEASANT, etc., et al., Respondents.

No. SC95148.

Decided: February 01, 2001

V. Lynn Whitfield of **Whitfield & Mosley**, West Palm Beach, Florida; and Dea Abramschmitt, West Palm Beach, FL, for Petitioners. Patrick N. Brown, City Attorney, Claudia M. McKenna, Deputy City Attorney, and Mayra I. Rivera-Delgado, Assistant City Attorney, and Leonard Berger, Assistant County Attorney, West Palm Beach, FL, for Respondents. Carl E. Brody, Jr., Assistant County Attorney, Clearwater, FL, for The Florida Association of County Attorneys, Amicus Curiae.

We have for review a decision of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, which certified the following question certified to be of great public importance:

DOES [STATE V.] POWELL [497 So.2d 1188 (Fla.1986)] PRECLUDE ALL SECTION 1983 CLAIMS GROUNDED ON INTERFERENCE WITH AN INTEREST IN A DEAD BODY?

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:
<https://caselaw.findlaw.com/fl-supreme-court/1489244.html>

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Stuart News
March 28, 2000

Ex- Deputy's sex case dropped

Randy Toombs had been accused of asking for sex from a 14-year-old.

Author: Suzanne Latshaw

STUART - The state attorney's office dropped all charges against an ex-Martin County deputy who was accused of asking a 14-year-old girl to perform oral sex on him on the night of Sept. 5, 1998. Randy Toombs, 43, of Fort Pierce, who was scheduled to have a hearing Monday morning, will not have to face Judge Stewart Hershey on charges of solicitation to commit a lewd act. "He's ecstatic, not that this is something we didn't expect," said **Lynn Whitfield**, Toomb's attorney. "This is over for him now. He has no charges pending." She said Assistant State Attorney Lev Evans called her late Friday and told her she and her client would not have to show up for Monday's hearing. He did not explain why the charges were dropped, but another prosecutor said it was because the alleged victim wouldn't be available to testify.

"The victim in the case is 15 years old and she ran away from home a few months before the trial was to begin," said Assistant State Attorney Ryan Butler, who also worked on the case. "The case simply could not proceed without her." Prosecutors alleged that in 1998, Toombs, in uniform, approached the girl and a 22-year-old man in a car parked at a beach access along Hutchinson Island. According to police reports in 1998, Toombs ordered the man to walk down a boardwalk out of sight from the car. Then he allegedly asked the girl to perform oral sex on him or he would tell her mother that she was with the man. When she refused, he asked her to show her breasts, which she did, the report stated. Toombs then reportedly said, "Damn, look at you!" When she put her shirt back down, Toombs told her "I didn't tell you to put it down," the report stated.

The state also dropped charges of battery against Toombs stemming from a separate incident on Jan. 25, 1998, when he allegedly grabbed another woman and pulled her shirt aside to look at her breasts, according to the state attorney's office. The battery charge was "inextricably intertwined" with the solicitation charge, Butler said. The victim's mother told The Stuart News/Port St. Lucie News at an earlier hearing that her daughter was scared to testify against the 6-foot-1-inch, 280-pound ex-deputy. "She's scared to death. She's telling the truth," her mother said in the Martin County Court house three weeks ago. "Little kids just do what they're told." The Martin County Sheriff's Office fired Toombs in September 1998 after an investigation accused him of lying about the incident and failing to follow procedures, as he did not check the license plate or the names of the alleged victim or the man she was with.

He was fired by the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office in 1994 after he was arrested on charges of shoving his girlfriend's friend and hitting his wife, according to his personnel report. "Deputy Toombs does good work, knows the job well and gets along well with fellow workers, supervisors and the general public," Sgt. Harvey Sharpe wrote in Toombs' 1993 evaluation. "Deputy Toombs' weakness seems to be in his personal life." In St. Lucie County, he worked as a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

school resource officer for several years before receiving a written reprimand in 1993 after two girls at Port St. Lucie High School said Toombs asked them to "pop" their bras to show whether any marijuana cigarettes fell out. He is still certified to practice law enforcement in Florida, according to the state Department of Law Enforcement.

Whitfield said she and Toombs will discuss his future employment options later this week. Toombs must be employed in the law enforcement field by Sept. 14, 2002 to be able to stay certified. A discipline case was opened against him after he was fired from St. Lucie County, but not after he was fired from Martin County, said Danny Quick, a training and research manager for the FDLE. There was no record in his Martin County personnel file that the sheriff's office reported the 1998 incident to the state, even though an internal investigation concluded the girl's allegations to be "sustained." The sheriff's office is required by law to report any action that would concern his moral character standards, Quick said. Butler said the state could refile the charges when the girl returns home. Ray Martinez and Gabriel Margasak of the News staff contributed to this report.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

March 3, 1999

CROCKER v. PLEASANT

No. 98-0633.

727 So.2d 1087 (1999)

John CROCKER and Betty Crocker, Appellants, v. Richard PLEASANT, individually, City of West Palm Beach, a municipal corporation, and Palm Beach County, a subdivision of the State of Florida, Appellees.

District Court of Appeal of Florida, Fourth District.

March 3, 1999.

Attorney(s) appearing for the Case

V. Lynn Whitfield of Whitfield & Mosley, West Palm Beach, for appellant.

Leonard Berger, West Palm Beach, for Appellee-Palm Beach County.

Patrick N. Brown, City Attorney, and Mayra I. Rivera-Delgado, Assistant City Attorney, West Palm Beach, for Appellee-City of West Palm Beach.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:

<https://www.leagle.com/decision/19991814727so2d108711648>

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 26, 1998

Dedication gets attorney to top post among peers

Author: Scott Gold

Lynn Whitfield is a minority in a minority. The West Palm Beach defense attorney is one about 15,000 female attorneys in Florida _ compared to the state's 42,000 male attorneys. And she is one of an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 black attorneys in Florida _ a number that pales in comparison to the percentage of the population that blacks encompass. "I am a product of the affirmative action movement in this country," **Whitfield**, 43, said in her office high above Clematis Street last week. "I am cognitively aware of that. It got me in the door. But it didn't keep me there."

What kept her there was hard work _ routinely as much as 75 hours a week. It has paid off with a successful private law practice, a series of high-profile clients and an identity that rests far more on legal skills than race or gender. And now it has paid off with her election as president of the Palm Beach County Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She will take over in November as the association's first black president. Most of the public hasn't heard of the association, but its monthly gatherings, as well as **Whitfield's** imminent presidency, will likely produce some tangible results with a potential impact on thousands of county residents.

For example, Palm Beach County Circuit Court Judge Edward A. Garrison recently suggested handing out first-degree murder cases to attorneys who submitted the lowest bids. He hoped it would cut down on litigation costs paid by the county _ but defense attorneys saw the plan as a drastic affront to their clients' rights to a fair trial. No one submitted a bid, and Garrison eventually abandoned the idea, partly, **Whitfield** said, because of the criminal defense association's lobbying. Also, court officials are now considering dedicating a single judge to hear domestic violence cases. Though it is part of a proposal to help slow family violence, many defense attorneys _ joined by several judges _ fear it could hamper defendants' rights. "It's very dangerous," **Whitfield** said.

Whitfield, a Cleveland native and a 1980 law school graduate from the University of Miami, is well aware that the public is not always enamored with her choice of career. With varying degrees of success, she has represented her share of questionable characters during the years. She has represented Ronald Knight, who is awaiting trial in the second killing of a gay man he allegedly lured from a bar near West Palm Beach. There was Maceo Wright, a West Palm Beach man convicted in 1996 of killing ex-girlfriend Tasha Richard. There was Bryant Patrick, one of four men accused in the kidnapping, robbery and rape of a West Palm Beach student, who was left naked and stranded on a crime-ridden street.

Most recently, there was murder accomplice Anthony Thompson _ the lookout man in a botched robbery that led to the May 1996 slaying of Delray Beach convenience store owner Mohammad Rashed Karim _ who was sentenced to life in prison without parole. But she said she believes in

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

an idea instilled by a former boss _ Janet Reno, now the U.S. attorney general. When **Whitfield** started out of school as a prosecutor in Miami-Dade County, Reno _ then the county's state attorney _ told **Whitfield** that she firmly believed it better that 10 guilty people go free than one innocent person be wrongly convicted. "That's what keeps me doing it," **Whitfield** said. "When you have a client who is wrongfully charged, and when you get a not guilty in a case like that, it's worth everything else."

Whitfield acknowledges getting close to some of her clients _ and frustrated when she sees them re-arrested. Active in church and her community, **Whitfield** speaks in schools and mentors children. She has assisted a prison ministry and has gone into jails to act as a liaison between inmates and family members who have been left behind in dire need. Most of her community work takes place in inner-city West Palm Beach. She has been known to pull her car over to warn former clients that they should be home rather than hanging out with the wrong crowd. "People think that defense lawyers don't care about the revolving door," **Whitfield** said. "We do."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
December 19, 1996

Boynton Oks settlement of traffic-stop lawsuit

Author: Chuck McGinness

City commissioners have agreed to pay \$10,000 to settle a lawsuit by a Coral Springs man who claimed he was wrongly arrested and beaten by police during a traffic stop. Daniel Maxime, 33, claimed five officers pulled him out of his car, threw him to the ground and beat him with their batons. The incident occurred in June 1991, two months after he came to Florida from Haiti. He received injuries to his face, knee and back. He now has a job as a lawn maintenance worker, his attorney, **V. Lynn Whitfield**, said Wednesday.

A police report said officers pulled Maxime over after he stopped in the middle of Northeast 11th Avenue, blocking traffic, then ran a red light. Officers twice ordered Maxime to put his hands outside the car window, but he did not comply - which Maxime contended was because he did not understand English. When Maxime rolled up his window and reached for something under the seat, officers tried to "escort him" out of the car, the report said. A police spokesman at the time said officers used proper procedure. Commissioners approved the settlement Tuesday night. The city spent about \$3,500 to defend the case. Legal costs could have topped \$30,000 if it had gone to trial, said Wilfred Hawkins, assistant to the city manager.

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
October 25, 1995

Lawyer decrying O.J. ‘bias’ should reread her law books

Author: William R. Osterman

The Palm Beach Post recently published an article, “Coverage of Simpson trial was biased from the start,” by **V. Lynn Whitfield**, decrying the paper's coverage of the O.J. Simpson verdict. She accuses the editors of bias in their coverage of the Simpson trial and verdict. She feels that the editors should have printed the reactions of local black attorneys and further alleges that perhaps the editors were afraid of what they would say. When I think about lawyers in the criminal justice system, I automatically think of two types: defenders and prosecutors. Why would the color, gender, nationality, religion or sexual orientation of the lawyers be important in a society that claims a longing desire to be an inclusive society? Ms. **Whitfield** entifies herself as a black attorney. Would it be in bad form if I called her firm and asked to speak to a white, Hispanic, Jewish or Asian attorney? I would think it racist to do so. Ms. **Whitfield** states that for 200 years, this country has maintained a criminal justice system grounded in the Constitution. Ms. **Whitfield** must have missed a few classes in law school. U.S. criminal law is based on English common law. She states that the Constitution did not apply to blacks for 100 years. Actually, it was 81 years, but women had to wait 131 years for the constitutional amendment giving them the right to vote, and they are still waiting for the equal rights amendment.

Ms. **Whitfield** also makes remarks about the ability of an indigent defendant to get a fair trial. She is right on the money here, but let's leave race out of the debate. The powerless and poor are at a definite disadvantage and always have been. This is also true in the cases of police brutality. It is not a race thing. It is a class issue. Had Rodney King been driving a Mercedes and wearing an Armani suit, I doubt we would recognize his name today. Ms. **Whitfield** claims that Mr. Simpson was not given special treatment. But, can you imagine Mr. Doe, fugitive from justice, riding on the freeway with a gun, wanted for murder, being allowed to set the pace for a parade of policemen for hours? I am afraid Mr. Doe would have had so much lead in him that it would have taken a wrecker to lift him from the car.

This article is a prime example of the divisive attitudes that are alive and moving in areas of our society today, and it is unfair and unjust to all races of people. Ms. **Whitfield** must realize that O.J. was the celebrity in this case, and the race of the victims is really not relevant. They were humans, and they were murdered. Ms. **Whitfield**, please believe me when I tell you that the majority of the people of this country would have been overjoyed if the trial had had a Perry Mason ending with someone identifying the real killer. You must realize that O.J. was a superstar to almost everybody, and we have all been traumatized by seeing one of our superstars fall from the sky. Perhaps it is time to go to the library and restudy the works of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. Has the movement that Dr. King led changed from a straight line of progress heading to the fulfillment of dreams into an unending circle that goes nowhere? William R. Osterman is a resident of Okeechobee, where he owns a car dealership. He wrote this article for The Palm Beach Post.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald

July 14, 1995

South Florida Psychiatric Society installs new officers

Author: Herald Staff

The South Florida Psychiatric Society, a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association, recently installed its new officers. They are: Dr. Richard L. Rubin, president; Dr. Ana E. Campo-Bowen, president-elect; Dr. Angel E. Garrido and Dr. Richard M. Steinbook, vice presidents; Dr. Ramona Abed, secretary; and Dr. Fernando Pino, treasurer.

National Bar's state officers announced

The Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association, an organization of black legal professionals, recently announced its newly elected officers. They are: Monique M. Edwards of Orlando, president; **V. Lynn Whitfield** of West Palm Beach, president-elect; Allison K. Bethel of Hollywood, vice president; Lansing C. Scriven of Tampa, secretary; Cynthia A. Everett of Miami, treasurer; Daryl E. Trawick of Miami, loan officer; and Michael A. Robinson of Fort Lauderdale, student liaison.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post
December 20, 1993

Man seeks damages, says officers beat him in '91

Author: Jounice L. Nealy

Daniel Maxime says he has shooting pains in his face. Looking at his left eye, it almost seems as if he is being hypnotized. The top eyelid hangs lower over the left eye than the one on the right. And Maxime said he still needs treatment for knee and back injuries he received almost 2 1/2 years ago. Maxime, 30, claims that five Boynton Beach police officers snatched him out of his car, threw him to the ground and beat him in June 1991, two months after he left Haiti. And Maxime intends to sue the city and the officers he claims violated his civil rights while making a traffic stop. **V. Lynn Whitfield**, his attorney, filed a notice in October. Last month, she filed against each officer. "It's not unusual that we are sued in these types of situations," spokesman Lt. William Galbraith II said.

Officers Richard Root, James Prestinari and Scott Vash, who is no longer with the department, are named in the suit. Lt. Patrick Smith and Sgt. Frank Ranzie also are named. The officers were advised by the department not to comment. Maxime said the officers beat him with their batons and kicked his head "like a soccer ball." "They grabbed me and walked on my body," Maxime said through an interpreter. Holding photographs of Maxime's injuries, **Whitfield** said he had stitches on his elbow and knee, in his mouth, around his eye and nose. "I think sometimes they (officers) just don't take the time to truly assess the situation," **Whitfield** said. "At best they say this was a traffic stop . . . and it ended up with five officers on the scene with guns drawn."

Maxime was stopped June 17, 1991, in the 100 block of Northeast 11th Avenue after police said he stopped in the middle of the road, blocking traffic, and then ran a red light. When he came to a stop, Maxime started to get out of the car, but police told him to get back in and he did, according to police reports. Officers ordered Maxime twice to put his hands outside the window. They said he did not comply. Maxime said he told the officers that he was Haitian and did not understand English, but he said they did not listen. Backup units soon arrived and shined a light that penetrated the tinted windows, police said, and they saw three occupants making "furtive" movements.

They were ordered out of the car, but none of the occupants would comply, Root wrote in his report. "We made the decision to approach the vehicle and remove all occupants. All officers had their weapons drawn due to the occupants' furtive movements," he wrote. Officers said Maxime rolled up his window when officers again ordered him out of the car and reached for something under his seat. "At this time, I opened the door and attempted to escort the driver, Maxime, from the vehicle," Root wrote. He also said Maxime began throwing punches, and officers "were only able to escort him to the ground." Galbraith said the officers followed proper procedure. Maxime was subdued and officers said he received "minor injuries to the left side of his face."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
April 26, 1993

More black lawyers going it alone Many shed security of large firms

Author: Lois Frimet Perdue

Gwendolyn Key says she had no fears about leaving the safety of a large law firm to go out on her own and establish a law practice -- even in the competitive Palm Beach County market. Key, the president of S. Malcolm Cunningham Sr. Bar Association -- the 75- member black bar association in Palm Beach County -- said at least half a dozen of her colleagues have opened their own small or solo practices within the past year or so. Key and the other African-American lawyers who have abandoned the security of a paycheck from an established law firm or the public sector to start their own businesses said it is working out well. In fact, Key said business is going exceptionally well for her. "Society doesn't expect the African-American community to be able to support its own professionals," said Key, a Howard University Law School graduate. "But, I am earning more now than I could ever make working with a large law firm."

Black lawyers, like many who have left large law firms or the public sector to establish their own firms, have found that a successful solo practice requires building a variety of connections with the business and governmental communities, balancing business needs with community service, and building referrals through good work. Key and her partner, LeRonnie Mason, opened their practice about eight months ago in West Palm Beach, handling civil, criminal and litigation matters. New business comes from established contacts in the community and referrals from other attorneys. Key was an assistant state attorney for four years in Palm Beach County and an associate for two years at Gunster Yoakley in West Palm Beach.

Linda Mitchell is a name partner in the year-old practice of Hanna Mitchell & Associates in Lake Park. She and her partner, Harlington L. Hanna, have a general law practice and handle commercial, labor, entertainment and sports law matters, as well. Before opening her practice, the Tulane Law School graduate worked for two years at mid-sized Coogler, Adams, Watson & Merkel, P.A. in West Palm Beach. Mitchell said most young lawyers want to join a large law firm, reap the benefits of a good work product and then maneuver into the partnership track. But, she said, the opposite seems to be happening. "The trend seems to be that there are less attorneys being made partner and that large firms don't offer security any longer," Mitchell said.

By opening her own practice, Mitchell is creating her own security. To attract business, Mitchell believes in practicing the age-old lawyers' credo of doing good work to bring in clients. "If you have established a reputation and do quality work, clients will return and also refer others," she said. So far, it seems to be working. Mitchell said there are plans to expand the firm into the Belle Glade area, "where more attorneys are needed." Lawyer **V. Lynn Whitfield** has been in her solo practice for nine months in West Palm Beach. Her practice includes criminal and civil litigation, along with some personal injury work. With a background in government work for 12 years, eight in Palm Beach County, she says she is generating consistent business referrals. By

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

continuing to work for the public sector as she establishes her new practice, **Whitfield** is able to develop and maintain her practice.

The University of Miami Law School graduate is, for example, part of a conflict team with the Palm Beach County court system on a yearly contract. When the Public Defender's Office has a conflict in a case, **Whitfield** can receive the matter -- with the county paying the fees for the work. "It's a good source of income," **Whitfield** said. **Whitfield** also works part-time for West Palm Beach doing legal work at half the original salary she received when she worked there full-time as deputy city attorney. She also does legal work for Riviera Beach's civil service board. **Whitfield** has learned about negotiating fees in the few months she has been in practice. "Some prospective clients will try to negotiate fees with you. Young lawyers may tend to fall for lowering their fees, but if you sell yourself short, you may end up not getting the case at all."

Michael D. Brown was a lawyer on the partnership track. He had been with the Department of Justice's Executive Office of the U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., for about two years after graduating from Howard Law School. But he wanted to return to his hometown of West Palm Beach. Five years ago, he went to work at one of West Palm Beach's oldest law firms -- Jones, Foster, Johnston & Stubbs, Pa. Brown said he was the first black hired and, to date, the only one. But he gave it all up six months ago to open a solo practice in West Palm Beach. Brown said that practicing at the firm was a "wonderful experience" and an educational one. It particularly taught him about fitting in -- a vital skill now in managing and marketing his own practice.

"Working at a law firm or a large corporation is not any different," said Brown, who was on the law firm's recruitment committee for two years. "Both organizations are looking for a certain type of individual -- one who won't upset the hierarchy and is flexible." Brown seems to have learned his lessons well. He is involved in numerous community organizations and maintains his contacts at Jones, Foster. Brown is also involved in the black community, from which he receives referrals from relatives and friends. Brown thinks that all people need to interact more with different groups, particularly if they want to develop their careers. "It's a two-way street," he said. "Black attorneys. Hispanic attorneys. They need to get involved in groups other than in their own communities -- like the Rotary or Kiwanis."

For his efforts, Brown said he has generated a consistent flow of business and a steady cash flow. Mitchell is working hard to establish a referral base for practice -- a practice she said includes all colors and nationalities of clients. In addition to the referrals Mitchell receives from other attorneys and clients, she also receives referrals from Louisiana, where she also holds a license to practice law. Mitchell said a law firm, especially a new one, has to balance goodwill with good business practice. "If our clients are in need of services and don't have lump sums for fees, we will make financial arrangements for them," Mitchell said.

Brown, too, said that while he has office expenses to meet, he also provides additional services particularly to those in the black community in need of legal representation. "I provide discounts and other favors in certain situations at affordable rates," he said. Wilbur Chaney opened his solo practice in Delray Beach a few years ago after moving from Orlando, where he had been in

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V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

private practice for six years and was an assistant U.S. attorney. Chaney says it was difficult starting over with a new practice. He is handling criminal and civil litigation, but sees heavy competition from other lawyers in another area in which he practices: personal injury work. Chaney said he is considering advertising to generate more business.

Chaney does not depend only on Palm Beach County to generate business; he travels to do business with clients in Lee, Orange, Dade and Broward counties. To generate additional revenue, he has a contract with the Resolution Trust Corp. on a per project basis. Chaney also volunteers his time as a magistrate, hearing civil traffic cases once a month. From this, he says he also receives occasional referrals. Chaney expressed surprise that some blacks were leaving the haven of large law firms to go out on their own. "This is not an easy time to open a law practice because of the economy," he said.

Key, though, summed up her reasoning for forging ahead with her plans to run her own practice. "As an African-American, if you have survived passing the Florida Bar and working in a large law firm, you're not afraid to go out on your own."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

November 18, 1992

Fazzolari v. City of West Palm Beach, 608 So. 2d 927 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1992)
District Court of Appeal of Florida
Filed: November 18th, 1992

Precedential Status: Precedential

Citations: 608 So. 2d 927

Docket Number: 90-3425

Judges: Dimitrouleas

608 So. 2d 927 (1992)
Frank FAZZOLARI, Appellant,
v.
The CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH, Appellee.
No. 90-3425.
District Court of Appeal of Florida, Fourth District.

November 18, 1992.

Rehearing Denied December 29, 1992.

*928 Schuler, Wilkerson & Halvorson, P.A., and Philip M. Burlington of Edna L. Caruso, P.A.,
West Palm Beach, for appellant.

Kelley B. Gelb of Krupnick, Campbell, Malone and Roselli, P.A., Fort Lauderdale, Amicus
Curiae, for Florida Academy of Trial Lawyers.

V. Lynn Whitfield, Asst. City Atty., and John J. Bulfin of Wiederhold, Moses, Bulfin & Rubin,
P.A., West Palm Beach, for appellee.

DIMITROULEAS, WILLIAM P., Associate Judge.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:

<https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/1843251/fazzolari-v-city-of-west-palm-beach/>

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
June 17, 1992

West Palm deputy city attorney quits

Deputy City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield** announced her resignation recently. She plans to enter private practice. **Whitfield's** resignation will take effect July 31 and will follow the July 3 departure of City Attorney Carl Coffin. It leaves the city with three attorneys. Coffin's replacement is to be named June 26. **Whitfield**, who earned \$62,545, filled in for Coffin until April, when she gave up the temporary post after clashing with Mayor Nancy Graham. Graham questioned **Whitfield's** friendship with a principal in a company that received an \$18 million contract to build a police station.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
April 17, 1992

**West Palm counsel steps down
Lawyer dropped from station suit**

Author: Joel Engelhardt

Acting City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield** resigned her post Monday after being relieved of legal responsibility for construction of a new city police station. Mayor Nancy Graham said she hired outside counsel to oversee litigation over the police station contract because **Whitfield** is a close friend of Ann McNeill, a partner in the joint venture that won the \$18.6 million job. McNeill is chief executive officer of MCO Construction of Miami, which is a 25 percent partner in the project with Federal Construction of St. Petersburg. **Whitfield**, who was promoted to deputy city attorney in October, said Thursday that she would have removed herself from the case at any point that she felt her friendship with McNeill impaired her decision-making ability. In resigning the post, **Whitfield** gives up a \$3,141 pay raise. She returns to the position of deputy city attorney at an annual salary of \$62,545.

Graham said she is still committed to reducing city payments to outside counsel. But she said she had no other choice because without **Whitfield**, the city's legal staff could not handle the case. **Whitfield**'s decision leaves the City Attorney's Office without a director. The job will rotate among four of the office's five lawyers. Former City Attorney Carl Coffin will not be part of the rotation. Coffin resigned under pressure on Feb. 11 after 13 years as city attorney. He works in an undefined capacity roughly equivalent to an assistant city attorney. He retains his \$81,993 salary. Graham sought Coffin's resignation, linking it to the city's mishandling of instructions to bidders on the police station contract.

The City Commission awarded the contract Feb. 3 to Federal/MCO, the sixth- highest bidder, based on its level of minority business involvement. Centex Rooney Construction, the low bidder at \$17.77 million, sued the city over the award. Until last week, **Whitfield** oversaw the city's legal defense. On April 10, Graham hired the law firm Steel Hector & Davis to handle the litigation. The firm also will review contracts with subcontractors and monitor construction, reporting to the mayor and city manager. Graham is considering six candidates for the city attorney job. She plans to narrow the list to three on May 1 and select someone by May 15, said her assistant, Susan Olson.

None of the candidates is from Palm Beach County, Graham said. Some were among candidates identified by an executive search firm for a recent opening for county attorney. The county paid the firm about \$11,000. The county selected Tampa lawyer Joe Mount on April 2. The other two finalists were assistant Palm Beach County attorneys. They will not be considered, Graham said. While the city's five attorneys will continue dividing the office work, no attorney is yet assigned to counsel the City Commission at its Monday meeting, Graham said. The duty will rotate among **Whitfield** and the three assistant city attorneys: Saul Smolar, Elizabeth McBride and Amy Diem.

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V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

October 10, 1991

Department of Transp. v. Konney

Annotate this Case
587 So. 2d 1292 (1991)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, Petitioner, v. Loretta KONNEY, etc., et al.,
Respondents. PALM BEACH COUNTY, Petitioner, v. Loretta KONNEY, etc., et al.,
Respondents.

Nos. 75180, 75241.
Supreme Court of Florida.

October 10, 1991.

Michael B. Davis, of Davis Hoy Carroll & Isaacs, P.A., West Palm Beach, for petitioner, State of
Florida Dept. of Transp.

Christopher D. Mauriello, Asst. County Atty., West Palm Beach, for petitioner, Palm Beach
County.

Richard L. Martens and Fletcher N. Baldwin, III of Boose Casey Ciklin Lubitz Martens McBane
& O'Connell, West Palm Beach, for respondents.

Robert A. Butterworth, Atty. Gen. and Franz Eric Dorn, Deputy Asst. Atty. Gen., Tallahassee,
amicus curiae for The Office of Atty. Gen.

Susan H. Churuti, County Atty., Clearwater, amicus curiae for Pinellas County.

John J. Copelan, Jr., County Atty., Alexander Cocalis, Chief Trial Counsel and Stephanie W.
Werner, Asst. County Atty., Fort Lauderdale, amicus curiae for Broward County.

Robert R. Warchola, Asst. County Atty., Tampa, amicus curiae for Hillsborough County.

*1293 Charlene V. Edwards, Asst. City Atty., Tampa, amicus curiae for City of Tampa.

V. Lynn Whitfield, West Palm Beach, amicus curiae for City of West Palm Beach.

Phillip C. Gildan of Nason, Gildan, Yeager, Gerson & White, P.A., West Palm Beach, amicus
curiae for The Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers.

OVERTON, Justice.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:

<https://law.justia.com/cases/florida/supreme-court/1991/75180-0.html>

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

V. Lynn Whitfield

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
December 7, 1990

West Palm may strengthen loitering law to fight drug sales

Author: Angela Bradbery

City officials are considering adopting a law identical to a controversial Tampa measure that allows police to arrest people for loitering if they appear to be selling or using drugs. The ordinance, to be considered Monday by the West Palm Beach City Commission, would beef up the city's present loitering law and allow police to arrest anyone who loiters "in a manner . . . manifesting the purpose of illegally using, possessing, transferring or selling" drugs. The law says police should consider someone a suspect if the person is a known drug dealer and if the person repeatedly beckons to and stops passers-by as if to offer them drugs.

The American Civil Liberties Union questioned the law in Tampa. "The mere fact of standing on a street corner and approaching a vehicle does not mean you are manifesting the intent to deliver drugs," said Robyn Blunner, executive director of the ACLU of Florida. "You don't have to justify your presence in America." City officials say the law is not an excuse for police to harass people but a tool to clear dealers from the streets. Tampa adopted the ordinance in April 1989 because residents in drug-infested neighborhoods "were screaming and yelling, 'Why can't you get these people off the street corners?'" Tampa police spokesman Steve Cole said. Now, confidence in the police has been restored in some drug-ridden communities, he said.

The law has been unsuccessfully challenged in Tampa several times and is now being considered by an appellate court, Tampa's Assistant City Attorney Ty Brown said. Opponents argue that the law invites arbitrary enforcement and that it gives police officers too much discretion in deciding who might be dealing drugs, Brown said. Courts upheld the law because it detailed specific circumstances that would give police cause to question someone, Brown said. West Palm Beach Assistant City Attorney **Lynn Whitfield** said the law guards against violating people's rights because officers are required to give suspects a chance to explain themselves. West Palm Beach now has a similar law prohibiting loitering for the purposes of prostitution, she said. Violating the law would constitute a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and a jail term of up to 60 days.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
December 11, 1987

Liability Claim Denied

Liability claim denied

West Palm Beach city employees were not at fault in a 1985 motorcycle accident that led to the amputation of Curtis Gilligan's left leg, a Palm Beach County jury ruled on Thursday.

In the pre-dawn hours of April 26, 1985, Gilligan lost control of his motorcycle near the intersection of Okeechobee and Palm Beach Lakes boulevards after he skidded on water run-off from a nearby sprinkler.

As he was getting his motorcycle started, Gilligan — who was uninjured at that moment — was struck by a car and dragged 78 feet through the intersection. Months later, his left leg had to be amputated.

Gilligan's attorney argued that the city was negligent for allowing water sprinklers in the median strip to coat the road with water and because they had no records of maintenance on the sprinklers.

Gilligan had asked for compensation of nearly \$822,000 from the city.

Lynn Whitfield, assistant city attorney for West Palm Beach, argued the city was not responsible for the accident because Gilligan was not injured until after the driver of the car hit him. The jury agreed.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
October 27, 1987

Legal meeting recalls fight for civil rights

Author: Mark Kriegel

Members of two county lawyers' groups -- one black, the other Jewish -- met Monday evening in the hope of re-establishing ties that proved vital to the civil rights movement two decades ago. "There was too much headway made in the late '60s and early '70s for us to let (racism) creep back into our society," said **Lynn Whitfield**, assistant city attorney for West Palm Beach and president of the F. Malcolm Cunningham Sr. Bar Association, an organization of black lawyers in Palm Beach County. Monday's dinner meeting at the Airport Hilton in West Palm Beach, attended by about 150 local lawyers and judges, could be the first in a series of meetings sponsored by the Cunningham group and the B'nai B'rith's Norman J. Kapner Legal Unit, said Arlyne Warshall, the Kapner board member who organized the meeting.

Warshall, a civil rights lawyer, said she saw the need for such a meeting after listening to her own clients. "I've witnessed anti-Semitism and racism on the part of my own clients," she said. The meeting was not organized "to address any particular pressing problem," she said. One of the future issues the two groups might address is membership policies of the Kapner Unit itself. As a part of the B'nai B'rith, it is open only to Jews. Hugh Glickstein, the Kapner unit's president and a judge on the Fourth District Court of Appeal, tried to challenge the national policy and lost. In an interview before the meeting, Pat Clark, executive director of Klanwatch and the meeting's keynote speaker, gave an example of how the two lawyers' groups could work together.

B'nai B'rith lawyers, she said, came up with a key piece of evidence needed to win a \$7 million settlement from the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama last February. The Southern Poverty Law Center filed suit against the Klan on behalf of Beulah Mae Donald, whose son, Michael, was lynched in 1981. Attorneys for Donald had to prove that Klan policy approved of lynching and murder. Lawyers from the B'nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation League uncovered a cartoon from a Klan periodical that depicted a black with his head in a noose. Clark said the effort by the law center and the Anti-Defamation League was "an example of what can be done" when civil rights groups work together.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
May 21, 1987

WBP files suit to stop drug sales

WPB files suit to stop drug sales

Since April 1986, police say they have bought or confiscated marijuana or observed the sale of it at least 17 times at 711 and 711½ Georgia Ave. in West Palm Beach.

During that time, city officials say they have on various occasions notified two owners of the property of the continuing illegal activity.

On Wednesday, the city filed suit asking the Palm Beach County Circuit Court to declare the property a public nuisance, evict the tenants and have the buildings sealed.

The suit names Palm Beach attorney Mario G. de Mendoza as the property's trustee.

De Mendoza has acted as agent for developer Henry Rolfs, who in the last year has brought several parcels of land in the city west of Dixie Highway, including the Georgia Avenue site.

De Mendoza became trustee of the Georgia Avenue property in January, according to Assistant City Attorney Lynn Whitfield, who filed the suit.

Circuit Judge Vaughn Rodnick has scheduled an emergency hearing for 2 p.m. May 26 to consider the city's request that the property be declared a public nuisance and sealed pending a final hearing.

Officials particularly are interested in the activity at 711 and 711½ Georgia Ave. because the property is two blocks east of Twin Lakes High School, Whitfield said.

De Mendoza could not be reached for comment.

— DAVID GIBSON

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
V. Lynn Whitfield
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Fort Walton Beach Playground Daily News
July 22, 1983

Pensacola lawyer given 3 year suspension

Pensacola lawyer given 3-year suspension

From Staff and Wire Reports

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Supreme Court on Thursday suspended a Pensacola lawyer from practicing law in the state for three years, saying the attorney improperly used trust funds.

The court also disbarred a North Palm Beach lawyer for allegedly importing marijuana.

The court said that Pensacola tax lawyer Daniel C. Perri operated several investment ventures for clients. He placed their funds in his

firm's trust account. When some of the ventures suffered financial losses, Perri borrowed \$127,446 from other trust accounts to cover the deficits, the court said.

In a separate case, the justices disbarred James E. Travelstead of North Palm Beach. Travelstead was charged with conspiring to import a large amount of marijuana. He was freed on bond and then failed to appear for a bond hearing, the justices said.

Travelstead also failed to appear at his disciplinary hearing, the court said, suggesting he has fled to escape prosecution.

The court also suspended Vennie Lynn Whitfield, a Miami lawyer, from the practice of law for six months.

While working as an assistant state attorney, Whitfield allegedly informed someone under criminal investigation about the probe. She also allegedly made false statements to an undercover agent about cocaine.

Research Compiled by: Tammie Browder
Colin Baenziger & Associates