

Terry G. Phillips, Esq.

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EXPERIENCE

DEKALB COUNTY GOVERNMENT, Decatur, Georgia

Interim County Attorney, November 2025 – Present

- Duties include serving as lead counsel for DeKalb County Government, including the Governing Authority, elected and appointed officials, and employees. Primary areas of service include leading and managing staff attorneys, providing advice and counsel to the Chief Executive's Office, Board of Commissioners, Sherriff, Tax Commissioner, Solicitor General, Probate Court, State Court, Magistrate Court, Juvenile Court, the various Clerks of Court, the Board of Tax Assessors, and Board of Registration and Elections, and the County's departments and employees.

Deputy County Attorney, October 2018 – November 2025

- Duties include assisting in leading and managing staff attorneys in representing DeKalb County Government, including the Governing Authority, elected and appointed officials, and employees. Primary areas of service include advice and counsel to the Chief Executive's Office, Board of Commissioners, Public Safety, Human Resources, and Purchasing and Contracting. Subject matter areas of focus include matters related to elections, SPLOST, E-HOST, HB 581, In Rem actions and property maintenance, contracts, media relations, open records, and personnel, including litigation, negotiation, training staff, and drafting a variety of documents including pleadings, briefs, legal opinions, ordinances, resolutions, policies, procedures, contracts, and responses to media inquiries regarding legal matters.

Major accomplishments: advising the Governing Authority regarding HB 581, the COVID-19 Pandemic response, advising the Board of Registration and Elections through the 2020 and 2024 election cycles, including direct communication with Donald Trump's counsel and the Georgia Secretary of State's counsel, training attorneys in County operations and local government law, including conducting training for litigating In Rem cases at the 2024 annual City and County Attorney Seminar, providing on-air interviews, and creatively negotiating resolutions to high profile matters, including contract disputes and adjustments for improved service through the County's emergency medical services contract for ambulance service, a rewrite of the 1984 Grady Operating Agreement for a new 2023 version, between Fulton County, DeKalb County, the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority and the Grady Memorial Hospital Corporation, and arranging acceptance of the donation of the John Lewis Memorial via a three-party agreement between the artist, the non-profit that paid for the memorial, and the County.

Supervising County Attorney, September 2016 – October 2018

- Duties include leading and supervising three attorneys in representing the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Commissioners, Tax Commissioner, Tax Assessor, Airport and the Finance, Human Resources, Purchasing, and Information Systems Departments, representing the County in State and Federal Court, drafting, interpreting, and negotiating contracts, researching legal issues and drafting memoranda to counsel elected officials, including but not limited to, drafting ordinances, resolutions, and amendments to the Code of DeKalb County, reviewing legislation and case law and drafting memoranda

directing various departments to revise policies and procedures to conform to changes in the law, researching, drafting legal opinions, and advising departments.

Major accomplishments: Training and orienting new attorneys to County operations and local government law, conducting county wide training in defending disciplinary matters, and creatively negotiating resolutions to high profile personnel matters, including a former Chief Executive Officer's claims.

Senior Assistant County Attorney, April 2012 – September 2016

- Duties included representing the County in State and Federal Court, drafting, interpreting, and negotiating contracts, researching legal issues and drafting memoranda to counsel elected officials, including but not limited to the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Commissioners, Tax Commissioner, Sheriff, Clerk of the Superior Court and their staffs, drafting ordinances, resolutions, and amendments to the Code of DeKalb County, reviewing legislation and case law and drafting memoranda directing various departments to revise policies and procedures to conform to changes in the law, researching, drafting legal opinions, and advising various departments, and litigating as plaintiff and defense counsel.

Major accomplishments: Successfully defending the County and various officials in lawsuits, negotiating settlement to avoid costly and likely lengthy litigation, and advising clients in adjusting policies and procedures to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Police Senior Staff Attorney, March 2008 – April 2012

- Duties include reviewing and monitoring departmental procedures for compliance with legal requirements, providing legal counsel for criminal investigations, conducting research of case law and legislation, including local, state and federal levels, counseling regarding policies and procedures, serving as liaison to the County Attorney, assisting officers in preparation for court, defending disciplinary action in administrative hearings and presenting to the Board of Commissioners.
- Major Accomplishments: counsel Internal Affairs Unit and Command Staff for improved investigative process, procedure, and reporting and corresponding implementation of discipline, undefeated defense of disciplinary matters in administrative appeal hearings, developed procedures and forms for responding to requests pursuant to the Open Records Act, created and implemented training for Chaplin's team, and drafted corporate documents to create and obtained tax-exempt recognition from the Internal Revenue Service a local chapter of the Police Athletic League.

***Court Administrator of Recorder's Court of DeKalb County,
November 2005 – March 2008***

- Duties included coordinating and supervising administrative and operational services, developing short and long-range plans, constructing and managing budgets, representing the Court with the County Administration, Board of Commissioners, other County agencies, and various non-County entities, managing, directing, evaluating, counseling, and disciplining staff, addressing employee concerns, completing employee performance appraisals, compiling and maintaining statistics, monitoring and improving operational procedures and policies, interpreting and implementing County policy and procedure, preparing reports, and monitoring, maintaining, and improving security systems and procedures.

- Major Accomplishments: drafted a comprehensive policy and procedures manual, upgraded the security systems, identified opportunities for expansion and developed a satellite office, collected over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) in past due bond forfeitures, and assisted in upgrading and coordinating job descriptions with workflow procedures and performance plans for the entire staff.

Judge Pro Hac Vice, January 2006 – March 2008

- Duties include presiding over bench trials, arraignment calendars, probation revocation hearings, show cause hearings and assisting the Chief Judge and Associate Judges as requested.

***Assistant Director, Purchasing, Contracting, and Legal Affairs,
March 2002 – November 2005***

- Duties include supervising the daily operations of the County's Purchasing and Contracting Department, developing, implementing, and managing purchasing policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures, advising and counseling elected officials and their staff verbally and in writing regarding all purchasing related matters, managing, directing, and evaluating the staff of up to fifty (50) people, training and managing an Assistant County Attorney, drafting, interpreting, and negotiating contracts, preparing and reviewing invitations to bid and requests for proposals, conducting bid openings, organizing selection committees, reviewing government procurement issues and trends and drafting memoranda advising various departments to revise policies and procedures, and preparing and reviewing correspondence, forms, and reports.
- Major accomplishments: implemented an automated purchasing system, assisted in re-organizing the department, incorporated Contract Compliance into the department, produced the County's first Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual; and trained and/or supervised five (5) attorneys.

Acting Contract Compliance Officer, August 2002 – November 2005

- Duties include supervising the daily operations of the County's Contract Compliance Office, advising and counseling elected officials and their staff verbally and in writing regarding all contract compliance related matters and reviewing the County's efforts to ensure that all facets of the business community get equal access and opportunity to do business with the County.
- Major accomplishments: reorganized the entire office to improve the County's efforts, designed and implemented the County's first automated tracking system to monitor the participation of minority, women, and local small business enterprises, and assisted in implementing the County's M/WBE program.

Assistant County Attorney, July 1998 – March 2002

- Duties included serving as the primary transactional attorney for all County Departments and elected officials, drafting, interpreting, and negotiating contracts, researching legal issues and drafting memoranda to advise and counsel elected officials, including but not limited to the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Commissioners, Tax Commissioner, Sheriff, Clerk of the Superior Court and their staff, drafting ordinances, resolutions, and amendments to the Code of DeKalb County, reviewing legislation and case law and drafting memoranda directing various departments to revise policies and procedures to

conform to changes in the law, researching, drafting legal opinions, and advising various departments, and litigating as plaintiff and defense counsel.

- Major accomplishments: drafted, interpreted, and/or negotiated several multimillion dollar contracts (construction, professional services, and leases); assisted in drafting House Bill 1079 which lead to Chapter 91 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and overhauled Georgia law for public works construction projects; seminar lecturer at continuing legal education and published a paper on implementing House Bill 1079 in ICLE's materials for the 2001 Metro City and County Attorney's Seminar; defended multiple challenges to the constitutionality of various County ordinances; drafted the County's computer policy; and assisted in the supervision of assistant county attorneys.

Solicitor of the Recorder's Court of DeKalb County, 1999 – 2000

- Sole prosecutor of violations of the Code of DeKalb County, defended constitutional challenges to the Code of DeKalb County, and defended appeals of convictions to the Superior Court of DeKalb County and the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia.

ELLIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C., Attorneys at Law, Decatur, Georgia

Senior Associate Attorney, 1995 - 1998

- Staff attorney in real estate and corporate law firm with an emphasis on representing homeowner associations, business enterprises, and non-profit organizations.
- Primary attorney responsible for servicing approximately twenty (20) corporate and real estate retainer clients.
- Duties included maintaining active caseload as plaintiff and defense counsel; drafting pleadings, legal memoranda, and briefs; drafting, interpreting, and negotiating contracts; and representing business clients as general counsel.

CUNNINGHAM & ELLIS, P.C., Decatur, Georgia

Attorney, 1994-1995

- Supported senior partners in criminal defense, domestic relations, personal injury, and corporate cases.
- Duties included litigating as second chair, drafting pleadings, legal memoranda, and various forms of correspondence, researching trial transcript for appeal issues, co-authoring appellate brief, interpreting and drafting contracts, researching various legal issues, and interviewing clients.

UNITED WAY OF METROPOLITAN ATLANTA, Atlanta, Georgia

Consultant, Volunteer Initiative Program, 1995-Present

- Prepare and teach classes regarding the legal responsibilities of serving on Boards of Directors of nonprofit corporations.

EDUCATION

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Juris Doctor (1994)

Universite D'Aix-Marseille, Faculte de Droit, Aix-en-Provence, France

(Summer 1992)

Study of Constitutional Interpretation under U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun

HOWARD UNIVERSITY, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Arts with a major in History (1989)

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Public Purchasing Officer (CPPO), National Institute of Government Procurement (2006) and Certified Contract Compliance Officer (CCCO), American Contract Compliance Association (2006)

ASSOCIATIONS

State Bar of Georgia, State Bar of Georgia Unlicensed Practice of Law District 4 Committee Member, DeKalb Bar Association (*Member, Board of Directors 2004-2006, President-Elect 2007-2008, President 2008-2009*), DeKalb Lawyers Association, (*Member, Board of Directors 2001-2005 & President (2003-2004)*), Leadership DeKalb (*Class of 2003*), 100 Black Men of America, Inc. (1999-2001)

****References are available upon request.***