

# Women's History Month: Women to Watch Spotlight | Amanda Bradley

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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To kick off our Women to Watch spotlights in honor of Women's History Month, we'd like to introduce you to Greenville lawyer Amanda Bradley. Amanda joined the firm in 2007 after moving to Greenville from Louisiana with her husband and two children.

Amanda's path to law school (and MGC) was not a straight line – unlike many, she did not grow up wanting to be a lawyer.

*"I went to undergrad at Clemson as an architecture major for 2 ½ years before really recognizing that nobody needed me designing their buildings," she said. "I actually dropped out of school and was out for three years. During that time I worked – I waited tables, I was a manager of a restaurant, I worked in my mom's art studio and I was a bartender."*

When Amanda decided to go back to school, she went in as a psychology major. While in school, she took a philosophy class just thinking, "hey, I'll take a philosophy class." She ended up loving it and chose to double major in psychology and philosophy. She took a Philosophy of Law class and Psychology of Law class, which sparked her interest in the law. From there, Amanda went to Tulane School of Law, where she also met her husband. Inspired by the movie "The Burning Bed", she initially thought she would represent battered women who killed their husbands.

So how did Amanda end up at MGC?

*"So I don't know that I've taken a straight path to get anywhere, but I went to Tulane Law School in New Orleans and at Tulane, they offered this environmental law certificate. Environmental law wasn't new, but it was definitely in its early stages and I found it interesting and meaningful. We had an environmental law clinic where we got to actually practice as 3L's with environmental lawyers. After law school, we stayed in New Orleans and I was practicing from 1997 until 2005...I did class action defense – a lot of toxic tort, chemical exposure kind of cases, oil release, that kind of thing on the defense side. My husband is also a lawyer and he was doing insurance defense."*

*We came [to Greenville] because of [Hurricane] Katrina. At the time our kids were three and one, so we knew that we were not going to take them back and try to rebuild there. My parents and brother are here in Greenville, so it made sense to come home."*

Amanda worked as a contract lawyer at another Greenville insurance defense firm where her husband was also working at the time. In 2007, she interviewed with Doc Morgan in MGC's Greenville office and has been a part of the firm's litigation team ever since.

**The firm has grown tremendously since 2007. From your point of view, what do you think has changed and what's remained the same?**

*In general, the size has changed. I started out part-time and worked with Doc for 16 years before changing over to [full-time]. I was able to spend that time with my kids. It was a fantastic choice for me and I am grateful that MGC was willing to support that. There were not really law firms in New Orleans, or Greenville even, that were accepting part-time lawyers the way MGC did and the way Doc did, in particular, and we were able to make it successful.*

*The size of it back then - I remember we used to go to the [holiday] party in Columbia and everybody from all the offices went. As more offices opened up and it got to be where you couldn't do that, it became office by office. So, what changed was, even though I might still recognize names, it's harder to keep up with who's who.*

*But the atmosphere I don't think has changed as much. For example, you [Powers – interviewer] sent me an email and you remember that I'm on the board of a charity and I think we may have met once in-person. I think that's a huge challenge all of the firms that I've seen try to grow and still maintain the culture of a smaller firm. To be able to maintain that interaction, even if it's by Zoom or phone, I think that part of the culture has stayed consistent.*

**What type of law do you practice when it comes to litigation? What are your favorite kind of cases?**

*So, I do a little bit of everything. I have my share of car accident cases, but I also have a lot of premises liability cases and some professional liability. I've been working on the Clemson floor collapse cases for the past four years, which involves 48 Plaintiffs and that is very similar to the class actions I used to work. I've recently gotten more into representing HOA's on a personal injury kind of thing and I've started mediating some too.*

*It's the quirks of different cases that make them interesting. Every case has something unique about it. We have to have a twisted sense of humor to be able to appreciate it a lot of the time.*

**What do you see MGC doing to support and promote women when it comes to making sure that we're successful? How have you personally felt supported?**

*Honestly, I feel more of a responsibility to support the younger female attorneys than I feel like I'm looking for support. I think it goes back to the way I got to where I am at the firm. I was able to get support, even in my non-traditional path. I think I may have been the first one to come on part-time so what I was doing was a learning curve for everybody. I felt though that this was something that the firm understood – I have my career, which is very important to me, but I also have my family that is very important to me and I was the primary caregiver. I never felt like those two priorities were something that I was forced to choose between.*

*[When it comes to the WIN committee] I think it is important that we get the information about what the WIN Committee is doing. Even though you may not be in direct contact with someone or directly involved, you're still getting the information. And it lets you know, hey, the firm recognizes that this can be an issue and we are here to support everyone.*

*The women here are supportive of each other. That has not always been the case in my experience. It is hard when you are a young female attorney and the person who should understand what you're going through and should be there to try to help you through it, had to fight tooth and nail to get to where she is and doesn't offer support.*

*At MGC, when one woman wants to lead something, the support is there from other women. The attitude is let's all work together and make this happen - make it better.*

**This year's International Women's Day's theme is "Embrace Equity." What does that mean to you?**

*That is such a hard thing to answer because in some ways it's common sense. It means exactly what it says. It can be really hard then to turn around and say, "how does that work in actual practice?"*

*As we continue to grow and more people come in that are that same mindset of 'nobody is going to exclude anybody else, nobody is going to look at someone else's opinion like it's less than theirs, including partners.' I saw that attitude when I was part-time, I saw when I was an associate and I see now - everybody's input is equally valued.*

*I have my team speech, which most people in the Greenville office have heard - I truly believe that for all of us, whether you're an attorney or a legal assistant or an LSA or a paralegal, it doesn't matter. We're all here on the same team and we all have the same goal. Everybody is just as important as the other person. If I don't do what I'm supposed to do as an attorney, then it's going to fall flat. If you don't do what you're supposed to do as a legal assistant, it's going to fall flat. Everyone comes with a different insight and adds value to what we are doing. Everybody is just as important as everybody else and I think that approach - whether it's by position, whether it's by age, whether it's by experience or whether it's by gender or anything else - that's what "embrace equity" means to me.*

**Is there any advice you would give to a younger associate coming into the firm?**

*From my perspective, the mentoring program has been a really, really good way to foster support and the development of that mentoring relationship is key on both sides. The relationship - my mentees - and really anyone who wants to - can come in and ask me absolutely anything, whether it's work-related or not, and whether it's a case of mine or not, it doesn't make any difference. The frustrations that women face as a lawyer are different. I don't know that they're better or worse, but they're different than the frustrations a man faces in the same position. When younger attorneys come in and they have something new or have a quick question, I love the excitement they have and really love when something just all of a sudden clicks.*

*I would say for someone coming in, take full advantage of that mentoring program and talk to your mentor. It's a two-way relationship and benefits both the mentor and mentee. And it can be one of the most constructive things you can possibly engage in here.*

**Tell us more about Let There be Mom, the nonprofit you are heavily involved in.**

*I have been on the board or heavily involved for the past 13 years. Let There Be Mom was created to help preserve legacies for families where parents have been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. They will go in and create this package of things that are meaningful to that parent so that the children will have something. We've done things like mom's wedding dress was turned into a bridal bouquet for her daughter and cufflinks for her son. We had a big spaghetti bowl that we had made that had the dad's spaghetti recipe that he always made for them. We create photo albums and books with letters from the parent's family and friends for the children to keep.*

*The difference that I see that making and those children's lives, even if they're too young to remember their parents, to be able to go back and have those tangible things to be able to hold onto is amazing.*