



Meet the President...

Amanda Main

The LBA welcomes its 2017 president, Amanda G. Main. Amanda is an assistant vice-president at Brown-Forman Corporation, where she is responsible for privacy law matters, legal review of advertising, marketing, digital activations, public relations materials, promotional concepts and trade practice compliance for the corporation's brands in North America. She was previously a senior associate at Frost Brown Todd.

Amanda earned her J.D. from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law where she was editor-in-chief of the law review. A graduate of the LBA's Leadership Academy and a past chair of the In-House Counsel Section, Amanda has served on the boards of both the LBA and the Louisville Bar Foundation. For the past three years, she has served on the LBA executive committee as secretary (2014), vice-president/treasurer (2015) and president-elect (2016).

Amanda is a Trustee of Lindsey Wilson College, serving as chair of the Student Services Committee. She has also served on the boards of Visually Impaired Preschool Services and the Exploited Children's Help Organization. She is married and the mother of twin boys.

She recently sat down with LBA executive director Scott Furkin to share some information about herself, her career and her year as the LBA's leader.

Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Louisville and grew up on a small farm in Valley Station.

Did your family farm for a living?

My dad worked at a printing company in downtown Louisville. But we lived on 13 acres with my uncle who farmed and also worked at a nearby dairy farm.

What was farm life like?

Four fields surrounded our house. We grew a lot of our own food and my mom canned vegetables from the garden. Each fall we took a cow and pig to slaughter and kept meat in the deep freezer to eat during the winter. My mom sewed many of our clothes. So actually we were poor but I didn't know we were poor. I never felt deprived because it seemed like we had everything in abundance and free run of all this land.

Do you have any siblings?

Yes, I have a sister who's five years older and a sister who's 18 months younger. So I'm in the middle, but I think I have a lot of first child characteristics.

Not the neglected "middle child"?

(Laughing) I might say that to my sisters. But really because we lived with my uncle, growing up there were always three adults in the household. My mother kept busy tending to the baby and my father had a close relationship with my older sister; my uncle, for all practical purposes, was our third parent and he was the one I did a lot of things with.

What did you do for fun?

My sisters and I would ride our bikes, climb and eat fruit from trees on the property. There was also a pond where we would go fishing. One neighbor had a son close in age and his family lived on an adjoining farm. Sometimes we'd walk across the field to play together.

Looking back, what family characteristics have had the greatest impact on you?

I'd say my parents' work ethic. They taught us that hard work can get you pretty much anything you desire.

What were some of your interests as a young person?

I loved reading and music. We couldn't afford a piano but my parents got me a paper keyboard – it had 88 keys and everything, but it was paper. I had some sheet music and I used to pretend to play piano all the time. Luckily, when I was about 7 years old, I had a cousin who moved to Louisville; she had a piano and took lessons, so then I was able to take lessons and practice on her piano.

Do you still play piano?

Not very well. I haven't kept up with it diligently but music is something I still greatly enjoy. When I was in elementary school, I played violin; in middle school, I started playing French horn. I played French horn in the concert band and flugelhorn in the marching band during high school.

Where did you go to school?

I went to Johnstontown Road Elementary School, Frost Middle School and Valley High School

Other than band, did you participate in extracurricular activities in high school?

I was on the math team all four years and a cheerleader my junior and senior years.

Was education highly valued by your parents?

Yes, because they wanted us to go further than they did. My father is one of 9 children and the only one with a high school diploma. It was the Vietnam War era and he got drafted and sent to Thailand right after graduation. My mother is from Thailand and is one of 10 children. Although she's very intelligent and speaks two languages, when she came to the United States she was expected to be a housewife. She did study and eventually obtain a GED. I think both my parents regret not going to college but it just wasn't in the cards for them. They always expected us to do our best in school. I'm the first person in my family to graduate from college and the only one with a secondary degree.

So your mother is an immigrant?

Yes, she's a naturalized American citizen. And so is my husband, who's from England. He became a U.S. citizen last March and voted in last fall's presidential election.

Does this give you a unique perspective in the ongoing conversation about how welcoming – or not – our country should be to immigrants?

It's definitely a cause that's near and dear to my heart. It wasn't as if my mother was fleeing a horrible situation necessarily, since Thailand was a relatively safe place in that region during the Vietnam War – and she got married and was coming to America with her husband. But she was very close to countries that were ravaged by war. A lot of Vietnamese immigrants came over for the same reasons Syrians are coming now. So I think I've always been sensitive to foreign conflict and what it does to people living in it and just the humanitarian urge to do something to help them.

Did your mother encounter any difficulties when she came to the United States?

I'm certain she did although she isn't one to talk about it. I know she struggled to be accepted and to fit in with her new in-laws and also our neighbors, and I saw her actively try to assimilate into American culture. While she kept some of her traditions, such as cooking Thai food, she shed others. For example, she cut and started to curl her long straight hair, she learned to cook American food, and although she was Buddhist in Thailand, she converted to Baptist shortly after her arrival.

Do you speak Thai?

Unfortunately no. We didn't learn Thai when we were little and I regret that she didn't teach us. My father was afraid it would affect how we spoke English. But that decision meant that I couldn't speak to any of my aunts, uncles or my grandmother on that side of my family.

Has anything you were exposed to as a child carried over to your adult life?

Even though I have a professional career, I find that I miss some of the things my mother – or even my husband's grandmother – used to do, things that are considered homemaking. So a few years ago I planted five acres at my uncle's farm, started some raised beds at my home, and started canning. I sometimes joke that if the zombie apocalypse comes, we can survive because I now have some homesteading skills. I also recently took up crocheting and knitting. It's very relaxing.

Where did you attend college?

I went to Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, Kentucky.

What attracted you to go there?

I had full scholarships to both UofL and to Lindsey Wilson, but I think part of the college experience is getting out of your hometown, so I chose Lindsey Wilson. It was far enough away but not so far that I couldn't come home on the weekend if I wanted to. And even though it's a small town, the campus is very cosmopolitan. At the time it probably had students from 25 different countries. So it was a little metropolis within a small town.

What did you major in?

I was a liberal studies major with a minor in communications. I consider liberal studies to be my "potpourri degree;" it's a little bit of everything.

When did you begin thinking about law school?

I got married right after college graduation but my husband still had another year to go. I thought I might want to go to law school, but I didn't know any lawyers and I wasn't sure I wanted to make the commitment of time and money without knowing more about what practicing law would be like. So I just started applying to law firms for any kind of entry level position. Morris Garlove Waterman & Johnson hired me as a file clerk. I worked there for a year before I decided to apply to law school and I continued working there until after my second year, when I got a summer associate's position with Brown Todd & Heyburn before its merger with Frost & Jacobs.

What about working in a law firm convinced you to go to law school?

After seeing the work, it was something I could envision myself doing. But what I really liked about a law degree is it's so flexible. You're not limited to working in a law firm. You can go into law enforcement or higher education or business; it gives you so many career options. I knew if at some point I didn't want to practice in the traditional sense, other opportunities would be open for me.

Where did you attend law school?

At UofL. I graduated in 2001.

What law school activities had the greatest impact on you?

I was editor-in-chief of the law journal. That was something I found especially helpful because not everyone will go into a courtroom and make arguments; but everyone will write at some point, especially persuasive writing. So it was important for me to get as much experience as possible writing and getting it critiqued and reviewed. I think being editor also helped with time management. You have all these writers and you're trying to get a publication out on a timeframe, so managing all of that's an important skill.

As graduation approached, did you have a clear idea of the type of law you wanted to practice?

I was fortunate that I had a job offer from Frost Brown Todd. I was attracted to litigation but I also knew the firm would put me where it thought I needed to be. I ended up doing commercial litigation and some First Amendment and media law work.

What was the job market like for law school graduates at that time?

It was good. Almost everyone in our summer associate class got a job offer. It was right before there was a dip in the market, so I feel pretty fortunate.

Can you describe your career progression?

I was at Frost Brown Todd for five years and a senior associate by the time I left. I loved it there and wasn't looking to leave when I got recruited by Brown-Forman. Mary Barraozotto was looking to hire someone to



do advertising and marketing law for the company's North America region; and that fit right in with my media law background and my experience as a commercial litigator, weighing risks and making calls. I was offered the position and took it. I've been there 10 years now.

What's the biggest difference between private practice and working in-house?

In a firm, time is money. I never felt like keeping track of my time was a burden, it was just something I did. But going in-house was a real paradigm shift for me. The first few days, not having a timesheet, I was incredibly anxious. I thought "How will they know I'm here? How will they know what I'm working on?" Thankfully, that feeling passed after a few days. Not keeping a time sheet has actually been liberating; I just focus on doing what needs to be done. I also like having just one client. They have all my attention and everything I do is for this one client.

What's your area of focus?

I focus on the North American region, which is Canada and the U.S. Two to three years ago, I started doing privacy law and now I'm the privacy officer.

What does that entail?

I help coordinate and work with our regional in-house lawyers on consumer and employee privacy matters, making sure that what we're doing is consistent across the company and that we have a uniform approach.

How has legal education evolved since you graduated from law school?

I've seen law schools really being pushed to teach, not just esoteric legal theories, but also practical skills. When I was there, the point of law school was to teach you to think like a lawyer, not necessarily to be a lawyer. That was what practicing or working in a firm under someone's mentorship was supposed to do. But because of how law practice and law firms have changed, there are fewer opportunities for new lawyers to work and get that on-the-job experience. I hate to think of law schools losing that "think like a lawyer" emphasis because we're not ministerial. Just teaching us skills on how to write and file a complaint at the courthouse, while valuable, shouldn't be the point of law school. Law school is supposed to teach you how to think critically.

How did you get involved in LBA activities?

Thanks to my employers paying my dues, I've always been a member; but I wasn't really involved in any substantial way until I started volunteering for "Call a Lawyer" on the third Tuesday of each month. Then I began taking pro bono cases periodically. When Colin Lindsay was president, he encouraged me to get involved in the In-House Counsel Section. I started off a vice-chair and then became chair.

How have you benefitted personally or professional from your involvement in the LBA?

Being in-house, I could go all day and not see another lawyer. My clients are mostly marketers and IT people, and every now and then an HR person. So I value the bar association because it keeps me connected to the legal community. Without it, I don't know that I'd have the impetus to reach out to other lawyers very often.

What do you say to colleagues – particularly lawyers in the earlier stages of their careers – as to why they should engage in organized bar activities?

It's valuable, it's worth it. We're a voluntary member-driven organization. I know it's hard – I have small children and a husband who's a teacher with an inflexible schedule, at least during the school year – and sometimes it's not possible to get to things. But when your schedule does allow it, we want it to be a good experience. We need people participating in order for that to happen.

What civic or community activities have you been involved in?

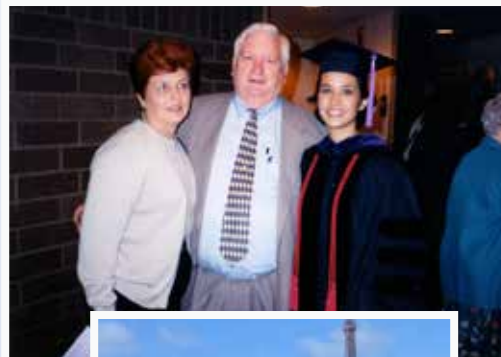
I've been on the Board of Trustees of Lindsey Wilson College since 2005. I serve on its Executive Committee and as chair of its Student Services Committee. For 6 years, I was on the board of Visually Impaired Preschool Services, a small local charity offering preschool services to blind and visually impaired children, which aims to help close the early learning gap between them and their seeing peers. I also served on the board of the Exploited Children's Help Organization, which focuses on child abuse prevention mostly for school age children.

How long have you been married?

It will be 20 years in June.

How did you meet your husband?

We met at college. He was there on an athletic scholarship and I was on an academic scholarship. I offered to tutor him in math, but he didn't take me up on it. We started dating near the end of our freshman year; and we continued to see each other over the summer while I was back in Louisville and he was



in Lexington playing on an A-league soccer team. He ended up asking me if I wanted to go with him to England for three weeks that summer and meet his family. How could I say no? We got engaged after we'd been dating for about 9 months.

You mentioned that he's a teacher. What and where does he teach?

He teaches physical education at Louisville Collegiate School.

You also mentioned children. How many do you have?

We have twin boys, Aidan and Bode, who are 10 years old.

What's it like being the mother of twins?

(Laughing) It's exhausting. It's probably the reason we don't have any other children. But they are so much fun. They're really good buddies, but you couldn't ask for two more opposite children when it comes to interests and personalities.

What do you do for relaxation?

I started yoga when I was in law school and I've stuck with it since then. I still go at least once a week.

What's your idea of a perfect vacation?

I'm happy just lying in the sun on a beach reading, napping and doing absolutely nothing.

We hear a lot about work-life balance. How do you think you're doing balancing your personal and professional lives?

As well as anybody else. You just do what needs to be done. As far as allocating time, sometimes work wins, sometimes family wins. It depends on what's going on at any given moment. Because my husband's off in the summer, we never have to worry about summer care; but I have to be the more flexible parent during the school year because he can't leave his classes unattended.

Do you think work-life balance is more challenging for women in the legal profession than men?

Absolutely. It just is. It's getting better but we're not there yet. For me, there's a lot of "mom guilt" and this feeling that I can and should do it all. I feel like that all the time.

What advice do you have for young people contemplating law school?

Think long and hard because it is a big commitment of both time and money. You may not get your dream job when you graduate and you have to be okay with that. But I've never regretted – not for one minute – getting a law degree, even though I had to incur student loan debt to do it. I was happy to write those checks every month because I feel I got real value from it.

What advice do you have for new lawyers just starting their careers?

Get involved in the bar association. There are a lot of advantages to being connected to the bar and the larger legal community. And don't be afraid to ask people for help. The value of networking cannot be overstated.

We've all heard the lawyer jokes. What can the bar association do to improve the public's perception of lawyers and their role in society?

There's the often quoted Shakespeare line, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." It has been posited that, in context, it means that if you want to disrupt a society, you have to eliminate the lawyers. In that sense, I think it shows how integral lawyers are to an orderly society, in making laws and implementing them fairly. So we have to continue to toot our own horns, let the public know about all the good things we do to affect positive change. And that's a very important function of the bar association.

What do you anticipate will be the focus of your year as LBA president?

I've been thinking a lot lately about the "sandwich generation." I relate because I have children in elementary school and a 70-year old parent who lives with me. I see parallels within our membership. We have boomers who are retiring from practice and millennials who are coming up as new lawyers. So how do we connect and engage them? The retiring lawyers have a wealth of knowledge and experience that we don't want to lose. And we have young lawyers, many of whom have been forced by the market to hang out their own shingles, who could benefit from that knowledge and experience. Finding a way to bridge these two groups is something I'd like to work on.

What are you most excited about as you begin your year as the LBA's leader?

Just getting to meet more members. Because I don't go to court anymore, I don't get to see lawyers regularly, especially new lawyers as they're making their first appearances at motion hour or elsewhere for non-litigators. I think that will be a lot of fun.