

# Gay Woodhouse

If those pencil-neck geeks at 702 W. Lincolnway thought they'd get away with making unwarranted and untrue attacks on Gay Woodhouse without the Cheyenne Herald coming to her defense, they're eating too much trail mix.

Obviously, readers of this publication have seen that Gay Woodhouse runs advertising on these pages and, for that, we are most appreciative. But readers also know that the Herald hasn't become popular with readers in Wyoming by pulling punches.

Let me open by saying once again that Gay Woodhouse has been a Godsend to Cheyenne and Laramie County. The timing of her opening her private law office in Cheyenne was simultaneous with the timing of a new city administration deciding to flaunt state law. Perhaps another attorney would have stepped into the breach but what we know for certain is that Gay Woodhouse did.

She started her private practice just months before the Cheyenne Herald's first publication. Out paths crossed after the first illegal annexation approved by this mayor and the city council members at the time - August, 2001.

Gay Woodhouse has been a "Champion of the People" since her doors opened. And the people need an attorney who is not only willing but is competent. For whatever reason, Gay decided to represent the people against a wrong-acting government and it has been a marriage made in heaven.

While the pocket-protector accessorized dorks at the WT-E support continued to encourage lawless behavior on the part of the city administration they have unethically infiltrated, such abuse would have brought great damage and havoc to the area, had it gone unchecked.

But it didn't go unchecked.

This same newspaper has long ranted about the county pockets in the city. Those areas present a limited problem for the health, safety and welfare of residents within them. No major problems.

To hear the newspaper tell it, those residents are in constant danger of crime, fire, vermin, unpaved roads, no sidewalks and inadequate drainage. They have demanded that the pockets be annexed - at whatever cost there might be to residents.

Then, in contradiction, they supported annexation of land far separated from the city limits, without concern for the problems those residents might face - like crime, fire, vermin, unpaved roads, no sidewalks and inadequate drainage.

It is easy to take inconsistent positions if you have no core principles, which describes this city administration and Cheyenne's daily paper.

If you don't believe in anything, you don't remember the position you took on a subject previously or in an identical situation with another motivation. Such is their inconsistency on annexation.

And, had Gay Woodhouse not come along almost simultaneous with this city administration, there is no telling what the city would now look like and what legal quagmires it would be in.

County government was, and is, incompetent to protect county residents from the city's encroachment. When the Cheyenne Herald asked then-county attorney Peter Froelicher to seek an attorney general's opinion about the Village West annexation west of town, he buddied up to the city attorney and they drafted a DOA letter to the AG. As expected, the AG ducked the issue by stating that an annexation dispute in Casper was making it way through the courts and he would not interfere with it. There was no Casper/ Evansville litigation heading to the courts.

Enter Gay Woodhouse.

When city attorney Mike Basom made the mistake at a public meeting of saying the wrong thing about livestock on a ranch adjacent to the land approved for annexation, Gay was given the green light by her clients to bring action. And she did.

The newspaper, just hours after insulting residents by accusing them of wanting

someone else to pay their property taxes for them, then tried to recruit and convert those same residents to their argument that Gay had sued city residents who she now would represent as a county commissioner.

Neither Gay Woodhouse's nor her clients have ever sued city residents. Nor have they sued county or state residents. They have sued no resident. They have brought litigation against a rogue band of city elected officials who do not obey state law. Had city residents understood the legal issue at stake, there is no doubt in my mind that a vast majority of them would have agreed with the county residents who were forced to pony up money to prosecute the city for its wrongdoings.

Had the four illegal annexations, approved by 7 or 8 city residents who constituted a majority of the city governing body, been heard in criminal court, all of them would be doing time in Rawlins now. Had there been real justice, they would have been doing time for misusing city residents money by paying the Perry Dray law firm \$300,000 to defend their indefensible illegal acts.

Gay has been willing to represent clients with grievances against the city other than illegal annexations. If your home is defiled by sewer line backups, you will run into a denial of responsibility by the city (BOPU) based on governmental immunity. They will do that in spite of a Supreme Court ruling that said negligence was not a defense and could not be used as a shield. It is almost certain that the WT-E would side with the city on those matters as well. The mayor sold his integrity for praise and the newspaper sold its journalistic integrity for access. It was a marriage made in hell and the newspaper is obviously very worried it won't continue under the Kaysen administration.

We shall see.

If a police car runs into the back of your vehicle when you have pulled to the shoulder (as you know you're supposed to when overtaken by an emergency vehicle with lights and siren) and the city admits fault but claims the defense of governmental immunity, who do you want on your side - Gay Woodhouse or Reed Eckhardt?

When you've been wrongfully terminated to make way for the department head's archer friend and then falsely accused of disgusting personal behavior and you want your job back and lost pay, who do want on your side - Gay Woodhouse or Reed Eckhardt?

Gay has been invaluable, and perhaps irreplaceable.

Eckhardt would like for the 30,000 residents outside the city limits to have no competent legal representation in their battles with this city administration. When he surrendered his journalistic ethics, he evidently also gave up his soul.

Will Gay represent city residents in their legal battles against the next city administration? The reason the city had to defend so many actions over the past eight years was that they violated state law so frequently. Maybe that won't continue.

Reed's heroes at city hall never wanted to bring the question of whether their annexations were legal to a legal conclusion. Gay had to first prevail on the questions of legal standing and timeliness. The mayor and members of the city council bleated publicly that they just wanted to get the question answered through the courts while they privately did everything possible to prevent that from happening. Motions were filed to prevent residents from challenging their decisions, not to have the courts decide them on the merits. They stalled, they roadblocked. At the Supreme Court in the Cotton v. City of Cheyenne case (which Gay did not handle) their citations were invalid and the Supreme Court admonished them for that.

For Reed to write that Gay has made a cottage industry of forcing the City to comply with the law is like saying Barry Scheck has made a cottage industry of getting innocent men released from prison. What Gay Woodhouse has accomplished is no more a cottage industry than is the Innocence Project. Thank God for both.

*If Gay decides not to represent clients against future City violations of law, we will find another attorney to pick up the cudgel. They're out there. It will be difficult, but not quite impossible, to find one as capable and as successful as Gay.*

**GAY WOODHOUSE**  
Law Office

**Liberty & Justice for All**

*Gay Woodhouse has 29 years legal Experience and is Past-President of the Wyoming Bar Association*

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