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## Florida Attorney General candidate visits Levy County & Gilchrist County



**(from left) Lafayette County Sheriff Brian Lamb, Dixie County Sheriff Dewey Hatcher Sr., Ashley Moody – candidate for Florida Attorney General and Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz are seen at a restaurant in Bell (Gilchrist County).**

*Photo by Travel Aide Erica Geiger of the campaign to elect Ashley Moody as Florida Attorney General*

### **Story and All Other Photos**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Feb. 23, 2018 at 4:48 p.m.**

**Updated Feb. 24, 2018 at 7:58 p.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** – one of the four Republican candidates seeking to replace Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi stopped in Levy County and Gilchrist County Friday afternoon (Feb. 23) as she tours the state seeking election to take Bondi's place.

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Ashley Moody



People gather in Chiefland before the candidate spoke about her platform and sought help in her campaign.

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**Doug King (left) watches as Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum introduces Ashley Moody, candidate for Florida Attorney General.**

**Ashley Moody speaks with Sheriff Bobby McCallum and Levy County School Board Member Paige Brookins after Moody made her presentation.**

There is also at least one Democrat who said he plans to seek election as the Florida Attorney General.

Bondi, a Republican, cannot run again in November because of term limits.

**Former 13th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Ashley Moody said she intends to be in the Republican primary for this race, and given that she wins there to go on to the general election.**

Of the 20 judicial circuits of Florida, the 13th includes only one county – Hillsborough, due to its large population, which is concentrated in Tampa. Most of the circuits are multi-county.



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Moody was elected in 2006 and took office on Jan. 2, 2007. She resigned from the bench in April of 2017 to run for attorney general of Florida.

Moody earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting, a Master's degree in accounting, and a Juris Doctorate, all from the University of Florida.

Moody earned a Master of Laws Degree in international law from Stetson University College of Law, which is located in Gulfport (Pinellas County).

Prior to her election to the 13th Judicial Circuit Court (Hillsborough County), Moody served as an assistant United State attorney for the Middle District of Florida. Her experience includes work as an associate for the law firm of Holland & Knight LLP, an assistant to the president of the American Bar Association, and as an adjunct professor for Stetson University College of Law.

She stopped in Levy County first. At a restaurant gathering, hosted by Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, the candidate laid her cards on the table.

Sheriff McCallum mentioned Moody's background as a federal prosecutor and that she is married to an agent of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

Among the priorities she lists on her brochure are:

- Protect consumers against scams, identify theft, cyber-crimes and price-gouging.
- Continue the mission to eliminate human trafficking.
- Combat violent criminals and drug traffickers.
- Vigorously prosecute elder abuse.
- Support law enforcement officers in their mission to keep people safe.
- Protect the United States Constitution, the Florida Constitution and uphold the laws of Florida.

- Prioritize mental health reforms.

Moody is a fifth-generation Floridian.

She said Attorney General Bondi endorses her, as do 35 of the 67 Florida sheriffs and 11 of the 20 state attorneys in Florida.

Moody labels herself as a "conservative Republican."

The former judge said she does not consider herself to be a politician in the past.

"I was hesitant to get involved in partisan politics," Moody said. "I was a Republican since I was in college, when being a Republican wasn't cool – I've been a Republican.

"The political process in elections has evolved (devolved) into what I know many people think is unrecognizable," Moody said. "It is a blood sport these days, with everything that comes along with it – attacks and the duplicity.

"Nobody is truly excited to go through that," she continued. "But I can tell you what I am truly excited about, and that is to be the attorney general of the state of Florida."

As she spoke about reasons for people to choose her, Moody said the people of Florida will want the top prosecutor in the state to be a person who has actually prosecuted a case.

As a judge for more than a decade, Moody said she was tasked with certain duties.

Moody said she wanted to be more proactive than she was allowed to be as judge.

She changed in her role from being a judge to being a candidate, and she has been a candidate since June. In her current role, she is seeking people to join her team. She wants supporters to help her become elected as the next attorney general of Florida.

Among the many people at the first stop in Levy County were Levy County Sheriff McCallum and his wife Kandy McCallum, Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz, President of the Florida Cattlemen's Association Ken Griner and his wife Lynetta Griner,

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Levy County School Board Member Paige Brookins, Doug King Jim King Realty Inc. and various Republicans.

In answering questions from HardisonInk.com, Moody said she believes the Sunshine Law is important to help allow the people of Florida to see what their government is doing.

In regard to a case in August of 2017, Moody gave her input.

Gov. Rick Scott had removed cases of suspected cop-killers from a prosecutor who refused to seek the death penalty.

In an executive order, Gov. Scott reassigned the prosecution of a man accused of shooting and killing two Kissimmee police officers from State Attorney Aramis Ayala.

Scott said he removed Ayala from the prosecution of that case because she refuses to seek the death penalty in any case prosecuted by her office.

“What we expect from our elected officials is that they do their job,” Moody said. “When you take an oath to do your job, sometimes that means if you’re in the position of state attorney or attorney general, sometimes that means you have to apply the law as it is written, and as it is on the books.

“That is what we expect when we vote someone into office,” she continued. “As a judge, I might not have agreed with every single law that I had to apply in a case, but I did it because I took an oath to do my job.”

When Moody was asked about the transition if she is elected in regard to keeping some staff from outgoing Attorney General Bondi, the potential next attorney general gave a reply.

“Certainly, I am following behind an attorney general who has had great success in her role,” Moody said, “and certainly there is a lot of admiration in what she has been able to accomplish.

“A good attorney general is a true protector of the communities,” Moody continued, “and a defender of the Constitution. I believe Pam Bondi has done a great job in that regard. She would tell you, as I will tell you, you cannot accomplish great things without a great staff.

“And so thankfully I am following behind a person who has the ability to have done good things,” Moody concluded, “and has been successful. I am hoping much of that staff is still in place when I come into that office.”

Moody was joined on this tour by her travel aide Erica Geiger.

The other candidates for this post so far include State Rep. Sean Shaw (D-Tampa, Dist. 61). Shaw is the son of the first black chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court. Florida Supreme Court Justice Leander Shaw Jr. who was a justice from 1983 to 2003, and was chief justice from 1990 to 1992.

Four other Republicans have announced so far. Three of them are state representatives and the one visiting Levy and Gilchrist counties is a former circuit court judge.

The three other Republican candidates who are members of the Florida House of Representatives are Jay Fant (R-Jacksonville, Dist. 15), Frank White (R-Pensacola, Dist. 2) and Ross Spano (R-Dover, Dist. 59.)