



Sandra Pfau Englund: Founder of Pfau Englund Nonprofit Law, PC, Alexandria, VA

[By Jen Woods]

Unlike most people, Sandra Pfau Englund actually looks forward to going to work. “I must say I love what I do,” said Englund, founder of Pfau Englund Nonprofit Law, PC. Her law firm provides legal services to a variety of nonprofit organizations.

Englund said her job is fulfilling because “the majority of the people who run nonprofit groups have very strong ethics and are really out there trying to improve the world, and they’re a wonderful group to work with.” Englund, whose parents were always very active in the community, said she admires the shared mission of many nonprofit groups. “Most nonprofits are out there trying to make our society better in one way or another,” she said.

Her job allows her the flexibility to balance her time at work and home. “I’ve been able to build a nationwide practice, [...] raise three children, and now homeschool my children, and [I’ve] be[en] able to do all of that at one time and work with really wonderful people,” she said.

Another appealing aspect of the job, she said, is that nonprofits don’t have a lot of emergencies that require immediate action. “But that doesn’t mean I’m not stressed, and I don’t have things to do for my clients, and I don’t have exceedingly busy days,” she added.

Nonprofit groups seek legal counsel for a number of reasons. Englund explained that new organizations, for instance, need help getting incorporated as nonprofit corporations and attaining federal tax exemption status.

Established nonprofits require ongoing legal help, especially with contracts. “Nonprofit groups often have meetings, conferences, educational workshops...and to hold those they need to have a contact with a hotel or another facility to have the meeting,” Englund said.

Nonprofits that have paid staff also have to deal with many of the same employee issues that for-profit companies do. “Those that have a staff of any size have the regular employment issues that any employer may have between employment contracts or employee handbooks,” Englund said.

Englund’s firm also helps nonprofits coordinate fundraising activities. “Most of them [nonprofits] have fundraising registration and fundraising requirements and forms that have to be filled out. And nonprofits come to us with what they can and can’t do in respect to fundraising,” she said.

Englund’s firm provides legal services to all types of nonprofits, including parent groups. The firm specializes in parent teacher organizations, parent booster groups, and athletic booster groups, which are traditionally run by volunteers. “And so we have set up two websites, ptolaw.com and parentbooster.org, which both are catered to that particular part of the market,” she said.

Pfau Englund Nonprofit Law’s website offers a wide array of legal information, including fundraising tips, frequently asked IRS questions, and links to other leading nonprofit sites. “I think we have a fairly big presence on the Internet, and so a lot of new nonprofits come to us, and we assist them,” she said.

Englund encourages young lawyers who are passionate about nonprofit groups and interested in helping them to consider careers as nonprofit lawyers. “I didn’t know anything about this area of law until my

third year in law school [when] there was an elective class that I could take in nonprofits,” she said. “I think it’s still an area, a growing area, and people should go for it,” she said.

Englund is admitted in the District of Columbia and Virginia. Before establishing her law practice, Englund served as an attorney with a nonprofit law firm and as a senior manager of a major scientific association. Englund earned her bachelor’s degree from Eastern Michigan University and both her law degree and master’s degree in public administration from George Washington University. She is a member of the Virginia, District of Columbia, and Ohio bars.

Englund is also active with the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and the Greater Washington Society of Association Executives (GWSAE). She writes for both ASAE’s and GWSAE’s magazines and has given presentations at ASAE’s management conferences. In addition, she has chaired GWSAE’s Congressional Breakfast and the Virginia subcommittee of its Government Affairs Committee.

ON THE NET

Pfau Englund Nonprofit Law, PC
www.nonprofitlaw.com

The Internet Site for Parent Teacher Organizations
www.ptolaw.com

Parent Booster USA
parentbooster.org