

# AMANDA CHAPMAN

## A SEAT AT THE TABLE

BY Kolter Bouchard | PHOTOS Nat Caron



A benefit of running a business in the area where you were raised is having an intimate bond with the people around you. They're not just your clients; they're your friends and neighbours, too. Or maybe it's the other way around. Perhaps Amanda Chapman, raised in Muskoka, opened a law practise in Greater Simcoe Region because she's eager to give back to the community that made her who she is today. In truth, it's partially both.

It's incredibly fitting that her firm, Chapman Law, is located inside a designated heritage home built in 1883. The sprawling estate once belonged to the Dyments, a prominent Barrie family who resided there until the 1960s, and is now used intermittently for legal proceedings. "It gives everyone their own sense of space. When we have guests for mediation, they feel comfortable—there's plenty of room for privacy." Building trust begins at the front door and Amanda has created a space where everyone, client or otherwise, receives the empathy and respect they deserve.

The firm's outreach goes beyond the office space it provides to the community. Members of her team are part of a referral program whereby Ontario residents can receive complimentary legal information from area lawyers. This is congruent with the values Amanda strives to provide. "We don't drag litigation. We're able to be time-effective because we put our clients' interests and well-being first." It's one of the reasons her firm is constantly taking on new clients. They share years of expertise while remaining efficient and grounded.

Maintaining a team of four—including herself—is a point of pride for Amanda. Her all-female legal team is more of a family than perhaps a typical firm, but Amanda eschews the role of matriarch. "We're a team and everybody deserves respect. I'm not 'the boss,' we're colleagues." This goes back to trust. Although clients assigned a lawyer keep that lawyer—a point of pride for Amanda—the team at Chapman Law are constantly advising amongst themselves, providing help where help is needed.



OUR TEAM: SANDY ROBSON, JESSICA MOR, ROBYN SMITH AND AMANDA CHAPMAN

The firm operates as smooth as a high-end restaurant during a busy shift, and it's no surprise: Amanda worked part-time through law school, a difficult feat. She knows how to manage a busy work environment.

We often speak of the "second shift" women work. After a day at the office, many are then expected to run the household unallied. She stresses her family is priority number one and expresses gratitude for having a supportive and hardworking partner. "I pack the kids' lunches, he drops them off at school. We're equals." Both parents run their own businesses and it's important to her that the whole family enjoys time—and dinner—together. She fosters the same nurturing atmosphere at home that she does at the office.

But there's a third sphere: the classroom. Amanda is a tireless champion of education and she would like to see more people take up the cause. Though she admits a University degree isn't necessarily requisite, "post-secondary education opens doors and everyone should at least have the opportunity."

Amanda admits that without her schooling, she wouldn't be where she is today and wants the call for universal education to reach the planet over: "some parts of the world don't allow girls to receive an education."

Even today, Amanda is still studying. In addition to completing her Master's at Osgoode Hall, she has been teaching part-time at Georgian College for six years. She even helped plan the paralegal program. It gets back to her passion for community outreach—her students are exposed to and discuss real cases. As a teacher, she is in a unique position to demonstrate how she herself overcame the same obstacles the class is examining.

Though law school is well in her past, Amanda remains the same vocal supporter of justice she has been her entire life. "I've always known I was meant to help people." Whether it's educating the next generation of legal professionals, raising a family alongside a supportive partner, or operating a principled, community-oriented law firm, Amanda Chapman is doing exactly that.

Find Amanda and her team online at [chapmanlaw.ca](http://chapmanlaw.ca). ♥



## CHAPMAN LAW

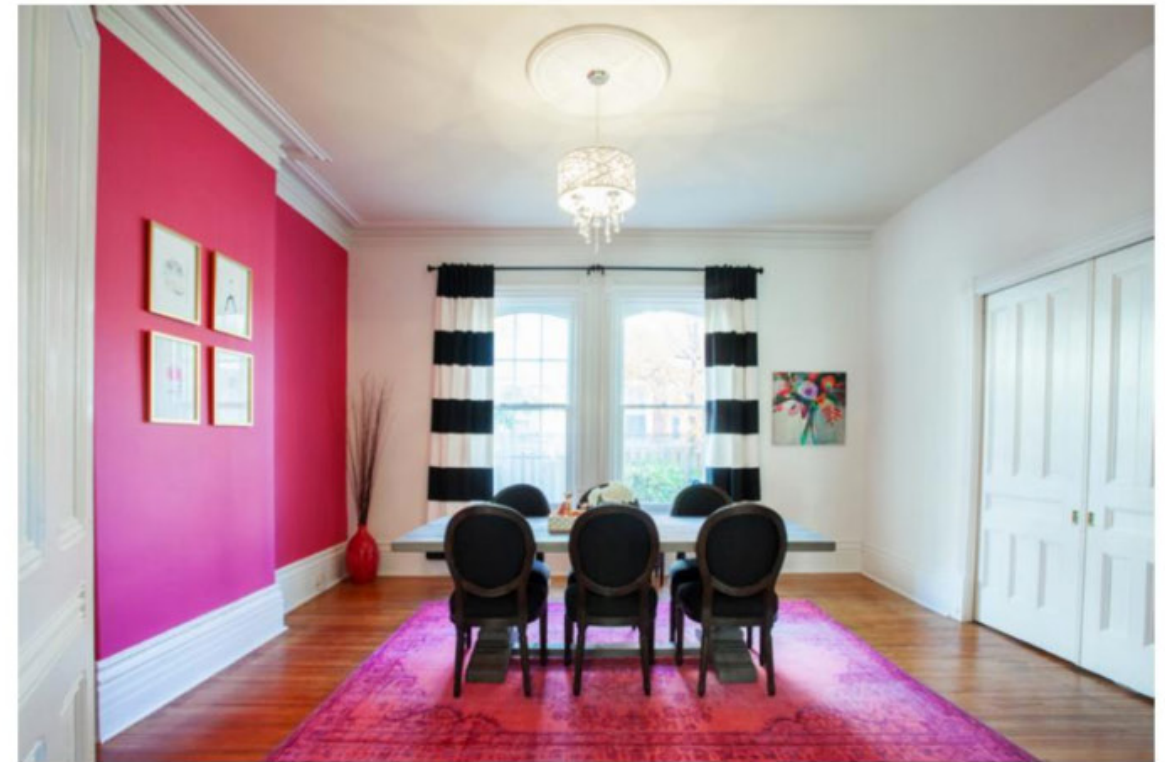
# Redefining the Office

It is said that employees who enjoy their workspace are more engaged, productive, happy and healthy. Large corporations such as Google and Deloitte know this to be true and have re-created the traditional office to incorporate wellness centres, high-end bistros and collaborative lounge areas – with the sole intention that it will facilitate a different and improved employee experience.

Chapman Law, also understands the importance of creating a beautiful workspace for employees and clients to feel “more relaxed, comfortable and at-home.” Built by lumber king Mr. Dymont, the building is one of Barrie’s few Heritage Homes within the city; boasting stunning architectural features such as high ceilings, original plaster moldings and stately millwork.

The three separate board rooms are available to other businesses looking for meeting space, and are utilized by external lawyers as a special setting to hold mediations, arbitrations and other client meetings.

Lawyer Amanda Chapman is the mastermind behind this unique office design; choosing bold paint colours, textiles, beautiful furniture and statement lighting. The space is dramatic, elegant and thoughtful. Feedback from her clients is that the space does not feel anything like an office, rather, an intimate meeting in a private home. This concept was important to the tight-knit group at Chapman Law who feel more like a family, than co-workers. The feeling of comfort, family and home transcends into the beautiful office design and has a lasting impression on those who utilize the space.



*In design, we are often guided by ‘rules’ and trends of what an office space should look like; however, when you have a clear vision of the overall atmosphere, or feeling your design will emulate – truly beautiful and special spaces are created.*

-Anne McNamara, Owner, Partner White House Designs -

