

## Case Study

# How Hillsborough County Clerk, Cindy Stuart, Brings Greater Access and Transparency to Critical Public Records

## Creating better, more efficient ways to serve constituents and staff with Kofile's Digitization and Access Solutions



**Cindy Stuart**  
Hillsborough County  
Clerk of the Court

Cindy Stuart has served the citizens of Hillsborough County, Florida for over a decade. After starting her career as an elected school board member for the seventh largest district in the nation, serving two terms, Ms. Stuart was elected as Hillsborough County Clerk of Court and Comptroller in 2020. Established in 1834, Hillsborough County is the fourth most populous county in Florida.



*Cindy Stuart*

CLERK OF COURT & COMPTROLLER  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



FOLLOW  
@HILLSCLERK

## Improving the customer and staff experiences through technology

Cindy Stuart is always looking for better, more efficient ways to serve her constituents and staff. When Ms. Stuart took on the Clerk and Comptroller role, she knew her predecessor was an efficient leader and a technology trailblazer. Having also had a background in information technology, Cindy sought every opportunity to innovate and expand access and services to constituents through the integration of technology and digitization.

## Prioritizing online resources

Cindy Stuart had the unique experience of coming into office during the COVID-19 pandemic. That challenge inspired one of Ms. Stuart's first initiatives: improving online resources that are accessible anywhere. This flexibility allows her staff and constituents to access online resources more efficiently.

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When COVID-19 hit, we were prepared with remote access, but we envisioned that we could build on access and offer our customers the ability to be able to do what they needed from home. Our employees also benefited from our status and were afforded the opportunity to work remotely. With the changing employment market, technology updates allow us to compete with flexible scheduling helps with our hiring practices,” said Cindy Stuart.

## Using technology to improve efficiency while providing greater constituent services

Technology updates also increase the efficiency of her office, enabling her to balance future staffing and budget constraints while continuing to push forward constituent service improvements.

## Digitizing, indexing, and increasing access to microfilm records

Greater constituent accessibility and preparation for the future start with digitizing, indexing, and providing online access to the county's microfilm records. These records line an entire wall of the Hillsborough County Clerk's office. Not only do they take up significant office space, but their contents and indexing system are not efficient for Ms. Stuart and her staff. Furthermore, these records are unavailable online for staff and constituents to access from home.



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“We have a large number of microfilm that is available to the public for viewing, and locating and researching information on those films is challenging. In our efforts to make these types of searches and gathering of information more convenient for our constituents and staff, digitizing and indexing was a necessary step in the process of serving the community differently,” said Cindy Stuart.

## Partnering with Kofile for records digitization, indexing, and access solutions that enable greater constituent and staff accessibility

Ms. Stuart partnered with Kofile to digitize, index, and provide online access to the microfilm records under her watch to make it easier and faster to retrieve the files online.

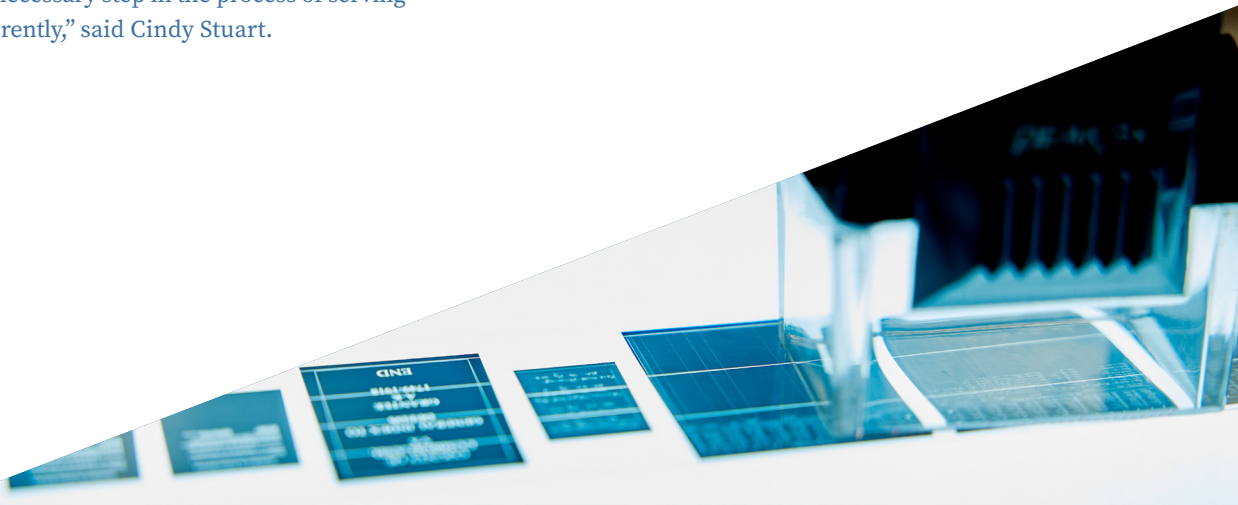
After an initial conversation with Kofile, Ms. Stuart visited to its Dallas headquarters to better understand the digitization and indexing process from beginning to end. The volume of records handled by Kofile and the quality of the restoration process of previously unrecognizable documents impressed Ms. Stuart and encouraged her to partner with Kofile.

## Kofile's expertise and quality of work impressed Ms. Stuart

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“When I visited Kofile's headquarters, the sheer volume of books they could accommodate was impressive, but the most intriguing part was the restoration process and how they were taking things that had been either laminated or were of poor quality and restoring them to a level that I had never seen before. It was incredible to be up close and watching people delicately and cautiously restore documents,” said Cindy Stuart.

Furthermore, she appreciated Kofile's expertise in helping her navigate the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) requirements to fund the project.



## Kofile's commitment to delivering the project on time and within budget to satisfy ARPA requirements.

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“Early on, I talked to Kofile about the plan to use federal grant money from ARPA to fund the project. Hillsborough County received almost \$5.7 million dollars to fund this project and several others, so it's really important that I have a partner like Kofile that's able to stay on a timeline and satisfy grant requirements while providing a great product that we're proud to show our constituents,” said Cindy Stuart.

## Kofile's image quality and clarity outshine prior digitization efforts

Since digitizing and indexing the microfilm records with Kofile, Cindy Stuart and the Hillsborough County staff appreciate and recognize the clerk's role to keep and maintain accurate and dependable records for this community. Any loss of information, whether by natural causes or disaster, would have a significant impact. Since our work with Kofile, we can visibly notice the substantial difference in the quality and clarity of their digital images compared to prior digitization projects.

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“Kofile's product is outstanding. We've taken Kofile's images and compared them to some of the digitization projects done previously and there are remarkably improved. I have some staff members who've been here for 15-20 years, and they've been through the digitization process numerous times and they comment that Kofile's images are a significant improvement over what we've had in the past,” said Cindy Stuart.

Specifically, Ms. Stuart and her staff have noticed Kofile's images are clearer and more readable because of Kofile's image enhancement and accuracy verification processes compared to the quality of digital images scanned in the past.

## Delivering higher quality digital images compared to past projects

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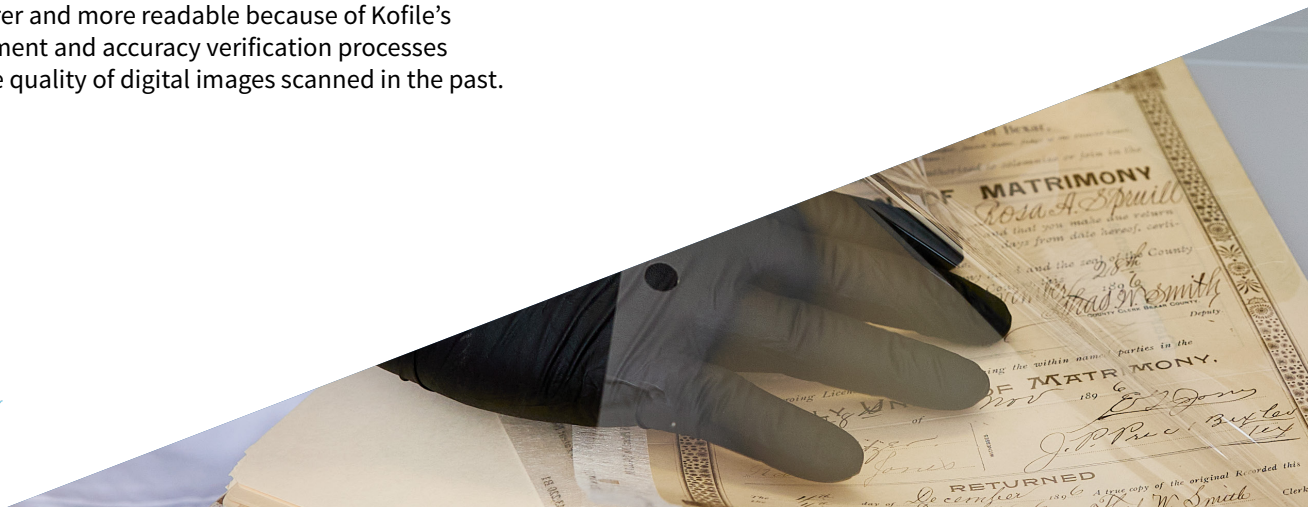
“The quality of some of the older digital images is speckled at the top of the pages and black lines appear down the sides. Sometimes it was crooked, blurry, and smudged, and items may have not been scanned correctly. Everything we've seen so far from Kofile has been of great quality and there are no blemishes on the pages,” said Cindy Stuart.

And by properly digitizing and indexing the microfilm records with Kofile, the staff is more efficient in retrieving the right records, reducing wait times from hours to minutes.

## Saving staff and constituent time and effort through accurate records indexing

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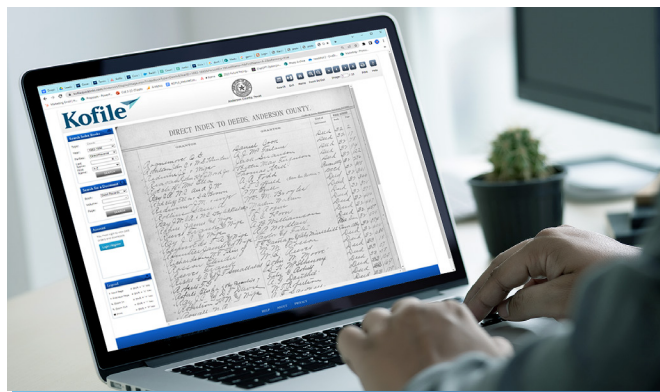
“Instead of having to load that microfilm, dig through, and scroll, our staff can just pull up an index from Kofile and click on a name and the information is available in a matter of minutes. The process of retrieving a record before the Kofile project probably took 30 minutes to an hour if someone knew the names and dates of what they were looking for, but it could be several hours if they couldn't specify details that are pertinent to a search. The new method that we are offering with the Kofile indexing allows users to avoid many of these steps to search for information,” said Cindy Stuart.





## Providing greater transparency and access for constituents to retrieve records from home

Cindy Stuart continues to advance her goal of creating better, more efficient ways to provide records access to constituents. Thus far, Cindy Stuart uses Kofile's Access Solutions (QuickLink) to provide constituents with the ability to retrieve marriage licenses online, which surprises and delights them.



## Surprising and delighting constituents through online access

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“When people call the office and we tell them that they can get a copy of their marriage license online, they’re really happy and appreciate that they don’t have to come into our office or wait for us to mail it to them. They’re now able to get it themselves and print it out at home for free,” said Cindy Stuart.

In the future, Ms. Stuart plans to bring land and property records online using Kofile's Access Solutions, which will make a big difference in saving constituents and regular office visitors time from having to take a trip to her office and spend hours or even days researching. Soon, they will be able to access those records from the comforts of their own home.

## Saving constituents days of research by bringing land and property records online

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“When we bring our land records online with Kofile, we hope to hear more from constituents about how easy it is to discover and retrieve information. We have a few regular news media outlets who come here frequently when they are researching a story,” said Cindy Stuart.

Schedule a consultation to address your critical records challenges and obligations

CONTACT US





## Your Trusted Partner for Critical Records Management

Kofile is the leader in Critical Records Management working closely with county, local, and state government organizations and their leaders. Our commitment to preserving, safeguarding, and modernizing access to history and the public record drives everything we do. Trusted by over 3,000 government organizations and officials earned from decades of service and innovation, we apply the right mix of expertise, technology, and processes to empower leaders to increase the impact of government services more efficiently.

**Kofile**  
Critical Records Management

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