The Future of the Paralegal Profession: Where Are We Headed?

By: Dana Martinez-Jones, ACP

The definition of “paralegal” can vary from website to website, but also from State to State. Nationally, the American Bar Association (ABA) defines it as “a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.” The renowned National Association of Legal Assistants/Paralegals (NALA) and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) have a similar definition to that of the ABA. Further, the Florida Bar at Fla Bar Rule 20-2.1(a) defines a paralegal as “a person qualified by education, training, or work experience, who works under the supervision of a member of The Florida Bar and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a member of The Florida Bar is responsible.”

But, consider Google’s definition of “paralegal”: “noun 1. a person trained in subsidiary legal matters but not fully qualified as a lawyer. Adjective 1. of or relating to auxiliary aspects of the law.” Under the Florida Bar’s definition, a paralegal not working directly under the supervision of an attorney could find her/himself potentially accused of the unauthorized practice of law (UPL). Is there a future for paralegals wherein they can use their skills and not be accused of UPL?

There is always a need for pro bono work, by both attorneys and paralegals. There is also a need for access to justice for every citizen of our country. Today, more than ever, there is a growing need to “close the justice gap” for access to this justice and for representation. The rich can usually afford attorneys and the poor are provided opportunity for justice through pro bono services; but what of those who fall into the low- and moderate-income category? This is quite a need that really must be filled. By last count, roughly 12 different states are exploring, or have already instituted, programs to answer this question, to fill this need, by offering affordable legal access to help meet the needs of those unable to afford the services of a lawyer.

Many in the legal field are aware that in June 2012 the Supreme Court of the State of Washington (WA) adopted a court rule allowing non-lawyers an avenue to provide legal services in a limited capacity (specially trained individuals will be able to practice law to a very limited scope in limited areas, e.g. family law; practice areas under consideration are elder law, landlord-tenant disputes, and immigration.) In December
President’s Message . . . Debra Bass, FRP

Usually the NWFPA Board works behind the scenes, making decisions that affect our members, mostly in ways that we believe will further the tenets and values established under the NWFPA Bylaws, but that do not hit our member’s pocketbooks. I am so very proud of our current Board, Heidi Yefremov, Regina Vino, Donna Nall, Aurora Osborn, Selina Bryant and Carissa Mitchell. We have all worked hard to be good stewards with our members’ hard-earned money, or at least, in some cases, their firm’s hard-earned money. That is why we struggled for months, had after-hours meeting in addition to our regular monthly meetings to determine the best course to take to cover NWFPA’s ever-increasing costs, all the while balancing the least expensive alternative for our members. After careful thought and consideration, the Board determined that we had no alternative but to increase the cost of our luncheon fees and, in order to cover the monthly costs for our remote members, start charging our remote members to view our monthly meetings. I know we have had very little feedback regarding these new charges that we introduced at our February meeting. I believe it might be because our members knew all along this increase was inevitable in our current economy. I relate all of this in my Message because I want to let all of our members know that your NWFPA Board continues to work behind the scenes for all of you, and to assure you that we continue to be good stewards of our members’ money.

Law Week 2016

The 2016 Law Day Theme is:

Law Day 2016

MIRANDA

to more than words
Don’t you just love the spring? It’s a time of fresh starts. Keeping that in mind, I have enjoyed many years on the Newsletter Team and am hoping to have many more but I need fresh leads for articles of interest to our readers. The Team’s goal is to provide articles that are relevant to you and your career. The Team would like to invite you, our esteemed readers, to contribute by providing suggestions for articles and/or writing an article or two for the publication. Please let us know what you would like to learn more about such as new technology; recent changes to rules, statutes or administrative laws; etc. We can do a much better job with the help of our readers. I am looking forward to hearing from many of you, please email me at cpeterson@levinlaw.com.

“The Team’s goal is to provide articles that are relevant to you and your career.”
2012, the WSBA established its LLLT Board “to hammer out the details about this new profession, including regulations for professional conduct, exam procedures, continuing education requirements, and disciplinary procedures.” Interestingly, this idea has been tossed around since as early as the 1990s in states such as California (1990) and Oregon (1992).\(^3\) In all, research has yielded over a dozen states interested or implementing a program similar to WSBA’s LLLT, namely, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon.

So what does that mean for paralegals? The courts and bars of the states referenced above have come to recognize the value paralegals bring to the legal system; thus the research in how to fully utilize “paralegals as part of efforts to close the access to justice gap in the United States.”\(^4\) Paralegals have been highly valued by their attorneys for years and now are being recognized for the well-trained non-lawyers that they are. These forward looking states, and some firms/attorneys, have come to see paralegals as an underutilized resource for helping the average citizen with their legal issues. The most recent state to imitate Washington’s “economically viable model” in an effort to “improve access” for all to the court system is the State of Utah. In December of 2015 it was announced that, “A new kind of paralegal is coming to help Utahns navigate the court system!”

The Utah Supreme Court approved a new legal profession entitled Limited Paralegal Practitioner: LPP.\(^5\) This professional, similar to the LLLT, is expected to have more training as well as added responsibilities over that of a “normal paralegal, but is not quite a lawyer.” Utah expects this LPP “to have either a law degree or an associate degree with a paralegal certificate.” They will also need to be experienced as a paralegals and “complete further courses in their practice area.” Further, they are limited in the services that they are allowed to provide to those in need. They are expected to help ease the burden of the courts by assisting clients with forms, providing representation in certain mediated areas, negotiations and help with settlements of legal issues. However, the line is drawn at the courtroom door since the LPP is not allowed to represent a client in the court.

It is exciting to see the paralegal profession given the respect it has come to deserve. It has been jokingly asked, “Do you want to see the attorney, or the paralegal who does the real work?” All kidding aside, attorneys are vital to our legal system. It is these strong attorneys that have helped push for programs to help the public and utilize the valuable person they already have in

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their offices. Attorneys offer great services and their paralegals have learned much under them. However, as is being acknowledged by many states, it is time for the paralegal profession to expand and become an avenue for all people to have full access to the justice system. It is time to re-think the role of the paralegal; time to utilize the knowledge, skills, and assessments so many experienced and practiced paralegals possess. While some state bars, Florida included, are reluctant to consider this untapped mine, the American Bar Association has addressed this new expansion of legal services. In 2014, Steve Crossland, an attorney in Cashmere, WA, plainly states that rather than see these new programs (LLLTs and LPPs) as a threat to an attorney or law firm’s practice, it should be seen as a golden opportunity to bring in business that, but for these new paraprofessionals, they would not otherwise have seen. Some firms in Washington State are pushing to have their paralegals get licensed as LLLTs in order to expand their business. The other states mentioned above are watching WA closely, as did Utah, and are poised to strike up their own versions. The forward looking attorneys of those states also acknowledge that having paralegals willing to take on this advancement to their careers could mean more business for their firms. It would stand to reason an entirely new client base would be reached. The common, ordinary citizen will be able to have their day in court without the need to pay the higher attorneys’ fees that must be charged. Rather than feel that attorneys are being threatened by the new paraprofessional role, many understand that if this section of the public were already availing themselves of an attorney’s services, there would be no need for consideration of the broadened role of the paralegal.

With so much happening in the legal community, now is an exciting time to be a paralegal, a paraprofessional. The future looks bright! For those who work in Florida, it could be awhile before the Florida Bar considers these programs such as these, but one day something similar just might, nay, could happen. Will you be ready?

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PARALEGAL SKILLS-WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO GET AHEAD?

By: Sylvia Jarrett

As we all know, the legal field is varied and no paralegal job or attorney job is exactly the same as the next one. There are legal counsel and legal staff who work for corporations and companies. There are attorneys and legal staff who work in small law offices and those who work for large law firms. There are attorneys and legal staff who provide legal defense for the indigent, handle real estate matters, handle corporate litigation matters, handle criminal matters, handle personal injury cases, and the list goes on and on.

Despite the variation in the services being rendered by the specific attorney or their staff, there are skills that are important and common to most, if not all legal positions. If you search the Web, you will find many articles on the skills paralegal need to excel in their career. In *Top Ten Legal Skills*, [http://legalcareers.about.com/od/legalcareerbasics/tp/Legal-Skills.htm](http://legalcareers.about.com/od/legalcareerbasics/tp/Legal-Skills.htm), following are those that are required in most legal settings:

1. **Oral Communication:** Language is the most fundamental tool so that you can (1) convey information clearly, concisely, and logically; (2) communicate persuasively; (3) advocate for a position or cause; (4) master legal terminology; and (5) develop listening skills. Remember—sometimes listening is more important than talking! Remember, you are a liaison, the attorney’s right hand, and expressing your thoughts clearly is essential.

2. **Written Communication:** Communication with letters, legal documents, contracts, etc. is integral to the legal field. Legal personnel must (1) master styles and the mechanics of writing; (2) master English grammar; (3) write in an organized, concise, and persuasive manner; and (4) draft legal documents used in the specific area of law in which it is practiced. Document formatting as required by your attorney or the specific court can be an important skill as well. Because writing is integral to the paralegal career, if you perfect this skill, you often find your job more lucrative.

3. **Client Service:** In most legal settings, there is a client whether it is a criminal defendant, someone buying or selling a house, an injured person, a corporation or entity, etc. Clients should be treated honestly, capably, and responsibly. Skills in developing clients and keeping clients are important. Developing good communication skills goes a long way in keeping clients informed, happy, and in keeping them as satisfied clients.

4. **Analytical & Logical Reasoning:** Legal professionals must learn to review, comprehend, analyze, evaluate, etc. documents, complex information, etc. Depending on the type of law you are involved with, this could involve review and comprehension of many types of documents as they relate to your specific area of law.

5. **Legal Research:** Researching legal concepts, case law, judicial opinions, statutes, state and federal rules, etc. often are an important part of the legal professional’s job. As a paralegal, depending on your attorney, your involvement may be minimal or you may be required to be heavily involved in legal research. Another skill often involved in this is investigative skills where paralegals are required to analyze case facts, track down medical records, evidence, documents, witnesses, etc.

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1. [9 Paralegal Skill for Students Who Want to Excel in Their Career](http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills)
2. [9 Paralegal Skill for Students Who Want to Excel in Their Career](http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills)
3. [8 Skills You Need to Succeed as a Paralegal](http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/tp/paralegal-skills-hht)
6. **Technology**: We all know that over the years, technology has become a large part of our daily work and changes constantly! In addition to word processing, presentation software, time and billing software, we are bombarded by e-mails, voice mails, videoconferencing, etc. Paralegals must become and continue to remain proficient in electronic discovery, on-line filing of pleadings in various courts, as well as document management software. Technology has created new paralegal niches, i.e., litigation support and e-discovery positions. Paralegals with advanced technology skills have a competitive edge in the legal market.\(^iv\)

7. **Knowledge of Substantive Law & Legal Procedure**: All legal professionals need a basic knowledge of substantive law and legal procedure. Often, the attorney relies on the paralegal heavily for legal procedure applicable to local, state, and/or federal rules, filing deadlines, etc.

8. **Time Management**: In the legal profession, often productivity is tied to billable hours in order to bill clients resulting in constant pressure to bill time and manage large workloads. Paralegals must develop: superior multi-tasking skills, strong work ethic, ability to juggle competing priorities, ability to meet tight deadlines, and calendar management skills. This would include the skill of “prioritizing” and “thinking ahead.” \(^v\)

9. **Organization**: In order to manage large amounts of data, documents, evidence, etc., paralegals must develop organizational skills including: Ability to sort, order, and manage large amounts of documents, exhibits, etc.; ability to identify objectives, catalog data & create organizational structure from available information; and the ability to use technology to assist with this process. “To stay organized, paralegals must be able to change priorities at the drop of a hat.” \(^vi\)

10. **Teamwork**: Legal professionals do no work without others to assist. Even solo practitioners rely on legal secretaries and support staff. Teamwork includes: collaborating with others to reach a common goal; coordinating and sharing information and knowledge; cultivating relationships; attending and participating in team events, meetings, etc. Since rules prohibit the unauthorized practice of law, paralegals are required to work under the attorney’s supervision. Paralegals work collaboratively with attorneys and staff within their firm, but also are required to collaborate with clients, opposing counsel, experts, and vendors. \(^vii\)

In addition to the above ten skills, “professionalism” may also be one of the most important skills or characteristics of a paralegal. Understanding the importance of professional and ethical skills allow a paralegal to excel in her job. \(^viii\)

\(^{iv}\)8 Skills You Need to Succeed as a Paralegal, [http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/tp/paralegal skills-h](http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/tp/paralegal skills-h)
\(^{v}\)9 Paralegal Skill for Students Who Want to Excel in Their Career, [http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills](http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills)
\(^{vi}\)9 Paralegal Skill for Students Who Want to Excel in Their Career, [http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills](http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills)
\(^{vii}\)8 Skills You Need to Succeed as a Paralegal, [http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/tp/paralegal skills-h](http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/tp/paralegal skills-h)
\(^{viii}\)9 Paralegal Skill for Students Who Want to Excel in Their Career, [http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills](http://www.paralegal.edu/blog/bid/236138/9-Paralegal-Skills)
ATTORNEY DISQUALIFICATION WHEN A NONLAWYER SWITCHES SIDES

By: Sylvia Jarrett

You are excited about your new position at a local law firm! More money, better benefits, etc! You have extensive experience working the same types of cases that the new firm handles and they were very happy to hire you! In fact, you happened to work on the other side of an ongoing case with your new firm. Life is good…or is it?

Lawyers are required to make sure that the non-lawyer employees who share in a client’s confidential information comply with ethical duties not to disclose or use information without the client’s consent. Fla. Ethics. Op. 86-5. What are the obligations of each firm regarding the client?

The former firm should admonish the departing employee about the ethical duty not to reveal confidential material of any client to the hiring firm. The hiring firm is ethically bound not to seek or permit disclosure of confidences by the employee and not to use such information. Further, if the departing employee had a close relationship with the client, the former firm must advise the client of the employee’s departure and new employment, which could lead to the client and the client’s law firm deciding that disqualification of the law firm which hired the employee is necessary.

The courts have usually found that disqualification of a party’s chosen counsel is a drastic remedy and should be used sparingly. Caruso v. Knight, 124 So.3d 962 (Fla. 4th DCA 2013), reh’g. denied (2013). However, the 3rd and 4th Florida district courts require disqualification. See Kouisis v. River, 730 So.2d 289 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999). Conversely, the 1st, 2nd, and 5th District Courts do not require disqualification. See Esquire Care, Inc. v. Maquire, 532 So.2d 740 (Fla.2d DCA 1988), Stewart v. Bee-Dee Neon & Signs, Inc., 751 So.2d 196 (Fla. 1st DCA 2000), City of Apopka v. All Corners, Inc, 701 So.2d 641 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997), and Lansing v. Lansing, 784 So.2d 1254 (Fla. 5th DCA 2001).

Practice Note: Keep these ethical issues in mind when you are changing jobs from firm to firm or when new legal staff joins your firm.

Reference:

Attorney Disqualification when a Non-Lawyer Employee Switches Sides, Friendly Passages, January / February, 2016, by The Honorable F. Shields, McManus, Circuit Judge,
Cheat Sheet for Common Mistakes in Legal Writing

By: Elizabeth Hudlett, ACP, FRP

In today’s “paperless” world, we all create documents by cutting and pasting from past documents and forms. In doing so, it’s easy to overlook common punctuation and grammar typos. Here is a cheat sheet for mistakes that I see almost daily:

**Defendant, Defendants, Defendant’s, and Defendants’**.
- Defendant is one defendant.
- Defendants is more than one defendant.
- Defendant’s is the possessive of a single defendant.
- Defendants’ is the possessive of more than one defendant.

**Ensure/Insure/Assure**
- Assure is something you tell someone to remove doubt.
  - I can assure you that you won’t be disappointed by attending the NWFPA’s business meeting.
- Ensure is a guarantee an event or condition.
  - To ensure there are no misspellings, perhaps you should read your pleading again.
- Insure is reserved for something limiting financial liability.
  - Is your firm is insured against malpractice?

**Endorse/Indorse**
- Endorse is to declare public approval or support of something.
  - I am officially endorsing Daffy Duck for President of the United States.
- Indorse is a legal term used to describe the transfer of a negotiable instrument.
  - When you sign the back of a check to deposit at the bank, you are indorsing that check.

**Irregardless** – this is still not a word!

**It’s/Its/It’s’**
- It’s is a contraction for “it is” or “it has”
  - This article wasn’t very interesting, but it’s quite educational.
- Its is a possessive pronoun.
  - The insurance company wants to have its cake and eat it too.
- It’s’ is not a word.
**Stationary vs. stationery**
- *Stationary* means not moving or still. 
  - Spin classes are conducted on stationary bicycles.
- *Stationery* means office or writing supplies.
  - I need to order more stationery for the Memorial Day party.

**Systemic/Systematic**
- *Systemic* describes something that happens throughout an entire system.
  - I hope he doesn’t have a systemic infection.
- *Systematic* describes something that was methodical, intentional, or implemented according to plan.
  - The doctors began systematic treatment to address the cancer.

**Pleaded vs. Pled**
This one is a bit tricky, since neither is technically wrong. However, Brian Boone, a senior litigation associate at Alston & Bird notes that “SCOTUS has used pleaded in more than 3,000 opinions, compared to 26 instances for pled. If the Court prefers pleaded, it’s probably the way to go.”

**Putting Numbers in Parentheses**
Example: Please file a response to our request for copies within the next ten (10) days in order to avoid hearing on the enclosed motion to compel.

Most of us are guilty on this one... *Garner’s Modern American Usage* says it was originally done in legal writing to prevent fraudulent alterations, suggesting it would be harder to alter both the word and number than just one or the other. This is a “relic of past legal writing” that is no longer necessary, and is not recommended or required by any current writing style guides.

References:


Did You Know……about Medical Lien Attorneys?

By: Ari Bures

The Board of Governors recently approved rule amendments which would allow for personal injury attorneys to utilize lien attorneys for the negotiation of medical liens and subrogation.

It all began as an ethics inquiry brought to the attention of the Florida Bar: Is it ethical for the original contingency based lawyer to hire another attorney who would be better equipped to negotiate the medical liens in exchange for a “reverse contingency” fee that would be a percentage of the amount they successfully reduce in medical liens? The reason for such an idea to be presented at an ethics committee is that the fee would be on top of the 40% the original contingency-based lawyer would be paid from the settlement, even though the potential for reduced medical liens would increase the size of their settlement.

The amendment was initially rejected by the Florida Supreme Court, suggesting that the original attorney should negotiate the medical liens themselves, or cover the cost of the lien attorney at entirely their own expense. The Board felt that this rejection would be detrimental to clients if there was no incentive for their attorneys to negotiate or have their medical liens negotiated.

They redrafted the amendment, and proposed that lien attorneys be hired in the most extreme cases. Several other provisions were recommended, including written consent from the client, as well as court approval and possible adjustability of the fees for both the lien attorney and the contingency attorney. It was approved in a 26-17 vote by the Board.

Reference:
NWFPA MEMBER & TEAM SPOTLIGHT— By Caroline Peterson, RN, FRP & Jenice C. Jones, CP, FRP

NAME: Carissa L. Mitchell, FRP
FIRM: Escambia County Sheriff’s Office

WHY DID YOU BECOME A PARALEGAL: I began working at the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office in the Asset Forfeiture Unit in 2009. My job responsibilities included preparing case files, drafting contracts and assisting with interviews. A position become available for the Administrative Assistant to the Sheriff’s General Counsel and through my training and experience in the Forfeiture Unit I felt as though I was up for the challenge. I interviewed and subsequently attained the position in 2010. While working as the Administrative Assistant I began pursuing my degree in Legal Assisting. Upon completion of the Associates program I was promoted to Legal Assistant. In my position I assist with a wide variety of issues and cases from civil litigation to Florida Public Records law.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING A PARALEGAL: I love the working with the issues of law enforcement and local government. For the most part, every day is different with new challenges. This has enabled me to learn a tremendous amount about a wide variety of topics. It is never boring.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY: Within the organization, I would like to create a process by which we would enable members to share ideas, information, contacts, advice, and support that is mutually beneficial.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION: I enjoy being part of an association of like-minded professionals.

PERSONAL: I am married to Thomas and we have two sons, Zachary, 5, and Bradley, 9 months. There is never a dull or quiet moment at our house. We are die-hard New Orleans Saints fans, WHO DAT!

NAME: Olivia Cole

SCHOOL & EMPLOYMENT: I attend the University of West Florida as a full-time student majoring in Legal Studies. I am currently employed at The Fresh Market as a part-time cashier.

GRADUATION DATE: April 2017

AREA OF LAW: I’m interested in Human Rights Law

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE LEGAL FIELD: I chose the legal field because I’ve always had a knack for law, I will attend law school as well. Human trafficking is an ongoing global issue. Women, girls and children are trafficked mostly. I want to help combat this issue and save as many lives as possible.

FAMILY, HOBBIES: In my free time I am constantly conducting research on my career. I am an avid reader, I love to shop, hang with friends, watch movies, and most of all spend time with my family. My favorite color is pink, and my dream car is a Bentley! I would be remiss if I did not give honor and recognition to my parents for everything they’ve done to ensure I continue to stay on the right path, holding steadfast to my faith and staying focus. It is a blessing to reside in the United States of America as a woman especially; women in some countries are not allowed to have a voice, nor, needless to say, have rights. In Africa women are still denied education and employment opportunities. Recently in Iran, woman were banned from watching a men's volleyball game. I was inspired to become a human rights attorney after hearing, reading and watching innumerable stories from surviving victims who were trafficked. I am excited about my career, and I look forward to all that is in store.
NAME: Donna Barton

FIRM: Perry & Young, P.A., Panama City, Florida

AREA OF LAW: Wrongful death and catastrophic type personal injury cases.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT BEING A PARALEGAL: There are many things that I love about my job as a paralegal at Perry & Young. First and foremost, I love the people I have the opportunity to work with every day. We are a team of individuals who strive to meet the needs of our clients and make certain that each client feels that his or her case is the most important case we have. We work together as a team and jump in to assist each other when one team member is overloaded or in a time crunch. We truly respect and care about each other, and we like to refer to ourselves as the Perry & Young family.

Second, most of the clients that I deal with on a daily basis have suffered a tremendous loss. They may have experienced the sudden loss of a loved one, or a life-altering injury that has left them in a wheelchair or unable to work and provide for their family as they were once able to do. Many times they have to relearn how to walk, feed themselves, or even the very simplest of daily tasks. They have tremendous obstacles that they are faced with every day. For most of them, their lives will never be the same.

Because these larger cases tend to take a little longer to reach a resolution, I have the opportunity to really get to know my clients. It gives me great joy to see their progress as they work to overcome their injuries. I love being able to help them where I can and to relieve them of some of the burden they carry. When we finally reach a settlement in one of these cases, it gives a great deal of happiness and satisfaction to all of us to know that our client is going to be taken care of financially and their physical needs met. I truly feel that I help a lot of people in my job.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS: This past year I was able to achieve one of my life-long professional goals when I became a Florida Registered Paralegal. I had worked in the legal field for more than twenty years, but never thought that I could be a registered paralegal. My boss, Mr. Perry, encouraged me to pursue this goal, and finally, after all these years, I am proud to say that I am a Florida Registered Paralegal.

PERSONAL: I am married to my husband of thirty-two years, Bruce. He is the pastor of Central Baptist Church in Panama City. We have three beautiful children. Our oldest son, Bradley (25), is married to Dakota and serves in the U.S. Air Force. He is stationed in Rapid City, South Dakota. Our second son, Brady, is 21 years old and will graduate from Florida State University in May of this year. Our youngest child, Joanna, is 19 years old and is studying Dental Hygiene at Gulf Coast State College.

Life as a pastor’s wife, mother, and litigation paralegal is very busy, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. I love my family, I love my church, and I love my job. Life is good!
NWFPA TECHNOLOGY TEAM
BY: April Swift

The NWFPA Technology Team is tasked with (1) maintaining and updating the Association website; (2) moderating the Association’s social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook; (3) corresponding with Remote Members regarding monthly webcast, and (4) periodically checking the Florida Bar’s website for new FRP’s to add to our list.

In the past year, the Technology Team (with the help of Kris Hill) has updated the website to the new look and made it more responsive so it will work better with mobile devices. A “Learn More” button was added on the main page so that people can use it to contact the board members to gain more information about our association with the hopes that we can reach more members. There is a link that tells you about the upcoming luncheons, including speaker name, topic and applicable CLE.

For the future the Tech Team has two short term goals. The first short term goal is to add an interactive application for membership that can be completed and submitted online with upload capacity (for certifications, transcripts, etc.) and an interactive fillable form for renewals both of these with a Paypal link. The second is to make the newsletter more interactive by breaking up the articles and features and make them into blog posts in hopes we will get better Google results.

The team currently has four long term goals for our website which affect the Team Page, Events, Online CLEs and Selling Ads. We would like to add a "teams" page that includes a link to the team chair, description of events/purpose, and other pertinent information about the team; maybe include pictures of the team members and team events; set up something like a blog that can be added to without deleting old content; creates a history of association events. For events, we would like to add separate "buttons" for our annual consistent events; info to stay up year round until updated info as events occur each year. For example, a button for Christmas Auction, button for charity drives where we can display flyers, donation requests, drop-offs etc, button for annual seminar with flyer, button for Law Week/provides essay contest info, button for naturalization events. On the online CLE Videos we would like to add a link on our website to our old videos of CLEs with inserted tags that will come up on Google search (the idea being to bring in non-members to pay for the CLEs as it costs us nothing to air them). Last, but not least, we are exploring the idea of selling ads on our website in order to pay for updates to our website, we were thinking of potentially selling scrolling ads at bottom of page for sponsorship (potential sponsors: attorney firms, court reporters, prolegal) proposed cost $50 per sponsor.

Team member, April Swift, primarily deals with the website, updating nwfpa.com on an as needed basis. The Membership documents are updated at the board’s request to post items such as the revised By-Laws, Board Meeting Minutes and General Meeting Minutes, revised Membership Applications and add the yearly NALA Reports. The Newsletters are posted to the website and
we hope to implement the new goal of breaking it down soon. The Events page is a work in progress as we work to keep this page up to date. The job board requires constant monitoring by the Board and Team to make sure the contents are acceptable and jobs are added and removed as needed.

Team member, April Williams, may not be local any more but she still does more than most members realize. Primarily she collects the RSVPs of remote users on a tracking spreadsheet for checks-and-balancing purposes, sends out the webcast hyperlink code to the remote attendees the morning of the webcast; answers any questions regarding technical assistance needed by any remote viewer and acts as a liaison for the remote viewers on an as-needed basis.

Additionally on a periodic/quarterly basis, April Williams downloads the previously recorded webcasts from our Livestream account; prepares the information necessary for each recording including gathering photos of the speakers; uploads the webcasts and gathered information to our DigitalContentShelf for purchase by the general public and deletes the recordings from the Livestream archive.

April Williams is not the primary contact for updating the LinkedIn group and Facebook group but she is always there to update and answer questions on an as-needed basis. If you would like to help with this area of our team, please contact one of the current members and we will get you on board. We are also looking for someone to help watch the Florida Bar website for new FRPs. So you’re not tech savvy you say… well we bet you use Facebook at the very least so we invite you to contact aswift@shellfleming.com if you wish to sign up to help us out on our social media sites or if you have a few minutes once a month to check for new FRPs on the Florida Bar Website.

Link to NWFPA Facebook page: 
https://www.facebook.com/northwestfloridaparalegalassociation/

Link to NWFPA Linkedin page: 
https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1231417
Click on the course name for a course description, registration, and speaker bio information.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day and Time Central Time</th>
<th>LIVE! Webinar</th>
<th>Category</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Tuesday, March 29, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **The Ins and Outs of Federal Court**  
Debbby J. Sawyer, ACP | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Wednesday, March 30, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Navigating the Bermuda Triangle: Interplay Among FMLA, ADA and Workers’ Compensation Leave Laws**  
Jennifer Frank, Attorney | General CLE (Intermediate) (1.5 CLE) |
| Tuesday, April 5, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Collection Law from A to Z**  
Kevin Gowen, Attorney | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Friday, April 8, 2016 1:00 p.m. (CT) | **Proper Utilization of Paralegals**  
Elizabeth H. Nellis, ACP | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Tuesday, April 12, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Patent Law**  
Peter Gutenberg, MS, JD | General CLE (Basic) |
| Thursday, April 14, 2016 12:00 p.m. (CT) | **Techno-Ethics 2.0**  
Karin M. Scheehle, ACP | ETHICS (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Wednesday, April 20, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Defending Questionable Claims for Workers’ Compensation Benefits**  
George E. Martin, III, Attorney | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Tuesday, April 26, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Fourth Amendment - The Law of Search & Seizure**  
John Davis | General CLE (2.0 CLE) |
| Thursday, April 28, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Malpractice Insurance Law for Paralegals**  
John A. Bermingham, Jr., Esq. | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Friday, April 29, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Introduction to Proper Subpoena Procedures**  
Rebecca J. Maxson, ACP | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Tuesday, May 3, 2016 1:00 p.m. (CT) | **Are You Sabotaging Your Annual Performance Review**  
Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD | Non-Substantive CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
| Tuesday, May 10, 2016 12:00 p.m. (CT) | **Ethics for Today’s Professional**  
Kathryn M. Keane, EA | ETHICS (Basic) (2.0 CLE) |
| Wednesday, May 11, 2016 10:00 a.m. (CT) | **Crowd Funding & Other Topics**  
Nicholas M. Oertel, Esq. | General CLE (Basic) (1.5 CLE) |
Hear ye, hear ye....

KUDOS TO 2 NEW CERTIFIED PARALEGALS

Caroline Peterson and our current First Vice-President, Heidi Yefremov, both recently passed the NALA CP exam and both are now Certified Paralegals!

CONGRATULATIONS CAROLINE & HEIDI!!!

**SAVE THE DATE**

The 2016 Law Day luncheon is scheduled for April 28, 2016 at the Crowne Plaza. Guest speaker will be Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice, Jorge Labarga. 2016 Law Week Theme is “Miranda-More Than Words”

NETWORKING OFFER

NWFPA member, Ari Bures, is offering to network with anyone receiving requests from their clients about estate planning, probate or long-term care services.

Contact Ari Bures at abures@shellfleming.com

UPCOMING NWFPA FOOD DRIVE TO BENEFIT MANNA FOOD PANTRIES

The NWFPA Charity Team is planning a food drive to benefit local Manna food pantries. They plan to start collecting food donations at the April membership meeting and end collections at the May membership meeting.

Be on the lookout for emails from the Charity Team with more information on the spring food drive.
### NWFPA Executive Committee 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Debra Bass, FRP</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.president@gmail.com">nwfpa.president@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Vice-President</td>
<td>Heidi Yefremov</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.1stVP@gmail.com">nwfpa.1stVP@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Vice-President</td>
<td>Regina Vino, FRP</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.2ndVP@gmail.com">nwfpa.2ndVP@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Donna Nall</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.secretary@gmail.com">nwfpa.secretary@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Selina Bryant, FRP</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.treasurer@gmail.com">nwfpa.treasurer@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentarian</td>
<td>Carissa Mitchell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.parliamentarian@gmail.com">nwfpa.parliamentarian@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NALA Liaison</td>
<td>Aurora Osborn, CP</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nwfpa.NALA@gmail.com">nwfpa.NALA@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### NWFPA Mission Statement

The Northwest Florida Paralegal Association is dedicated to encouraging the ethical and professional growth of paralegals in the northwest Florida area by providing continuing education to members of the paralegal profession; by providing a venue for members to interact with other members of the legal community; and by supporting and carrying out the programs, purposes, aims and goals of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

### Newsletter Team:

Caroline Peterson, Chair/Editor  
   Jenice C. Jones  
   Elizabeth Hudlett  
   Sylvia Jarrett  
   Dana Martinez-Jones  
   Arielle “Ari” Bures  
   Tracey Parker  
   Regina Vino, Proofreader