



***eDigest
Mini***

April

2022



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

We are conducting the annual *Job Satisfaction and Salary Survey*. Please use the link below to give feedback on the state of the Arizona paralegal workforce. The survey will take less than 2 minutes. The information we obtain from the survey is very helpful, particularly to our student members and those seeking new jobs, to see how strong the paralegal community is in terms of qualifications and experience. It also shows the salary it takes to keep such amazing employees on the job (and something we can share with employers at raise time!).

[Link to Survey](#)

Since the job of a paralegal can only be done successfully with education and lots of training, we often hear from student members how difficult it is to get a job in this field. Successful paralegals seem to all have the same basic qualities: confidence, organization, attention to detail and ability to focus in on important issues, a thick skin and determination. Build onto that your legal education (and maybe a certificate) and bingo: that's a highly sought after paralegal! Not something suited to people in all walks of life.

What used to be a career with rigid lines dividing offices into two camps: them (attorneys) and us (not just paralegals but all staff), now the lines are very much blurred and paralegal duties continue to cross lines. Inside a law firm, most paralegals do the work of attorneys at much lower rates to the clients. Paralegals are the backbone of the law office and not much can be accomplished without us. That clear fact was reinforced by Justice Bollick, our keynote speaker at the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference. He spoke about the Arizona court's desire to expand affordable legal services. That translated into an opportunity for very experienced paralegals in limited areas such as criminal and family law to jump into the "other camp" without having a law degree. These legal paraprofessionals can appear in limited courts on behalf of clients who would normally be forced to go it alone due to the often times prohibitive cost of hiring an attorney. The licensing is intense with a rigorous examination and, as of February 2022, only a 30.4% pass rate. We included a question or two about this field in our annual survey. We will continue to observe the progress of this new field of legal professionals and provide information to our members as appropriate.

Last but certainly not least: **Please register for the annual conference.** We anticipate about 125 attendees and registration is in full swing. As the hardest working people in the law firm, we all deserve the day off to attend the conference, so let your attorneys know that attending is critical to your further education. Plus after two years of staying home, it will be wonderful to gather as a paralegal community, share stories and see what lies ahead on the paralegal horizon.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the conference on April 29th. A link to the conference flyer and to register is below.

[2022 Conference Brochure.pdf](#)

[2022 ANNUAL LEGAL CONFERENCE - REGISTER NOW!](#)

Karen Flaaen, CP

We would like to share this space and highlight you and your accomplishments. Please consider sending us original works on topics of interest to our membership. Just reply to this newsletter with content and/or questions.

Membership NEWS

Welcome New Members

Lisa Carlin

Stephen Kridler

Elizabeth Mercurio

Christina Meyers

Cassandra Wunschel

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact us at membership@azparalegal.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ARIZONA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS



ON THE HORIZON:
NAVIGATING THE CHANGING LEGAL
LANDSCAPE

2022 ANNUAL LEGAL CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2022

REGISTER NOW

**The APA and CODEJ – Committee on Diversity,
Equality and Justice**

The APA has been invited to represent paralegals on the Appeals' Court's Commission on Diversity, Equality and Justice ("CODEJ"). CODEJ works to ensure a court system which is approachable and accessible by all community members in Arizona. CODEJ has not had representation of non-lawyer legal industry stakeholders previously. CODEJ fosters diversity in the judiciary, and has ongoing community commitments in

creating career development and mentorship programs for youth. These have included the 'Legal Futures' workshop for middle and high school students around the state (staffed by judges of the Arizona Appeals Court and Supreme Court) and a summer internship program for college students. CODEJ would like to have a stronger presence in developing law-related (or legal career related) curriculum programming for high schools.

Emily Goldberg, ACP, APA's 2nd vice present, attended CODEJ's March meeting and introduced CODEJ to APA's diversity and development work, including our Student Town Hall, scholarship program, student membership, and paralegal mentoring, and the Board's February vote to name the APA's annual scholarships after Hon. Rosa Mroz.

Hon. David Gass (Az. Ct. of Appeals Division 1), our Annual Conference keynote speaker, is a dedicated member of the Committee and oversees its summer internship program.



NALA'S WEBSITE: Visit www.nala.org for information on all things NALA, including certification, advanced certification, and upcoming webinars. Be sure to check out NALA Commons, an area where paralegals can network, ask questions, get advice, and share valuable information with one another.

NALA MEMBERSHIP: NALA provides exceptional continuing education and professional development for Paralegals. Joining NALA gives you access to a number of benefits that can help you advance your paralegal career. Check it out here! <https://www.nala.org/Membership>

NALA MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY MEMBERS: Are you celebrating a milestone anniversary with NALA? Each quarter, NALA honors and recognizes those individuals

who have reached 5, 10 15, 20, and 25-year anniversaries with them. If you have reached one of these milestones, you are eligible to receive one of NALA's complimentary anniversary pins. Claiming yours is easy, just visit www.nala.org/about-nala/milestone-members to start the process. Congratulations on this achievement!

NALA FACTS & FINDINGS AND WEBINARS: NALA is always looking for individuals to write articles for their quarterly publication, Facts & Findings, and presenters of webinars. If you have a gift of writing or speaking, or simply want to try your hand at it, contact me at cheryl.viscontii@gmail.com. This will afford you the opportunity to gain national exposure and teach to others at the same time. You do not have to be a member of NALA to do either of these.

SAVE THE DATE: 2022 NALA Conference is being held on July 22-24, 2022, at the JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. Visit [NALA CONFERENCE](#) to learn more about it.



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Recent Legal News:

Justia Legal Analysis – Verdict:

[European Courts Deliver a Wake-Up Call about American Prison Conditions](#)

[Picking Your Own Poison and Capital Defense Lawyers’ Ethical Quandary](#)

[As Oklahoma Goes, So Goes America’s Death Penalty?](#)

[**We Need to Talk About Psychopaths**](#)

Notary Bulletin - National Notary Association:

[Is there a special Notary certificate for blind signers?](#)

[4 Tips For Notaries Claiming Home Office Tax Deductions](#)

[Notary FAQ: Assessing A Signer’s Mental Capacity](#)

[How I launched my remote Notary business](#)

[What Every Notary Needs To Know About Journals](#)

[How to deal with Notary work stress and stay healthy and happy on the job](#)

Other Articles:

Maricopa County Superior Court Announces eFile capabilities expansions for Family Court went into effect on March, 17, 2022. eFiling for case initiating family law documents will become mandatory for attorneys beginning June 1, 2022. This expansion allows for the eFiling of case initiating documents through the statewide eFiling portal, [eFileAZ](#).

The court now also provides electronic applications for the deferral and waiver of court fees. The application is only applicable to the Family Court, Civil and Tax case types. [Visit application page](#).



[Click Here for More CLE Opportunities](#)



TreblePebbles.com

Recipes

Some fun recipes to try!

Loaded Cauliflower Breakfast Bake

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a51520/loaded-cauliflower-breakfast-bake-recipe/>

Instant Pot Pulled Pork

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a27043369/instant-pot-pulled-pork-recipe/>

April Showers Cocktail

<https://culinaryginger.com/april-showers-cocktail/>



A Little Inspiration for the Week

"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."

- Abraham Lincoln

Breaking Down Professional Networking for Students

By: Toya Walker

Professional networking is a key component of a successful career, especially for paralegals. The earlier students understand networking, the better off they will be preparing for their futures. This article breaks down legal professional networking for students into four categories: what, who, why, and how.

WHAT

What is networking? According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, networking is "the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business." Networking has also been described as a

long-term process by which we share ideas, leads, information, contacts, advice, and support that is mutually beneficial.

During my tenure as an adjunct instructor, I am often asked the following questions by paralegal students: Is there a secret formula to networking? Does networking really lead to a new job, mentor, or even a new client? My answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

If networking works, then why are so many students intimidated? I believe students are intimidated by networking because they feel they do not have the personality type and/or skills to strike up a conversation, introduce themselves in a room full of strangers, or function like a social butterfly. Some people feel more comfortable networking one-on-one rather than in large groups. My suggestion is rather than worrying about what to say when networking, focus on asking people about themselves and their work. Students must change the narrative and their view of networking in order to be successful at it. Networking should be viewed as getting to know others and letting others get to know you. I find that having this approach takes a lot of stress out of networking and puts everyone in a comfortable state.

Additionally, networking can be described as professional relationship building. It is all about putting yourself out there (both online and offline) and meeting people who work in an

industry or profession (i.e., the legal profession) that you are interested in learning more about and building a relationship with. The goal is to create a professional network. This simply means building a group of professional contacts you know well enough to call in a favor and for whom you would not object doing a favor. It really is that simple.

WHO

Students inquire about who should make up their professional network. My suggestion is to include people with a variety of connections, such as people with legal and technical knowledge, judges, attorneys, paralegals, legal assistants, social contacts, and peers, as well as people with external perspectives, business knowledge, and with backgrounds different from yours (cultural, gender, age, educational, occupational, etc.)

WHY

Why is it so important to build a legal professional network? It is important because the people in your network can help you solve a difficult problem, provide insight and perspective, teach new things, provide support, inform you of new opportunities, celebrate successes, give valuable feedback, and serve as a stress reliever.

HOW

How to build a network can be approached in different ways. Some examples include attending meetings and events on campus to meet new people, attending meetings and events of your professional paralegal associations, joining an online professional network such as LinkedIn, and inviting legal professional colleagues to lunch, coffee, tea, etc. Another way to build a network is to attend CLE seminars, paralegal conferences, and paralegal association meetings with other students. I strongly urge students to volunteer for projects where their specific expertise is needed (i.e., pro bono legal clinics).

CONCLUSION

Networking is a two-way street. Solicit your network to get the information and assistance you need, but you also need to be a source of information for your network. It is important to look for opportunities to make offers and contributions. Maintaining regular formal or informal contact with members of your network, including when you do not need anything from them, is key. Finally, ask people who you trust if they are aware of individuals who work in the legal profession, and ask if they would make an initial contact on your behalf. I believe that if students do the things that this article suggests, they will develop successful networking habits and build an outstanding professional network that will serve as a circle of peers for years to come.

Paralegal Pathways: Legal Assistant to Law Student

By: Kristine Custodio Suero, ACP

Many of us contemplate it but do not actually make the leap from paralegal to lawyer. Yet some of us make that transition to lawyer early in our careers and some make the decision after many years of practice as a paralegal.

For those of us considering the law school route, what are some considerations that we should think about so that we move forward with our eyes wide open? I interviewed two legal professionals who made that leap and are currently in law school. Each has a unique and interesting perspective shaped by their personal and professional experiences.

Kioshi Addison-Bell, Former Immigration Law Legal Assistant, 2L at Stanford Law School

Q: Kioshi, can you please share a little bit about your background and the defining moment of when you made the decision to apply to law school?

A: I am a lifelong Californian. I was born in Modesto, California and moved to Carlsbad, California when I was a Sophomore in High School. I attended La Costa Canyon High School in Encinitas and spent two years at MiraCosta College in San Diego before transferring to UCLA, where I majored in Political Science. During my second quarter at UCLA, I enrolled in two law courses and realized how fascinating and complex the law is. In one of the classes my professor assigned five full landmark Supreme Court opinions as readings each week. I noticed that I was enjoying reading over a hundred pages of legal opinions a week and determined that I would probably enjoy law school too.

Q: What do you know now that you would tell your 18-year old self?

A: I would tell myself to welcome disappointment. There have been many times in my life when I did not get the internship I wanted or get admitted into a school I wanted. But life has a way of working itself out when you keep going. Each time something does not work out the way you expected or hoped, redirect that disappointment into motivation. I would also tell myself to recognize my strengths and weaknesses—try improving where you can and capitalize on the things you are good at. Of course, I would also tell my 18-year old self to show more respect to my parents.

Q: Law school is known to induce stress in students navigating the challenging environment. How do you stay motivated and keep your mindset positive and focused?

A: I try to remind myself why I came to law school in the first place: I found it interesting. Sometimes I must put a pause on law school, take a step off the hamster wheel, and recalibrate. I do this by talking with non-law school friends or family members, or spending time immersed in nature without technology. The most important advice is to not compare yourself with your peers. This will be incredibly difficult in practice and something that you cannot always do. But when you remember that you are in law school to learn and eventually become a lawyer, and that everyone is coming into law school with different skill sets and experiences, it helps. Maintain the relationships that you value, law school does not need to completely take over your life. Remember the people who helped you get to where you are.

Q: Who do you most admire and why?

A: My parents. Neither of my parents attended college and they did everything they could to help me go to college. They sacrificed things in their lives so that I could do what they did not. Their selflessness is something I find admirable, and I keep in mind everything they have done for me when I am stressed out.

Kai Huffman, ACP, CEDS, Litigation Paralegal, 2L at Northwestern California University School of Law.

Q: Kai, you and I have known each other for quite some time through the paralegal association world? What made you decide to shift gears and apply to law school at this point in your career?

A: I have always wanted to go to law school, but I had my two children at 20 and 38 so I was always raising my sons and working full time. I had actually earned my college degree while working evenings when my oldest son was growing up but never could make the time commitment to law school. It isn't like college or a paralegal program where you can take a few classes a year and finish when you finish. I had started law school a few times, but it just wasn't right for me or my family. With the pandemic and working from home, my sons grown and my very supportive husband, and the realization that I still wanted to go to law

school when I grow up, I was in a place where I had the time to devote to law school, so I am.

Q: What is the most helpful part of your experience as a paralegal that prepared you as a law student?

A: I breezed through the Introduction to Law class but I think in a lot of ways it can be a deterrence in the same way that taking the CP exam after I had been a paralegal for a number of years was when I was studying for that. When you know a lot about a subject, you can kind of trick yourself into thinking you don't have to study as hard, but the reality is you have to train yourself to think of things in a different way.

Q: If you had to do it all over again as far as your career is concerned, what would you change?

A: I have loved being a paralegal and working with associations and other paralegals from the local to the state and national level and advancing the profession, but I think if I had it to do over I would have taken the leap sooner and made the sacrifice of time for the four years of law school. It really does go by quickly.

Q: For other paralegals considering applying to law school, what pearls of wisdom would you offer?

A: I don't know that I have any pearls of wisdom other than that you are never too old to follow a dream and that there really is a time for everything and sometimes it's not today, but maybe tomorrow will be the time.

Mentoring New Legal Assistants

By: Laurie Fields

February 25, 2022

A year ago, I was holed up in my office with my headset on in the middle of a scheduled conference call. My head bobbed up and down as I watched our new legal assistant bounce like a Jack Russell Terrier at my door holding a post-it-note above her head. She had a call on hold for me and was trying to get my attention through the glass part of my door.

In that moment it occurred to me I had gravely miscalculated my training and mentoring methods. In my own defense, the last 25 years of my career has been dedicated to one attorney as a contracted tort litigation paralegal.

Fast forward and a retired colleague later, we were in the middle of a pandemic and finding qualified people was a struggle. When I shifted some of my responsibilities to mentoring new hires, I quickly learned that our new up-and-comers could use a hand.

Many new lawyers find that it's one thing to acquire a law degree, but another to practice law. The same can hold true with new legal assistants. They may not have had the opportunity to put into practice [what they learned in school](#).

It was then I began to employ skillsets I'd learned outside of legal practice to attain the goal of moving a new legal assistant into a position of confidence as they integrated into our legal team.

It is important to follow the Rule of 3's below to be successful in mentoring new legal assistants:

1. Meet them where they are
2. Assess the way they learn
3. Make sure you've transferred the skills

Through these steps, you will take your new legal assistants from hesitant new hires to confident contributors to your legal team while avoiding the [scarcity mindset](#).

1. Meet them where they are

Your expectations and their level of skill may be chasms apart. You will not know just how big the chasm is if you haven't asked the right questions.

Sir Francis Bacon once said, "A prudent question is one-half of wisdom." Too often people focus on attempting to find the answers and solutions to problems but underestimate the value of a good question.

The Harvard Business Review, in an article entitled "The Surprising Power of Questions", suggested that in business, questions can spur learning and the exchange of ideas. Questions also establish a level of intimacy and trust.

I believe the more important benefit is the way questions can reveal blind spots on the part of both the mentor and the new legal assistant.

As paralegals, we look for the blind spots, or red flags, with our cases, witnesses, and in our legal strategies. When training, recognizing those blind spots will assist you in plugging holes that can avoid any critical mistakes down the road.

2. Assess how they learn

Most firms have set practices and protocols that employees are to follow. If you are the one responsible for ensuring that your new assistant has them down, then questions about how that new assistant learns is critical.

Are they visual or tactile, kinetic learners, or are they an active listener? I always ask how they prefer to learn allowing me to target my mentoring. Once that is established then I can provide the right tools geared to their strengths.

Many firms use software to manage cases such as Filevine, Clio, or MyCase. These [case management](#) tools are extremely helpful in keeping your client information, deadlines, and other important facts in one location. These systems are as good as the user who inputs the information. Some of the data entry is self-explanatory, but if your new assistant doesn't understand the "why" behind gathering and notating certain information, one of those pitfalls or "holes" I spoke about earlier can trip them up.

Provide your new assistant with a checklist with a brief overview of what they are looking for and why. If they are a more tactile learner, then provide it to them in paper form. Print the lists from your case management system or, if you don't use digital case management, use a spreadsheet and print it.

I use a [pre-litigation checklist for new legal assistants](#) in our personal injury practice. I like having a new assistant initial each task or project as they move through the case from start to finish.

A checklist is something you can use in your case reviews which are critical for everyone working the case, but especially for a new legal assistant. We perform them weekly, and it invites discussion and opportunities for continued mentoring.

3. Transfer the skills

Another set of 3's – see one, do one, teach one. While this is typically a learning method used by the medical community, law enforcement, or engineers, I have found it is a valuable tool as a mentor for making sure that skills have been transferred in the legal community.

Have your new legal assistant sit with you as you work through your list or case management system. Let them see how it works, but more importantly *why* you feel the information is valuable or if there is information missing. This initial “see one” moment is the time when questions easily flow and you will have the chance to evaluate what your new legal assistant really knows, and how they learn best.

The “do one” step is when your new legal assistant takes the wheel, and you are a passenger. Just like in driver's education, you can still take over or make a quick stop if necessary. If they make it through without any crashes, you've likely transferred the skillsets they need to understand the purpose behind the task.



Board Meeting

The next APA Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 3, at 5:45 p.m.** via Zoom. Contact board@azparalegal.org for more information. All are welcome to attend.

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to our Sponsors!**

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