

## S u m m o n s

**WESTERN DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF  
LEGAL ASSISTANTS****An Association for Paralegals/Legal Assistants**

www.wdala.org

Melissa M. Klimpel, ACP, Editor

## *President's Message*

*By Anna Heinen*



Hello Members! It is so nice to see the snow melting and the birds return. I am ready for warmer weather and being more active outdoors.

As we settle into the 2023 year, I want to know where you are at. Have you kept your new year's resolution; Have you started something new; Have you finished a tedious project? Take a minute to appreciate

where you are in your journey, even if it is not where you want to be, because every season serves a purpose. Some things are quick and some take extra time - keep moving forward! Everything comes to you at the right time. Be patient and trust the process.

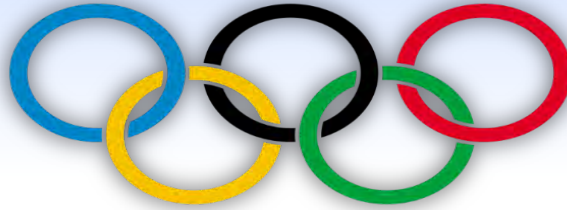
As always, please let me know what WDALA can do better for you, its members, and its communities? Also, let me know if you are interested in specific training sessions, more advice, one-on-one discussions, group gatherings, or volunteering options as I am here to assist in any way possible. Please reach out!

Thank you for your continued support, and most of all, for continuing to participate and be involved with this organization!

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**SAVE**  
— the —  
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September 11-12,  
2023

**WDALA's Fall Seminar**  
**Courtyard by Marriott**  
**3319 North 14th Street**  
**Bismarck, ND**

You won't want to miss WDALA's Fall Seminar. So far, the education committee has secured the following speakers and topics:

- **Chad Isaak Case Review:**  
**Gabrielle Goter and BCI Agent, Joe Arenz**
- **The Intersection of High-Tech Stalking, Domestic Violence and the Courts & OurFamilyWizard:**  
**Steven Bradley**

Watch your inbox for more information on the WDALA Fall Seminar.

## 3 Ways to Bounce Back When Close to Burnout

*By Alessandra Polizzi, PhD, SPHR*

“The pay is horrible, the stress is horrendous, and the office politics can be brutal.”  
-Paralegal, Boston

If the last three years have taught us anything, it is that our mental health matters. Alongside this collective understanding has come the broader awareness that work is a key component in our emotional wellbeing. In fact, a recent study by UKG showed that our managers have the same impact on our mental health as our spouses, which is nearly 70%. And global entities, such as the World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization, have published guidelines in the last 6 months that further support the needs for businesses to focus on the mental health of all workers.

While this knowledge may give us a sense of relatability, it does not help us identify what to DO about the situation. We may also feel like we aren't in need of mental health support because we are doing fine or event well. But, whether you feel on the verge of burnout or not, the actions below can help you prepare for stresses when they do arise.



The fact is that you don't have to be exhausted to care for your mental health.

Starting today, you can apply these three tactics, whether you are feeling great or not. The following are foundational approaches for navigating stressful situations and bolstering against burnout:

- **Value your Values** - According to Dr. Susan David, author of *Emotional Agility*, “by staying connected to our own values and goals..., we support and empower ourselves to stride forward with confidence.” If you are unclear as to what “your why” is, it can be difficult to focus on what you need when things get stressful. If you haven't thought about your values recently, spend some time reflecting on what your purpose is and keep this in mind when you feel overwhelmed. This can help you decide what's worth your energy and attention and what is not.

### 3 Ways to Bounce Back When Close to Burnout continued

- **Make Boundaries Your Best Friend** - It may sound unrealistic, but “no” really is a complete sentence. Maybe your situation doesn’t seem like one in which things are that simple. You can still have boundaries if “no” isn’t in your vocabulary. Here are a few go-to statements that can help:
  - ⇒ “X isn’t something that can be done now, but what about X?”
  - ⇒ “Help me understand which of these is a priority.”
  - ⇒ “I am not comfortable with X. I would recommend Y instead.”
  - ⇒ “I will need some time to think about X and get back to you with a recommendation.”
- **Be Kind** - Kindness might feel a little bit off base, especially when someone is not being kind to you. The first place to start, however, isn't with others; rather, focus on being kind to yourself. Self-criticism and negative self-talk are quite common and deplete our emotional resources. Self-compassion, on the other hand, has been well documented as a way to increase our ability to bounce back when things become stressful. Further, when we practice speaking to ourselves with kindness, we actually activate the nurturing parts of our brain that make us better able to connect with others.

We may not be able to change the high stress of the work, but by investing in ourselves through understanding our values, maintaining our boundaries, and practicing self-kindness, we can strengthen these critical foundations.



*Dr. Alessandria Polizzi is a former HR executive who is now the CEO of Verdant Consulting, a top 20 Workplace Wellness provider for 2022 that supports mental health in the workplace through resiliency and psychological safety skills development programs. She is also the ISO global liaison for Occupational Health and Safety, co-Founder of the Kite HR wellbeing app for HR professionals, and shares of-the-moment discoveries on all of these topics via the Be Verdant podcast.*

# The Criminal Defense Attorney: Guardian of the Bill of Rights

*By Paul H. Myerchin, Esq.*

The gruesome murders of four University of Idaho students (Madison Mogen, Kaylee Goncalves, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin) in November 2022 rocked the town of Moscow, Idaho and captivated a nation. This quadruple stabbing death murder case quickly whipped the news media into a frenzy for well over a month. And when the accused, Washington State University graduate student Bryan Kohberger, was apprehended nearly six weeks later half way across the country at his parents' Pennsylvania home, the media had all but pronounced Kohberger guilty of these brutal murders.

Kohberger waived his extradition back to Idaho and made his initial court appearance with a court appointed attorney. Upon that first court appearance broadcast around the country, certainly a common question asked was, "How can that attorney represent someone they know is guilty?"

The same question has been asked of me on more than one occasion either at a social gathering or out to dinner with friends. Having represented hundreds of criminal defendants over the past twenty-five years, I've reached my own answer to this profound question. The answer is three-fold:

1. Upholding the Attorney's Oath;
2. But for the grace of God, go I; and
3. Inspiration from Harper Lee's experienced and capable criminal defense attorney, Atticus Finch.

I explain each of these reasons more fully below.

## **1. The Attorney's Oath**

It seems like yesterday when those of us in the 1997 UND Law School class successfully passed the bar exam and had our swearing in ceremony at the North Dakota Capitol surrounded by family and friends. Despite all the pomp and circumstance that day, the most important task was to recite the pledge of the Attorney's Oath. That oath requires new attorneys to solemnly swear to support and defend the United States' and North Dakota's Constitutions while holding the office of attorney to the best of one's ability.

## The Criminal Defense Attorney: Guardian of the Bill of Rights continued

The significance and importance of the Attorney's Oath has grown on me over the years. Frankly, the display of genius by the Framers to include the Bill of Rights in our Constitution astounds me. Those first ten amendments to the Constitution have set this Nation apart from all others so that its' citizens could feel safe and secure from government oppression. Government oppression was something the Framers knew all too well back then. They also knew an all-important human trait: that those in power always abuse power, and thus, the power of the government needed checks and balances to prevent oppression.

The Framers put into practice their ideals and values. It must be remembered that President John Adams was a practicing Boston area attorney at the time leading up to the Revolution. Of course, one of the more significant events of that time was the Boston Massacre, a free-for-all protest between patriots and British Red Coats. Shots were fired by the Red Coats during this scrum and five patriots died. Adams, at age 35 years old, made the difficult decision to represent British Captain Thomas Preston and his eight soldiers on trial for murder. For a budding Nation, this was the "trial of the century." Adams took the case because he believed that every accused defendant was entitled to a defense and a jury trial (those rights guaranteed for all citizens in the Sixth Amendment). Adams would obtain "not guilty" verdicts for his clients with the exception of two soldiers that were found guilty. These two soldiers however were convicted of the lesser offense of manslaughter rather than murder. The citizens of Boston and a budding Nation accepted the jury's verdict out of respect for the jury system. See generally, Dan Adams & David Fisher, *John Adams Under Fire: The Founding Father's Fight for Justice in the Boston Massacre Murder Trial*.



## The Criminal Defense Attorney: Guardian of the Bill of Rights continued

Attorneys practicing criminal defense deal with three of these Bill of Rights Amendments every single day. The Fourth Amendment keeps every citizen in this country free from unreasonable searches and seizures by the Government. The Fifth Amendment ensures not only a right to counsel and the freedom to remain silent if questioned by the Government, but also the due process of law before one's life or liberty is infringed upon. The Sixth Amendment guarantees citizens' the all-important right to a jury trial and rights that insure the effectiveness of a jury trial (i.e., a jury of one's peers, cross examination, legal counsel, subpoena powers, etc.). The Supreme Court has stated the Framers' true intention behind this jury trial right as follows:

**A right to jury trial is granted to criminal defendants in order to prevent oppression by the Government. . . .** The framers of the constitutions strove to create an independent judiciary but insisted upon further protection against arbitrary action. **Providing an accused with the right to be tried by a jury of his peers gave him an inestimable safeguard against the corrupt or overzealous prosecutor and against the compliant, biased, or eccentric judge . . .** Beyond this, the jury trial provisions in the Federal and State Constitutions reflect a fundamental decision about the exercise of official power – a reluctance to entrust plenary powers of the life and liberty of the citizen to one judge or to a group of judges. Fear of unchecked power, so typical of our State and Federal Governments in other respects, found expression in the criminal law in this insistence upon community participation in the determination of guilt or innocence.

*Duncan vs Louisiana*, 391 U.S. 145, 155-56 (1968)(emphasis added).



Yet, to the lay person, the question still remains: why follow such rights when “everybody knows the accused is guilty”? Here, too, the Supreme Court answered that question profoundly and succinctly when it wrote: “Nothing can destroy a Government more quickly than its failure to observe its own laws, or worse, its disregard of the charter of its own existence.” *Mapp vs Ohio*, 367 U.S. 643, 659 (1961).



## The Criminal Defense Attorney: Guardian of the Bill of Rights continued

Therein lies the great paradox. If Courts disregard these important rights for the “guilty”, then the rights are eroded for all citizens of this great Nation. *Boyd v. U.S.*, 116 U.S. 616, 635 (1886).

And that takes me to my second point.

### 2. “But for the Grace of God, go I.”

Having practiced criminal defense in North Dakota, so many of my clients have simply been common, everyday North Dakotans and not hardened criminals. They have been sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles. They’ve been corporate executives, farmers, ranchers, electricians and every occupation in between. Some have been dealt the most unfair hand in life with such difficult experiences that it leaves you wondering how they got as far as they did. And more often than not, for a



number of these folks, their contact with the criminal justice systems was a one-off, typically fueled by alcohol that lead to their good judgment going right out the window for a short duration. Finally, there has been the truly sad cases where the person was plagued with substance abuse addiction or mental health issues.

Each defendant has had a story to tell about the human condition—a story both about failures and triumphs. And when it comes to representing a defendant that has voluntarily pled guilty to an offense or been found guilty of a crime by a jury of his or her peers, the due process rights enshrined in our Constitution remain. As the late North Dakota federal district court judge, the Honorable Rodney S. Webb penned, “The concept of individualized sentencing is deeply rooted in our legal tradition and is a fundamental liberty interest. This due process right arises at sentencing because sentencing involves the most extreme deprivation of personal liberty and therefore calls for a highly individualized process where a person must be assessed and sentenced as an individual.” *U.S. v. Dyck*, 287 F.Supp.2d 1016, 1021 (D.N.D. Oct. 16, 2003)(internal citations omitted).

## The Criminal Defense Attorney: Guardian of the Bill of Rights continued

And that take me to my final point.

### **3. Much inspiration for serving the role of criminal defense attorney can be found in the words of Harper Lee and his famous trial attorney, Atticus Finch.**

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” Harper Lee in *“To Kill a Mockingbird”*

That novel and those words have inspired me to bring my personal best to each criminal defendant when they needed an attorney most. That low point in their life when they sat in the loneliest chair on the entire planet—the criminal defense chair. Yet, despite all odds and the infinite resources of the Government being brought against that person, justice, either with an acquittal or a fair sentence, was served.

Needless to say, the answer to this straightforward question is anything but straightforward. It’s a complex answer. Yet, the importance of the criminal defense attorney in this Nation’s criminal justice system is paramount. Without the criminal defense attorney, the protections against Government oppression our Framers guaranteed in the Bill of Rights would be meaningless. Accordingly, whether guilty or not guilty, is for a jury of one’s peers to decide. The job of the criminal defense attorney has been and will continue to be that the Constitution is supported and defended for each criminal defendant to the best of one’s abilities.



*Paul H. Myerchin is a partner at Bormann, Myerchin, Espeseth & Edison, LLP in Bismarck. His practice includes criminal defense, estate planning and probate, real estate and general civil litigation.*

# A Few of My Favorite Things

*By Laura Mahr, Esq.*

If you were my client asking for ideas on how to improve focus at work, the first question I would ask you is, “What does your office look like?” You may wonder, “Why does it matter?” It matters because our physical work environment impacts our nervous system and therefore influences our ability to focus. If your nervous system is distracted by—or uncomfortable in—the space around you, it becomes unsettled (dysregulated). When your nervous system is dysregulated, it compromises your ability to think clearly and focus on the task at hand. From the lighting and decor to the temperature of the room, your body takes its cues about whether or not it can relax and focus from the spaces you inhabit. The good news is that if you create a work environment that is comfortable and supports nervous system regulation, making you better able to think clearly, stay focused, be decisive, and be more productive.

## **Light Bulb about Light Bulbs**

I was recently coaching an attorney seeking tools to help him feel motivated to work at the office. His firm requires him to be physically present at the office at least 50% of the work week. He found himself resistant to going in. During the pandemic, he got used to working at home and now feels more comfortable working at home than at the office. I asked him to describe the difference between his home office and his firm office. His home office, he said, surrounds him with his favorite things: pets, plants, photos of his family, and art. He also has things that support his physical comfort and relaxation like floor lamps for soft lighting, a sunny window, and a couch with blankets. “However,” he said, “my office at the firm looks like a ‘prison cell’—painted gray with no decor and overhead fluorescent lighting that agitates my eyes.” At that moment, a light bulb went off. “Oh, now I get it,” he said after doing the comparison, “I haven’t taken any time at all to get comfortable at work. No fuzzy blankets. No furry friends. No soft white light bulbs.” As we walked through the comparison, he realized that while it may not be possible to bring his dog to work (though sometimes it actually is!), it’s possible to have most everything else from his cozy home office at work.



## A Few of My Favorite Things continued

### Lost in My Mind?

As lawyers and judges, we often find ourselves absorbed in our heads, bogged down by endless responsibilities and deadlines. It can be easy to get consumed in serving others and lose sight of the importance of caring for ourselves, our bodies, and the space around us. Taking time to decorate your office may seem like a luxury when there are case matters pressing. And yet, if you look around your office and see bare walls and shades of gray, it may be a reflection that you're treating yourself like a bodiless brain machine. Check out the tips below and see how your body responds when you tend to it. For little cost and minimal time, you may get a big mental return on your physical investment.

### Try This

Which of these office decorating tips is most interesting to you? They all promote nervous system regulation and mental clarity.

1. **Consider the state of your office.** Is it cluttered and chaotic, or clean and organized? For some, a cluttered or cramped space can increase feelings of stress and anxiety, while an organized and spacious environment can promote a sense of calm and clarity. Take time to declutter and arrange your office in a way that promotes order and tranquility. Get rid of unnecessary items, especially obsolete papers, and use storage solutions to keep things organized. Schedule a regular time on your calendar to clear and organize your space, as paper and other clutter tends to accumulate over time in a way that you may not notice. Once you have made the change, gauge whether there is an impact on your ability to concentrate.



## A Few of My Favorite Things continued

2. **Assess the overall office comfort.** Is your office furnished in a way that promotes good ergonomics and physical comfort? Investing in ergonomic furniture and accessories can help to reduce physical strain and promote better posture. Do you have a supportive office chair, a sit-to-stand desk, and an ergonomic keyboard? Having a chair that offers spinal support and allows the option to stand when working creates more space in your abdomen, allowing you to breathe more deeply. Deep, full breaths oxygenate the brain, and improve nervous system regulation and cognitive functioning. In addition, do you have comfortable furniture in your office away from your desk in which you can reset? Having somewhere comfortable to sit or recline encourages taking mental breaks during your day, which allows you to tackle work rejuvenated. A bonus is that it also makes your workspace more inviting for colleagues and clients.
3. **Pay attention to the lighting and temperature.** Natural light is beneficial for both mood and productivity. If possible, position your desk so you can look out a window. If natural light is not an option, consider investing in high-quality artificial lighting so that your office feels light and bright. Experiment with desk and floor lamps instead of overhead lighting. Make sure that your office is a comfortable temperature; being too hot or cold is agitating for the nervous system. If you don't have control over the temperature at your office, can you bring in a soft throw blanket or a cozy sweater or a space heater to stay warm, or a fan or water cooler to stay cool?
4. **Examine office layout.** Is your desk positioned in a way that allows you to see the door or are you facing a wall? Facing the door can help your nervous system relax as you can see who's coming and going. If facing the door is distracting, experiment with closing the door or, if you have a glass door, cover it with an attractive window covering. You may want to try different layouts and furniture sizes to find what works best in the space, or find somewhere outside of your office to store files if your office feels cramped. You can read up on office "feng shui" or hire someone trained in office design to help you lay out your furniture for the best flow.

## A Few of My Favorite Things continued



5. **Incorporate personal touches.** Do you have a few of your favorite things at your office? Seeing personal items at your office helps to create a sense of familiarity and comfort which relaxes the nervous system. This can include artwork, photos, or small decorative objects that have personal meaning to you. Be mindful not to overcrowd your space, as too many personal items can add clutter and be distracting.
6. **Consider your senses.** Our senses are in charge of nervous system regulation, so pay attention to what your eyes, ears, and nose are sensing at work. For example, color therapy specialists have found that wall color and decor impact our mood and motivation. Colors like blue and green promote calm and relaxation, while warm colors like red and orange can increase energy. Consider using a color scheme that feels best for you for the atmosphere in which you want to work. Have you noticed if you work better in silence or with sound? If you prefer sound, do you work better with music, a noise machine, or a bubbling fountain? If you prefer music, it may be useful to create different playlists for different tasks. If you prefer quiet, do you have ear plugs or sound proofing? Are you sensitive to smell? If so, you may find that a small essential oil diffuser fills your office with a scent that helps you relax, such as lavender, or keeps you awake, such as peppermint.
7. **Include nature.** Incorporating natural elements into your office design can also support nervous system regulation and promote a sense of calm. The presence of nature has been shown to have a soothing effect on the brain by reducing feelings of stress and anxiety while improving your ability to think. Place a small easy-to-care-for potted plant on your desk, use natural materials like wood and stone when decorating, and if you like the sound, run a small decorative fountain. When possible, open the windows to allow for fresh air flow.

## A Few of My Favorite Things continued

### Start Small and Get Help

Decorating your office for nervous system regulation is a process of trial and error. What works for someone else may not work for you. If you feel overwhelmed by the idea of decorating and don't know where to start, get help! You may have a friend or family member who would love to offer creative inspiration. If not, hire a decorator and a decluttering/organizing professional to assist. You don't have to do it all at once; calendar it for a few hours at a time, or plan an all-office beautification project as a team building exercise. Start small and track your progress and the impact of your space on your nervous system regulation, focus, and productivity over time. Think of your office as more than just a place to work. It is an outward representation of who you are (and how you treat yourself) to those you work with and serve. It should also be a space where you feel comfortable and focused. Incorporating these mindful decorating techniques into your office can help create both a peaceful and productive workspace. With a little bit of intention and effort, you can create an office environment that supports your well-being and helps you thrive in your legal practice.



*Laura Mahr is a North Carolina and Oregon lawyer and the founder of Conscious Legal Minds LLC, providing well-being consulting, training, and resilience coaching for attorneys and law offices nationwide. Through the lens of neurobiology, Laura helps build strong leaders, happy lawyers, and effective teams. Her work is informed by 13 years of practice as a civil sexual assault attorney, 25 years as a teacher and student of mindfulness and yoga, and six years studying neurobiology and neuropsychology with clinical pioneers. She can be reached through [consciouslegalminds.com](http://consciouslegalminds.com).*

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## Multi-Billion Dollar Anti-Terrorism Judgment in North Dakota

*By Timothy Q. Purdon, Esq.*

In February 2022, a very unusual trial took place before United States Magistrate Judge Clare Hochhalter in United States District Court in Bismarck. In North Dakota, a case brought under the federal Anti-terrorism Act (“ATA”) is unusual, default judgment measure-of-damages trials are unusual, and billion-dollar judgments are unusual. This case had all three.

My law firm Robins Kaplan LLP, along with Ballard Spahr LLP and Motley Rice LLC represented the families of three American women—Rhonita LeBaron, Christina Langford, and Dawna Ray—who were murdered along with six of their children on November 4, 2019 by the Juárez Cartel while traveling in a caravan between LaMora, Mexico and Colonial LeBaron, Mexico, roughly 100 miles from the U.S. Mexico border. The Plaintiffs filed suit under the ATA in U.S. District Court in Bismarck, North Dakota. Venue in North Dakota

was proper under the ATA as several surviving family members had been living and working in North Dakota’s oil fields at the time of the attacks. Service on the cartel was accomplished via publication in Mexico and the cartel predictably did not appear to defend the suit in North Dakota and defaulted.





## Multi-Billion Dollar Anti-Terrorism Judgment in North Dakota continued

The default trial to measure damages was held from February 7, 2022 to February 10, 2022 in front of U.S. Magistrate Judge Clare Hochhalter. At trial, evidence was presented that on November 4, 2019, members of the Juarez Cartel attacked a three-car car convoy of three woman and their 14 children near the border of the states of Sonora and Chihuahua in northern Mexico. All three woman and six of the children were brutally murdered. Robins Kaplan's client David Langford and his 11 surviving children lost their mother Dawna and two young sons/brothers. Four of David's other children were shot and seriously injured in the attacks. At trial, the Langford family plaintiffs presented three estate pain and suffering claims, six survivor pain and suffering claims, and 35 wrongful death/loss of consortium claims (called "solatium" claims under the ATA) to the Court. Damages for all these claims were subject to trebling under the ATA.



On June 24, 2022, the U.S. District Court entered a judgment for David Langford and his family in the amount of \$2.077 billion. The three other family plaintiff groups represented by Motley Rice were awarded an additional \$2.5 billion for a total judgment in the consolidated cases of \$4.64 billion. These are believed to be the largest judgments ever recorded in a court in North Dakota history.



*Tim Purdon is a Partner at Robins Kaplan LLP. He served as United States Attorney for the District of North Dakota from 2010 to 2015.*

# Get to Know . . . Justice Douglas A. Bahr, Justice of the ND Supreme Court



## **What are your job duties?**

The basic role of the North Dakota Supreme Court is to review appeals from district courts, juvenile courts, and administrative agencies. To properly perform that adjudicative function, justices read the briefs and portions of the record, attend oral argument unless waived, conduct legal research, and draft opinions explaining the Court's determination.

Justices also have administrative responsibilities. Those responsibilities include committee work, reviewing potential rule changes, and personnel and other court administrative matters.

## **What did you want to be when you grew up and are you currently doing it?**

Do I have to grow up?

My initial education and career goal was to obtain a master's or doctorate degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and become a therapist. However, during my junior year of college I took courses in family law and American government. I found the study of law, particularly constitutional law, so interesting that I decided to go to law school instead of becoming a therapist.

I greatly enjoyed being a district court judge and enjoy serving as a justice of the Supreme Court. Although I did not even consider being part of the legal profession until I was in college, much less being a judge or justice, I cannot think of anything I would rather be doing professionally.

## **What is a typical day like at your job?**

My typical day includes a lot of reading. In fact, it is common for entire days to be spent reading. Reading is broken up by research, writing and editing draft opinions, participating in oral arguments, attending conferences to discuss cases or administrative matters, and participating in committee or other administrative work. Sometimes we are asked and honored to do school or other public presentations.

## **Get to Know . . . Douglas A. Bahr, Justice of the ND Supreme Court continued**

### **What is the best/worst part of your job?**

I like all aspects of my job. I enjoy coming to work and doing my job. I need to come up with some hobbies I like as much as my job so I look forward to retiring someday.

### **What led you to this career and how did you get into your current field or position?**

As previously noted, I decided to attend law school while attending college. I attended Brigham Young University (BYU) and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Science (Child Development and Family Relations). I then attended law school at the University of South Dakota.

After law school I clerked for Justice Jerry L. Larson of the Iowa Supreme Court. From there I took a position with the North Dakota Office of Attorney General, where I remained for over twenty-five years. I served nine years as an Assistant Attorney General and sixteen years as the North Dakota Solicitor General and Director of the Civil Litigation Division.

After the Office of Attorney General, I went to private practice. After being in private practice for 21 months, Governor Doug Burgum appointed me as a judge in the South Central Judicial District. I served as a district court judge from September 2018 until February 2023 when Governor Burgum appointed me as a Justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court.



### **What advice can you offer to attorneys / paralegals to make your job easier?**

Write clear and concise briefs. We do a lot of reading. It makes our job easier, and is appreciated, when a brief is clear and concise. Also, take the time to carefully proofread and cite check briefs. Finally, acknowledge weaknesses of your client's position in briefs and arguments and confront them. Doing so greatly increases a party's credibility.

## Get to Know . . . Douglas A. Bahr, Justice of the ND Supreme Court continued

### What could you give a 30-minute presentation about with no advance preparation?

How to give a 30-minute presentation in 30 seconds.

### What's the biggest misconception people have about your position?

Surprisingly, a number of people think North Dakota state justices are appointed for life. My appointment expires the end of 2026, so I hope they are incorrect.

Another big misconception is what the Supreme Court does. People often do not understand the difference between trial courts and appellate courts, not realizing the Supreme Court does not hold evidentiary hearings.

### What piece of advice would you give to yourself at the beginning of your career?

Find and keep appropriate balance in your life. Finding appropriate balance is essential to both personal health and satisfaction and professional success.

The practice of law is a vocation of service. You will find greater satisfaction in your employment when you view it through the lens of serving others.

Civility is the hallmark of a professional. Neither the adversarial system nor zealous representation of clients demand incivility. You will better serve your clients, increase

public trust and respect for the judicial system, and find greater professional satisfaction and emotional and physical health when you practice your profession with respect, civility, and cooperation.

Decide today what your professional reputation will be in 30 or 40 years and work diligently and patiently – one client, one case, and one day at a time – to forge that desired reputation.



## Get to Know . . . Douglas A. Bahr, Justice of the ND Supreme Court continued



### **If you didn't have to work, what would you do with your time?**

Bike and thru-hike across America and other countries with my children and their families and travel with my wife.

### **If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?**

Spend time with my family either playing games indoors or biking or hiking outdoors.

### **Do you have any favorite quotes?**

Yes. (When I practiced law, I counseled witnesses to only answer the question asked and not expound. I am following my own advice.)

### **If you could only have three apps on your smartphone, which would you pick?**

One of my sons regularly calls me a “Boomer.” But I do have a smartphone. I primarily use my smartphone to call, text, email, and search the internet. So as long as I have apps to text, email, and access the internet, I am good.

### **What book or movie have you recently read/seen and why would you recommend it?**

The Complete Calvin and Hobbes (4 vols.), Bill Watterson. I want to be like Calvin if I grow up. I read the books years ago, but reading a few pages here and there of Calvin and Hobbes helps me keep life in perspective and not take things too seriously.

### **If you were a super-hero, what powers would you have?**

Flying or invisibility. Flying would be exhilarating. Invisibility would permit me to play some awesome practical jokes.

## Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP

### 50 YEARS WITH WHEELER WOLF

*Note from Dianne: Melissa Klimpel stopped by Wheeler Wolf to deliver the prize I had won in the contest to find the green symbol in the last issue of the Summons. We visited a while and I happened to mention that it will be 50 years in July that I have been with the Wheeler Wolf Law Firm. I consider that a “life-time achievement”. A week or so later, I got an email from Melissa, asking if I’d like to be featured in the next Summons. I figured why not.*



#### **How long have you been a member of WDALA?**

I have been a member of WDALA since its early inception. I believe it was in 1986 or 1987. I became a member of NALA on May 10, 1990.

I served as Secretary from 1988-1992. I learned short hand in high school and still use it almost daily – mostly for note taking. I found that particularly useful in preparing minutes of the meetings. I served as First Vice President from 1997-1999. I enjoyed planning seminars as part of my duties as First Vice President. I’ve also served on the Nominations Committee, the Auditing Committee, and Legal Assistant Day in the past.

A funny story regarding shorthand – We had a high school girl who worked part-time doing miscellaneous errands. One day she came and asked me if I would teach her how to write her name in short hand. I showed her how to do it in short hand. She said, “no, that’s not what I mean. Like Jackie puts “jb” on stuff, and you put “dt” on stuff – I mean like that”. Taken aback for a moment, I simply said “yours would be “lg”, and those are your initials.” She was happy.

#### **Please describe your work history in the legal field, beginning with your first job.**

I knew from a young age that I wanted to be a secretary. I grew up with three young ladies living next door to me, with their parents and brothers. They left for work in the morning and I’d see them coming home late afternoon. Not everyone had cars at that time, they would walk home from work. I always thought they looked so nice in their work clothes, and I wanted to wear nice clothes to work too some day.

## **Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP continued**

After the birth of my first son in 1963, and looking for employment so my husband could continue with his college education, I applied for a job with the Burleigh County Court With Increased Jurisdiction. This was a new court created in 1963, as part of reforming the unified state court system, to reduce the number of district judges and assigning different duties to judges already in office. Because of the load increase in cases being handled in Small Claims Court, County Court and District Court, as a way of splitting up the cases to keep things moving in the courts, the Burleigh County Court with Increased Jurisdiction was created. This new court handled traffic citations issued by the Highway Patrol, Small Claims of less than \$1,000, and criminal complaints before they were bound over to district court. We shared office space with the Clerk of County Court who issued marriage licenses, and did other recording matters assigned to that office. As the first Deputy Clerk of Court of Increased Jurisdiction, I would answer phones, attend traffic hearings and take notes when the Clerk of Court was unavailable at other hearings. Docket entries were made by hand in those big white canvas journals you see on old TV shows, and as seen on “Finding Your Roots”, when they show searching old records. I also did secretarial duties for Judge W. J. Austin. He had acquired all kinds of court forms in his practice of law before being assigned judge, and during my spare time, I typed up all his forms into a form book. That is how I became familiar with various court documents. Judge Austin’s daughter, Bonnie Banks, is a present member of WDALA.

### **What led you to a career in the legal field, and how did you get into your current field or position.**

I don’t know what specifically led me to a career in the legal field. I think it was “Fate”. My husband graduated from Bismarck Junior College, and went on to North Dakota State University. Since I had just found employment, and Gene had already made arrangements at one of the student housing facilities at NDSU, my son and I remained in Bismarck during Gene’s first year at NDSU, and I continued with my employment with the Court. When it was time for his second year at NDSU, we decided the family should move to Fargo while he continued at NDSU to finish college. Many of the secretaries at the Courthouse at that time were members of the Legal Secretaries Association. One of those secretaries, Mildred Bendish, knew a member in Fargo, Lucille Campbell, who was active in the Fargo division of the organization, and she connected the two of us. Upon my arrival in Fargo, Lucy put me in touch with the Tenneson, Serkland, Lundberg & Erickson law firm in downtown Fargo, who were looking to add to their secretarial staff. I applied for the job and got it. As “fate” would have it, Lucille Campbell became my next door neighbor when we happened to move into the basement apartment in the house next door to her. We became good friends, took the bus to work together in the morning, and her kids were old enough to babysit our son on weekends.

**Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP**  
**continued**

I worked at that firm until my husband graduated from NDSU (September 1964-June 1966), doing receptionist duties, and working for Armand Erickson and Chester Serkland. Upon graduation, my husband was hired by 3M Corporation in St. Paul, MN, and we moved there. Our second son was born in August 1966. I remained a stay-at-home mom until our youngest son started kindergarten in 1971. I was anxious to return to the work world. I applied to the Firestone, Fink, Krawetz, Miley & Maas firm, in downtown St. Paul, through a placement agency, interviewed and was hired. I worked at that firm as a Receptionist and Legal Secretary for Lynn Firestone and James Miley, until we returned to Bismarck in the Spring of 1973.

I applied and left my resume with various law firms in Bismarck at that time. There were no immediate openings. I took a temporary job with the Office of the Secretary of State, where they were working on the Blue Book for the upcoming legislative session. Most secretaries and lobbyists are familiar with the Blue Book as it is a reference book listing all the representatives throughout the state for use during the then-current legislative session, as well as a summary of the state’s political, social and cultural history. My job was to type up the summaries from the then-current representatives and legislators to be eventually included in the published book.

While I was working at the Capitol, one of the law firms where I had left my resume had a situation where one of the secretaries for the main attorney had planned an extended vacation, and her temporary replacement injured her back and was unable to fill the temporary vacancy. That firm was Wheeler, Wolf, Wefald & Durick. After reviewing the resume I had left at the office, Mr. Wolf made a trip to the Capitol and tracked me down where I was working. He explained the situation to me, offered me a “full-time” job, and the rest is history. **I will have been with Wheeler Wolf for 50 years in July of 2023.**

**How has Wheeler Wolf helped you in your career development.**

The firm has always encouraged joining various organizations promoting the practice of law. Several secretaries were members of the Legal Secretaries Association, and the legal assistants joined the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants.

We were encouraged to attend seminars and continue with our legal education. The firm paid for membership dues, fees to attend meetings and/or seminars, etc., and has otherwise financially contributed to the various organizations.



**WDALA Board 1990-1991**  
**Dianne Taix, Secretary**



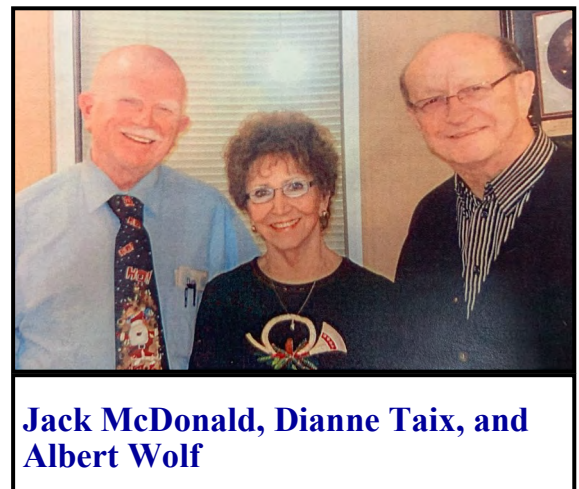
## Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP continued

### How has your role evolved since you joined Wheeler Wolf?

When I first began my employment at Wheeler Wolf, I was hired as a legal secretary and worked for all the attorneys. When the receptionist/secretary who was working there when I was hired left employment with Wheeler Wolf, I was then assigned as the receptionist and secretary, and also did minimal bookkeeping duties. The firm then consisted of Albert Wolf, Robert Wefald, Bert Wheeler and Tim Durick. Dave Peterson joined the firm in 1977. There were then two full-time secretaries and a bookkeeper, and eventually a full-time receptionist was hired. That was my role until we moved from the basement of Dakota Northwestern Bank, to our location at 220 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in 1980.

At the new location, and with several attorneys being added along with additional secretarial staff, etc., I was the Staff Supervisor, with ongoing secretarial duties. I supervised the staff, handled their concerns, and made sure the work flow was taken care of on a “priority”, “date, time, specified” or “whenever possible” basis. The attorneys marked their dictation as to timelines, put it on the “work table”, and during the day I frequently checked the files as they were brought out and rotated the work according to timelines indicated. I was also starting legal assistant duties, without the official title at that time.

The office continued to grow with additional attorneys being added, and we outgrew our space. We moved to new offices at 116 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, with two floors and 15 attorneys at that time. More staff was added. The attorneys decided to designate two attorneys to each secretary, with the overflow work being handled as previously. I was also assigned as legal assistant to Mr. Wolf, and was also his designated secretary along with Steve Latham. Three other legal assistants were hired, as well as an Office Manager, bookkeeper, file clerk, and errand runners. We were in that location for 5 years.



**Jack McDonald, Dianne Taix, and  
Albert Wolf**

Several of the lawyers left the firm later to form or join other law firms. The offices were now too large for the firm, the old offices at 220 N. 4<sup>th</sup> were empty, and we returned to our old location at 220 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where we remain today. My role during this time remained the same. Secretarial duties and legal assistant.

The firm last downsized in 2007. Albert Wolf and Jack McDonald were the only attorneys left at the 220 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. location then, and that is where we are at this time. There was still a part-time bookkeeper with us for a time, but I have assumed bookkeeping duties, with the help of outside accountants. Mr. Wolf is now retired from the law practice, and only Jack McDonald and I are still working here.

## Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP continued

A review of my records shows we had 36 attorneys with our firm at various times, 41 secretaries and legal assistants, and 21 “other” employees, which included interns, bookkeepers and bookkeeper assistants, file room staff, errand runners and office administrator. Lots of employees throughout my 50 years.

### What do you enjoy most about working at Wheeler Wolf?

When the firm was at its largest size, several of the attorneys were trial lawyers. That work included preparing for the trials, which required organizational skills, summarizing depositions, and otherwise doing whatever the attorney instructed you to do in preparation for trial. I learned early on that you assume each lawsuit will go to trial. That way, you keep things organized regularly. I especially enjoyed the trial work. At that time, the main trial lawyers were Albert Wolf, Dave Peterson, Orell Schmitz, Steve Latham, and Michael Wagner. The other attorneys handled smaller trial matters and did not always require legal assistants to assist them.

Another funny story: I was attending a trial with Steve Latham, and as part of the “voir dire”, the judge asked the potential jurors if they recognized any one at the lawyers’ tables. One of the jurists raised her hand. The judge asked who she knew. She said “I know Ms. Taix” and pointed to Steve Latham’s table. The judge asked how she knew me. She said “she frequents the place where I work”. The judge asked “where do you work?”, and she replied, “at an off-sale liquor and convenience store”. Needless to say, I turned red, and the judge and lawyers all smirked.

Another time, different judge but same question, a jurist raised her hand and pointed to me. Again, asked how she knew me, she explained we were cousins, and more questions about our relationship over the years and to present, and if that would interfere with her sitting on the jury, etc. I think she was excused from serving. I should note that by this time I had been employed with the firm for quite some time, and most judges and attorneys knew at least who I was.

### What is your favorite memory from working at Wheeler Wolf?

I have been fortunate to have always enjoyed coming to work. I’ve gotten along with almost all the attorneys and staff during my employment. I’ve learned over the years that not everyone is going to like you all the time, and you probably won’t always like someone you



**Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP**  
**continued**



**WDALA Board 1998-1999**  
**Dianne Taix, 1st Vice President**

are working with. You were hired to do your work, so you do your work and do your best to get along.

**What skills have you acquired over your entire work history?**

I think I am a good organizer, whether it's getting things done on the job or in my home life. I cram a lot of stuff into a day. I have developed "some" good computer skills. I admit I am not an expert.

**When you did you receive your ACP?**

I became certified on January 1, 1990, and received certification as a Civil Litigation Specialist in October 1992 and Real Estate Specialist in May 1994. I keep up with my certification requirements and remain certified at this time.

**What is your biggest regret in regards to your career?**

I have no regrets regarding my career. I was lucky enough to work in a field that was very interesting and ever changing. I tried to change with it. And, I got to wear nice clothes to work. I have been employed at Wheeler Wolf for almost 50 years, and still enjoy coming to work every day. My hours have cut back considerably with only one attorney. We talk about eventually closing the office, and we started with destroying old files and getting rid of our library books, but neither of us is really ready to quit at this point; we are still here.

**What have been some of the most important lessons you have learned throughout your career?**

As new staff is hired, there is occasionally someone who doesn't like you, or wants to take your place for some reason, and makes your life miserable for a while. If you are putting your full effort into your work, doing your work efficiently, and doing extra when asked to, the employer sees your value, and eventually that newcomer accepts the fact that you're not going anywhere, or they leave.

**What have been some of the most important lessons you have learned throughout your career?**

Always do your best and always give it your all. I always thought attorneys were people you had to respect because of their intelligence and just the fact that they were "attorneys". I was told, by an attorney, they are only people, they put their pants on one leg at a time, just like

## Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP continued

everyone else. That sounded profound at the time I heard it, guess it's really just kind of silly now.

### **What do you think is the most important skill that every paralegal needs to have?**

I think a paralegal needs to have self-confidence in herself and her work. The skill will come with experience.

### **What are the greatest successes or accomplishments in your entire working history?**

My greatest accomplishment was passing the Certified Legal Assistant test, and then my two specialty certifications – as Civil Litigation Specialist and then Real Estate Specialist. I took the CLA test twice to get certified before I finally passed it. My downfall was the “research” part of the test. I didn't really do research before becoming a legal assistant. Tracking what laws apply to a given situation, and researching prior case law on an issue was very difficult. Before computers and modern technology, that was all done through law books and the Supreme Court Library being your sources. Everything is computerized now and the process is much simpler.

Passing the CLA gave me confidence in my work and in myself. I started working right out of high school. Some of the younger staff being hired had college education and training in the legal field, and perhaps felt I was not entitled to call myself a legal assistant with no college education to back it up. My CLA proved I had earned the title “Legal Assistant”.

### **What advice can you offer to other paralegals?**

As I said before, give it your all. If it reaches the point where you no longer enjoy going to work, it may be time for a change. Change is good, too.

### **Who are some of your major influences at work and why?**

I worked hardest and longest for Albert Wolf while he was practicing law. He worked in various aspects of law so my work was varied and gave me lots of experience in all areas of the law. He was well-respected as an attorney and by me. He is no longer practicing law.

Jack McDonald is my major influence at work. His work is more generalized, and gave me exposure to areas of the law that Mr. Wolf didn't work in. It's just Jack and me at this point. Everyone who knows Jack, likes him and respects him. Who could want more.



**WDALA's 25th Anniversary 2009**

**Someone You Should Know . . . Dianne Taix, ACP**  
**continued**



**WDALA's 35th Anniversary 2019**

**What have been the most significant changes in work culture since you started? Which changes were for the better? Who do you wish hadn't changed?**

The most significant change in work culture is the computer technology.

**What is something that you have always wanted to try or learn?**

I always thought it would be great to know how to use various carpentry tools. Maybe when I DO retire, I will take a "shop" class at BSC to learn some skills.

**What would you say are your greatest personal and/or professional strengths today?**

I don't know if "experience" is a strength, but that's the word that comes to mind. I have stick-to-it-iveness. I'm not sure that is a word either.

**What are the toughest challenges you have had in the legal field? How did they help you grow as an individual.**

I do not recall any "tough challenges" in the legal field.

**What is something about you (a fun fact) that not many people know?**

I am 77 years of age; I've been married to Gene forever; we have three grown children, Randy, Brian and Lori; we have 8 wonderful and loving grandchildren, (Randy & Shellie) Tyler, Shandi and Elijah; (Brian & Sonja) Caitlyn, Dannon and Nathan; and (Lori & Johnny) Javan and Julian. Life has been good.

**What is the best trip you have ever been on and why?**

My sister Connie and my lady friend Donna and I took a trip to Hawaii in 1984. Besides enjoying the beautiful island and the gorgeous scenery and weather, it was so nice to get away from all the responsibilities of home life. We planned our next-day excursions the night before, starting with scenic scheduled tours each day, making it back to the hotel for a few hours in the sunlight during the afternoon, laying on the beach and then enjoying a planned evening meal and a planned evening activity each day. Everything ran so smoothly the entire week. No one to answer to and just enjoy ourselves. It is a trip we will remember forever.

**How would your best friend describe you in three words?**

Professionally – dedicated, dependable and thoughtful; Personally – funny, kind, selfless. (I asked a few friends for the words).

**If you could visit any place in the world, where would it be.**

With the world as crazy as it has gotten, I wouldn't want to visit any place in the world right now. It's just not safe any more. I cannot even envision taking that same trip to Hawaii at this point in time.

# We Asked . . . You Answered

## Other than family and friends, what are three simple things that bring you joy?

- Music, the heated seats in my car, and coffee.
- My pets, reading, and going on side-by-side rides.
- Coffee!, walking, and playing board games.
- My plants, cleaning/having a clean house, and being outside.
- Spending time outdoors appreciating nature, furry animals, and ice cream.
- Bringing joy to others, vacation, and watching movies.
- Volunteering, reading, and a trip to the casino.
- Silence, reading, and floating on our pontoon (I see a theme! Ha!).



## How do you organize for multiple tasks that all have tight deadlines?

- Keeping a to-do list and ranking tasks by priority. If all are equal priority, I often start with the task I can get done the quickest, i.e. the “Snowball effect.”
- Only keeping the file I am presently working on, on my desk (files awaiting responses or actions from others go on my credenza, which is outside my usual line of vision).
- I take a minute to sit down and write out a list of all tasks I need to complete. I then write a number next to each task prioritizing which task I should accomplish first. I usually pick the least time-consuming tasks first to knock those off the list. Then, I make sure to focus on one at a time and check them off as I go. Of course, the list changes and I reprioritize frequently.
- Setting alarms or reminders to pop up for time-critical tasks or follow-up.
- Turning off my e-mail pop-up notifications so my focus is not interrupted continually.
- I organize by the date of the deadline and the complexity of the project. Also, if there is anything that I cannot do from home after work to complete the project, I make sure that gets priority during work hours while in the office.
- I arrange the tasks according to the partner that is going to bug me more about his deadlines. I start with the first task and give it my full attention. Then just continue moving down the list.
- I try not to freak out and just do one thing at a time, instead of flip flopping through tasks, which tends not to be productive for me.
- Make a list, prioritize and ask for help.
- Creating false deadlines ahead of the true deadlines.



## Do you have any strategies for dealing with stress at work?

- I allow myself 10-15 minutes when I am overwhelmed to just sit and calm down. I then prioritize the tasks that are stressing me out. I write them all down, in order of importance, so I can see what I am facing and have a plan of attack.
- Taking a brief break to stretch and walk around about every hour or so.
- Closing my door or putting my phone on “do not disturb” for periods of time when needed.
- Close out distractions and stay focused. Once focus starts lacking, take a short trek around the office and then refocus.
- When I get stressed, I usually take an hour or so to organize files, emails, my desk, etc. Having a clean and organized workspace helps reduce my stress. A new strategy I’ve started using, which is proving to be very effective, is I pop in my earbuds and turn on my favorite piano music and tune out everything around me while I focus on my work.
- Take a break. Have a conversation with a co-worker about anything but work – get to know my office mates. Go for a short walk. Remind myself I don’t have to do it all myself and believe there is no shame in asking for help.
- Deep breathing while looking at a stone given by a dear friend that says “Focus on the Good”
- I exercise a lot and listen to relaxing music.
- Listening to music





# 1st Vice President's Report

*By Holly A. Radke, ACP*



WOW! What a great turnout for our 2023 WDALA Spring Seminar! WDALA again offered the Seminar both in-person and virtual. It was held on Monday, May 1, 2023 at the Sleep Inn and Suites Conference Center in Minot, ND. Our members that attended were able to obtain 6.0 hours of CLE credits. The seminar was approved by both NALA and SBAND so attorneys were able to attend also and earn those credits. We felt fortunate to be able to offer this to our members during this time and continue to offer the virtual option. Technology can sometimes not be our friend and not cooperate but I think that is to be expected.

We had 23 people registered (originally 25 but 2 had something come up the morning of so they were unable to join us), 14 attending in person and 9 attending virtually. Of these attendees – 5 were attorneys. We also had 3 nonmembers, 2 of them are now members!!! Please help me welcome Belinda Zabka and Molly Guy. Belinda and Molly both work at Craig Law Firm in Minot. Welcome Belinda and Molly!!!

WDALA made a donation to the Minot Drug Court Program in honor of our speakers at the seminar. We are looking forward to continuing our relationship with them and see the program grow. If anyone has any ideas for fundraisers or has any questions regarding the Minot Drug Court Program you can contact Vanessa Waller at 701-578-8645 or [vwaller@nd.gov](mailto:vwaller@nd.gov).

All of the speakers had great presentations! They were all simply amazing! We learned a great deal of information. Presentations included the following:

**“Understanding the Nine Steps of the Reid Technique”**

Presented by Michael Nason, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, Minot State University

**“Artificial Intelligence: The Good, the Bad, and the Ethics”**

Presented by Katie Carpenter, Attorney, Vogel Law Firm

**“Internet Crimes Against Children - Sextortion”**

Presented by Darrik J. Trudell, Resident Agent in Charge, Homeland Security Investigations

## 1st Vice President's Report continued

Below is a list of resources that may be helpful:

[www.howcast.com/categories/2-tech](http://www.howcast.com/categories/2-tech)

How to videos for popular websites and technologies

[www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting](http://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting)

Information regarding specific websites and apps

[www.netsmartz.org/Parents](http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents)

Information regarding wide range of cyber issues

[https://needhelpnow.ca//app/en/removing\\_pictures-facebook](https://needhelpnow.ca//app/en/removing_pictures-facebook)

Information on removing pictures and videos from popular social media sites and apps

### **“Helping Clients by Debunking the Myths of Divorce and Custody”**

Presented by Aften M. Grant, Attorney, McGee, Hankla & Backers PC

Attorney Grant ended our seminar recognizing how important our role as a paralegal is. She is very grateful for all that we do. She ended her presentation with the cutest meme of two attorneys golfing, “Here’s the bet: If you win, I’ll give you my best client. If I win, I get your paralegal.” It was uplifting to hear her gratitude towards paralegals.

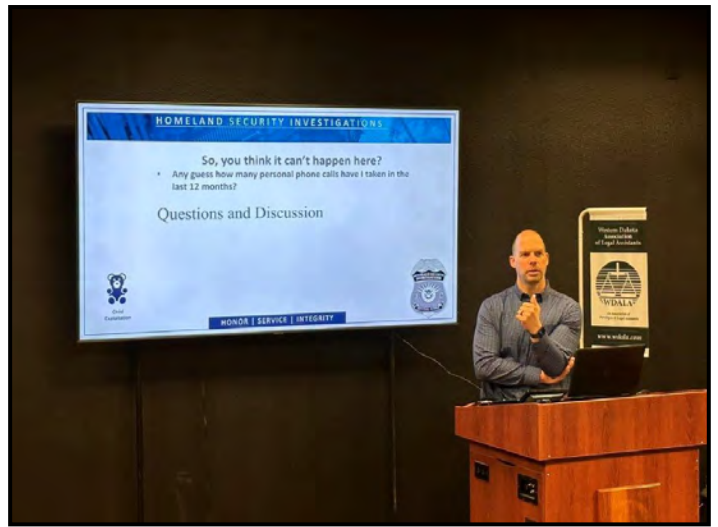
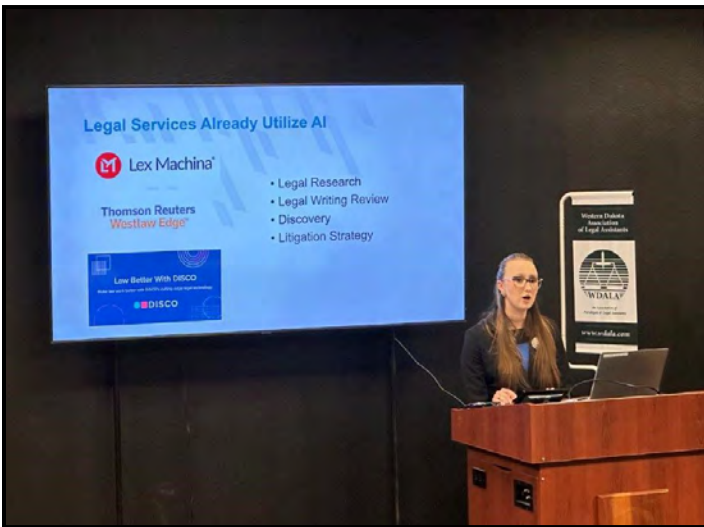
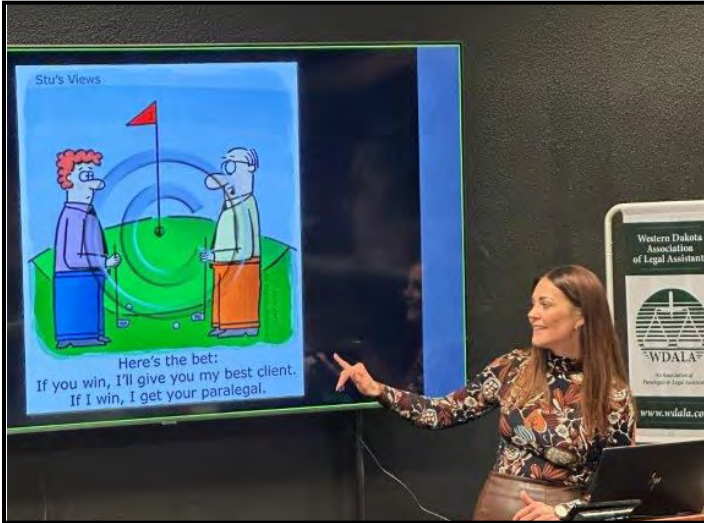
All the speakers were amazing, and I learned so much from all of them. It really was a great seminar. WDALA has always been fortunate in securing some of the best individuals in their field to come educate us. We are so very thankful for the time they take out of their schedules for us.

**\*\*\*Reminder for those that attended the Seminar both in-person and virtual - if you have not returned the evaluation form to me yet, please complete and return to me ASAP.\*\*\***

The WDALA Board held a Board Meeting on April 30, 2023 at 7:00 pm. The board discussed the upcoming Fall Seminar set for September 11-12, 2023! Now with the Spring Seminar behind us we will begin putting the final touches on the Fall Seminar. I cannot wait for you all to see who our line up of speakers are! You are not going to want to miss this one so get those dates requested off at work now!!! Hope to see you all there!!!

Thank you to all our WDALA members. You are all amazing!!!

# WDALA Spring Seminar



# NALA LIAISON'S REPORT

*By Ashley Miller, CP*



Wow, this has been the longest and hardest winter I've experienced so far. Hopefully, everyone survived with most of their sanity still intact. I don't have much to report from NALA at this time. However, WDALA board members nominated Adrienne Berry for the director position for the NALA Affiliated Associations this week. Adrienne is the current president of the Alabama Association of Paralegals, Inc. and has been an active member of NALA since 2005.

Currently NALA is preparing for the 2023 Conference & Expo which will be held July 12 – 14, 2023 in Boston, MA. Both in-person and virtual options are available. Information on the conference can be found at: <https://nala.org/education/nala-conference-expo-2023/> If you are a NALA member, your \$80 credit can be used for the conference. I strongly encourage anyone who is considering sitting for the Certified Paralegal (CP) exam to register for the CP review courses available at the conference. I attended these courses virtually for the 2021 conference and gained so much knowledge from them. If anyone has questions about the NALA conference or the CP exam, please reach out to me.



## **FOLLOW NALA:**

Facebook: NALA - The Paralegal Association

Website: [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

# Region I Report

*By Anna Oleksik, CP and Holly A. Radke, ACP*



Region I is continuing to grow our members and we are very excited about this!!! Region I members met on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Williston Brewing Company for some delicious food and conversation. We had two non-members join us and are hoping that they will officially join WDALA in the future. We are looking forward to our next meet-and-greet. Region I members are currently putting outreach packets together to deliver to area law firms in hopes to recruit members.



## Treasurer's Report

*By Cassy Larson, CP*



Greetings WDALA!! We've had a great quarter so far this year and received several donations from all around our district in response to the sponsorship letters mailed out by our team. It is wonderful to see support from the legal community for our exciting upcoming spring seminar.

The treasurer balance for the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants as of April 11, 2023 is \$11,290.90.

# Region III Report

*By Melissa Hamilton, ACP*



Happy Spring from Region III – hopefully by the time you read this we will be in full Spring mode and not still dealing with snow or going straight to summer! Hopefully you have been able to take in the Northern Lights show we have had this Spring – this was taken from my front yard – one of the benefits of living in North Dakota!



Region III continues to meet for lunch each month at A&B Pizza South. We will not meet in June, July, and August, but will resume monthly meetings in the fall. We have also started the initial planning for the annual Drug Court picnic. This year will be the 12th year WDALA has hosted a picnic for the Bismarck, Mandan Drug Court participants and their families at Sertoma Park. This is one of my favorite activities WDALA does – yes, there is work involved and time away from my normal routine, but the appreciation of the Drug Court participants and the joy on the faces of their children and families makes it all worth it.

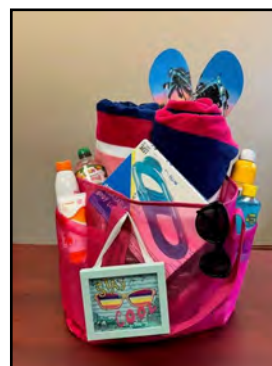
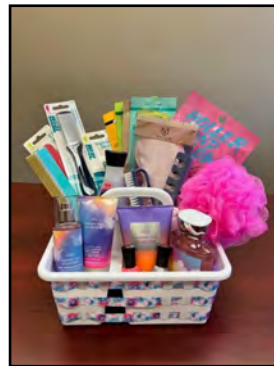
# Silent Auction Baskets

It is that time of year again for the silent auction baskets!!!!

This will be WDALA Region III's 13th year partnering with the Adult Drug Court program! The silent auction is open until Wednesday, May 10th at 12:30 pm. Basket pick-up will be at the Smith Porsborg Law firm on May 11th and 12th from 8am - 5pm. Please use the link below to access the baskets and begin bidding:

<https://www.32auctions.com/drugcourtchristmas2023>

Please consider sharing this link with your office and your family. The baskets make great Mother's Day gifts or a kick-off to summer! All the funds raised will go directly to the 2023 Drug Court Christmas project!



**W DALA's Officers/Executive  
Committee and Board of Directors**



President  
Anna Heinen



1st Vice President &  
Region I Co-Director  
Holly Radke, ACP



2nd Vice President  
Kathy Johnson, CP



Secretary  
ReBecca Wohl, ACP



Treasurer  
Cassy Larson, CP



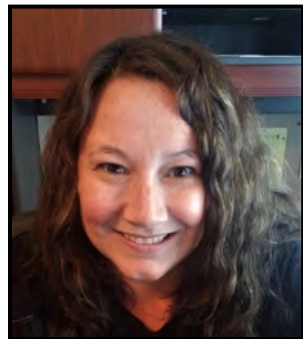
Parliamentarian  
Alice Johnson, ACP



NALA Liaison  
Ashley Miller, CP



Region I Co-Director  
Anna Oleksik, CP



Region II Director  
Andrea Johnson



Region III Director  
Melissa Hamilton, ACP





# WDALA Committees

## **Education**

Holly Radke, ACP (Chair); Stephanie Howe; Anna Heinen; Cassy Larson, CP; and Jen Defoe, ACP

## **Membership**

Kathy Johnson, CP (Chair); ReBecca Wohl, ACP; and Andrea Johnson

## **Finance/Budget**

Cassy Larson, CP (Chair)

## **CLA Chairman**

Ashley Miller, CP

## **Nominations/Elections**

Anna Heinen; and Melissa Klimpel, ACP

## **Legal Assistant Day**

Melissa Klimpel, ACP and Ashley Miller, CP

## **Auditing**

Becky Kocourek, CP

## **Ethics/Professional Development**

Holly Radke, ACP

## **State Bar/NDTLA Liaison**

Ashley Miller, CP

## **Historian**

Laurie Guenther, ACP

## **Student Liaison**

Ashley Miller, CP

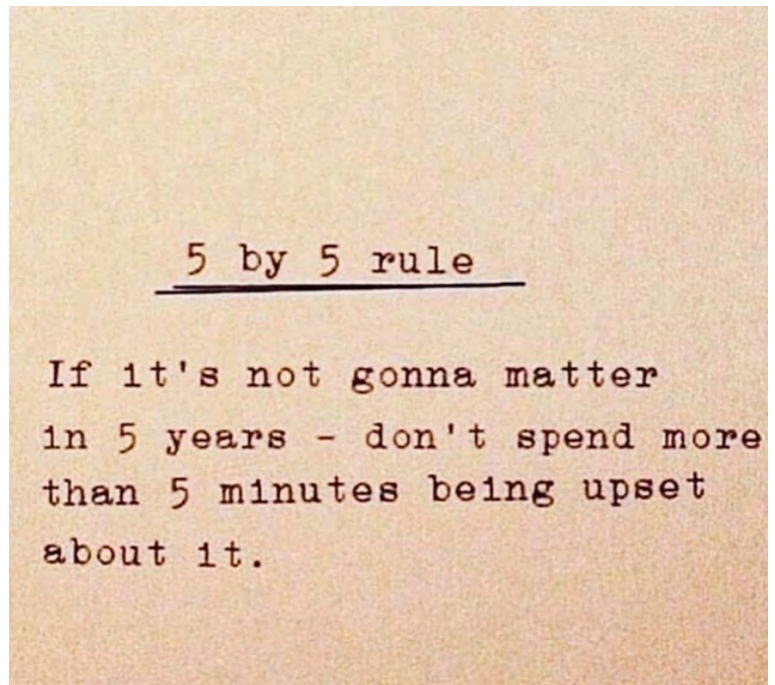
## **Public Relations**

Melissa Klimpel, ACP (*Summons* Editor); Anna Heinen (Website & Facebook); Samantha Lachenmeier (Facebook); Tami Hulm, ACP; Kolette Balsam; Laurie Guenther, ACP; Candy Schafer, CLA; and Andrea Johnson

**FOLLOW WDALA:**



Facebook: WDALA (Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants)

Website: [www.wdala.org](http://www.wdala.org)










# MAY 2023



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15  Kathy Johnson, CP 	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Melissa Hamilton, ACP 	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 	30	31			

# JUNE 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Tammy Berger 	2	3
4	5	6 Tiffany Knopik 	7	8	9	10
11 Kolette Balsam 	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 	19	20	21	22 Paralegal/Legal Assistant Day in ND 	23	24
25	26	27	28 Stephanie Howe 	29 Megan Ontis 	30	

# JULY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Becky Kocourek, CP 	3	4 	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Anna Oleksik, CP 	19	20 Vicki Kunz, ACP 	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					