



Summons

WDALA

An Association for Paralegals/
Legal Assistants

November
2023

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President's Message

By Anna Heinen

Hello Members! I hope you are all enjoying this beautiful Fall weather, either by taking your time to enjoy the pumpkin patches, breaking out your sweaters and boots, and/or enjoying all the pumpkin spice your tastebuds can tolerate!! Watching the kids begin another school year, the leaves changing colors, the crisp air, and football taking over the tv is always such a bittersweet time of year. It's a nice transition from the warm summer months into the holiday season. The downside of this transition will always be the shorter daylight hours. All the darkness that slowly takes over and we find ourselves going to work in the dark and coming home from work in the dark. And I don't know about you guys, but I find myself being lazier without the sun shining.



I am excited to begin WDALA's new year! We have a couple new members on the Board, and a little rearranging of positions. The committees have come together nicely and I look forward to the new ideas and fresh outlooks from the members that we have acquired! We have resumed our Region III luncheons again and we are already in full planning mode for the upcoming Santa Run and our Drug Court Christmas project! Be on the lookout for the emails containing all the details!

As always, please let me know what WDALA can do better for you, its members, and its communities. Also, let me know how I can assist you going forward - specific training sessions, one-on-one discussions, group gatherings, and/or volunteering options; as I am here to help 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! I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season and I look forward to seeing what this fiscal year has in store for WDALA! I am honored to continue to lead this organization for the 2024 year!



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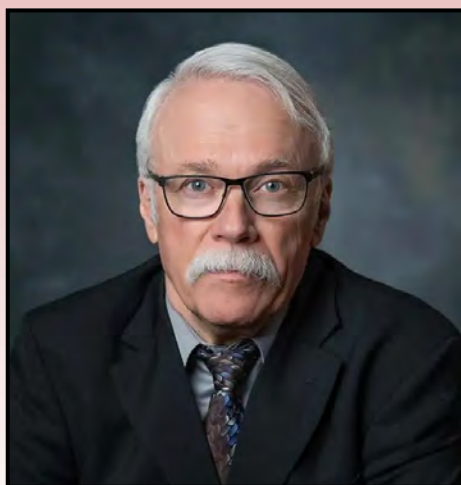
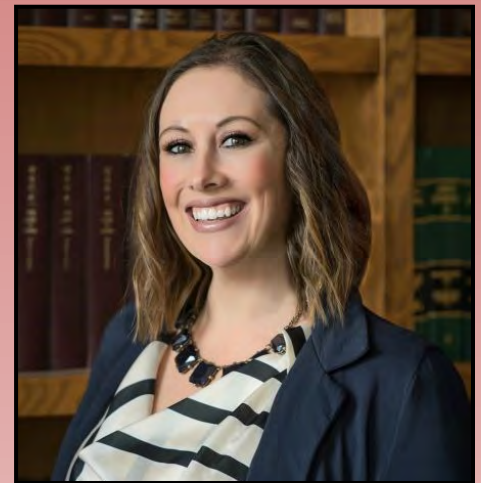
Website: www.wdala.org





New WDALA Members!

Trisha Kinnischtzke: (pronounced Kin-uh-shit-ski) I received my Bachelor of Science degree in Paralegal Studies with an emphasis in Criminal Litigation and a Minor in Theatre Dance from Minnesota State University Moorhead in 2004. I have 18 years of experience in the legal field varying from my time with the North Dakota Department of Human Services (Child Support Division) to private practice where I handled bankruptcy, civil litigation, criminal law, estate planning, personal injury, and real estate cases. I have been employed with the North Dakota Supreme Court since 2019 as an Executive Judicial Assistant. In my free time I enjoy judging dance team, studio dance, and cheer. I have had a passion for dance since I was young and after several years of dancing competitively, coaching the Bismarck High School Varsity dance team, and being involved with the North Dakota Association of Dance and Drill executive board, I now enjoy being in the judge's seat! My husband is the Varsity baseball coach at Bismarck High School, an officer of the Bismarck Men's Slowpitch Softball Association, and a teacher with Bismarck Public Schools. We currently reside in rural Bismarck with our four children.



Jim Hagen



Kim Perkuhn: I grew up in Starbuck, MN (no that is not where Starbucks Coffee comes from) and moved to Devils Lake, North Dakota after receiving my Paralegal degree from Moorhead State University. I have worked in a few different areas of the law prior to finding my home with the Ramsey County State's Attorney's Office. Some of my prior employers include: the Tax Directors Office, the Child Support and Enforcement Agency, and the Clerk of Court's Office with Ramsey County. My husband, Brian, and I have been married for 17 years. We have a blended family, 4 children and 9 grandchildren! We love spending time at the lake and the VIKINGS!

Dehan Schwan: My name is Dehan (Dee-Han) Schwan and I am a North Dakota transplant originally from Fergus Falls, Minnesota. I moved to Devils Lake in 2008 and reside with my significant other, Jay, and 10 year old daughter, Remy. I am employed as a paralegal for the Ramsey County State's Attorney Office in Devils Lake and have been here since 2019. Prior to that I worked as a legal assistant for North Dakota Child Support from 2008-2019, and Johnson, Rodenburg, & Lauinger Law Firm in Fargo from 2006-2008. In my spare time I am an avid runner, participating in the Fargo ½ marathon and the Devils Lake Fallen Soldier 14k annually. Locally I am a member of one of the five Devils Lake chapters of Beta Sigma Phi and a member of St. Joseph School/St. Mary's Academy Board of Education where my daughter attends school. Thank you to WDALA for the warm welcome. I am honored to be here!



Megan Klym: My name is Megan Klym. I was born and raised in rural central Minnesota on a dairy farm where my family still farms. I moved to Bismarck 2 years ago after living in Cody, Wyoming for 9 years with my husband Stuart and three daughters, Mckayla-9, Olivia-8 and Victoria-5. I have worked in the legal field in some capacity for the past 10 years and have been at the Attorney General's office for the past year and a half. I love continuing my education which has brought me to earning an Associates in Psychology, Bachelors in Psychology, Masters in Forensic Psychology, Certificate in Child Law and recently my Associates in Paralegal Studies. When I am not working I love to do as much as I can with my family. We love to bake, play board games, attend sporting events and as true former Wyomingites we love to attend rodeos.

Member Spotlight

Angie Dietrich

How long have you been a member of WDALA?

I have been a WDALA member since March of 2022.

What do you like most about being a member of WDALA?

I like meeting new people that share the same profession as me. It's fun to be able to visit with others that share similar work experiences. I also appreciate all the seminars WDALA puts on.

What company do you work for?

Borkus Law Group, LTD.



Why did you choose to pursue a career in the legal field?

I had been working as a corporate travel agent for 7 years. Most companies were moving toward online booking for their employees and phasing out the need for a travel agent. I was working for Lawyers Travel in Washington D.C. and decided it was time for a change in careers. I have always had an interest in law. I applied and took a receptionist position at one of the top law firms in Northern Virginia. I worked there for 3 years as the receptionist but also trained and worked my way up to Legal Assistant.

What career advice do you live by? Who gave it to you?

When I first started in the law profession, I was working for a law firm that handled mostly family law. A co-worker (who is now one of my very best friends) told me that we always need to be patient and understanding (as hard as it can be sometimes!) with our clients as they are going through what is probably the worst time of their lives. It really sank in because it's so true. No matter what type of clients I work with, I always treat them with respect and compassion.

What do you love most about your job?

I love the work that we do. We have some great clients! My boss is so good to me and really great to work for. I also love that I get to work from home =)

What is the last TV show you binged watched?

I am currently binging Gossip Girl.

If your pet could talk, what do you think they might say about you?

They would both say I am the best pet parent there is because my pets get treated like children and are very spoiled!

If you were to start your own business, what kind of company would you create?

I would love to open my own restaurant! I love to cook and I love cooking for others!

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

I have always wanted to visit Italy.

If you could make one rule for everyone in the world to follow, what would it be?

Just be kind. Everyone is going through something.



What type of books/movies do you enjoy?

I love to read mystery/thriller books!

What is something that you are proud of about yourself?

I've overcome a lot in life. I made something of myself when I didn't think it was possible. I'm so proud that I keep going and always push myself to do better and to be better.

What's a fact about you that's not on the internet?

When I lived in Virginia, I once got my hair cut by Lorena Bobbitt! I didn't realize it until the hair cut was over and she gave me her business card! If you don't know who she is, google her =)

If you could pick up a new skill in an instant what would it be?

I wish I had the patience to crochet! My grandma was the crocheter in our family. I would love to pick up that skill to carry on her favorite hobby.

Member Spotlight

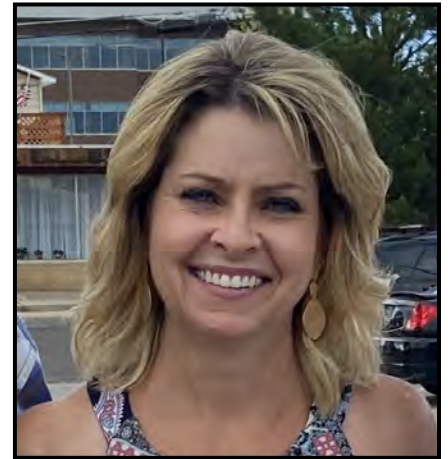
Laurie Guenther, ACP

How long have you been a member of WDALA?

35 years

What do you like most about being a member of WDALA?

It's hard to say what I like most, there are many things! As an inexperienced paralegal, when I became a member, WDALA provided valuable education and supported my goals to become certified. Then I started serving on WDALA's Board. This was a leadership role I never intended to take. Because of the encouragement and faith of others, I'm glad I did because it was one of the most rewarding personal and professional benefits of my WDALA membership. I love the comradery and friendships I've developed because of WDALA. It's also fair to say that being a member of WDALA helped me obtain and be better at each of my jobs. Finally, I love WDALA's volunteer projects. I love that we give back to the community.



Why did you choose to pursue a career in the legal field?

It was a combination of reasons. I like to read, be organized, and I prefer English over math and science. Any career focused on math or science was out of the question! My interest in the legal field started with my exposure to the legal system when my parents were divorcing and fighting for custody. My younger sister and I had always been told we would never be asked to choose which parent we wanted to live with. Much to my parents' dismay, however, one day my sister and I found ourselves sitting alone in the judge's chambers. Looking across the desk at the judge, he point blank asked us who we wanted to live with. Neither of us was able to answer the question. I remember feeling shocked and confused while my sister just cried. Whether it was right or wrong for the judge to ask us that, I don't know. Things were different back then. But, the family law process we were entrenched in certainly made me curious about the law and how our legal system works. I found myself fascinated by it and still am.

What company do you work for?

State Board of Law Examiners

When did you first know that you wanted to pursue a career in the legal field?

Around junior high

What do you love most about your job?

This is a soup-to-nuts position that keeps me challenged. There is always something new to learn and be curious about. The position includes processing applications for admission to the bar; administering the bar exam; facilitating background investigations; participating in character and fitness hearings; annual license renewal; taking Board minutes; assisting with policy, procedure, and rule amendments; staying aware of legislation affecting lawyers; and staying educated on competency and character and fitness issues. I enjoy helping examinees/admittees from the initial application process through licensure. It involves detail, organization, and lots of reading. All things in my wheelhouse. I've always been someone who wants to understand the whole story – read the entire book, not just a chapter. This position allows me to be involved in all aspects of lawyer licensing and I am continually learning. I am privileged to assist the Board in their duty to admit and license attorneys.

What is the best concert you ever attended?

Fabulous Armadillos performing “What’s Going On: Songs from the Vietnam War Era.” They are a local MN band worth seeing if you have not!

What’s a cause that you are passionate about?

Drug Court and The Santa Run

What is on your bucket list?

Travel to The Grand Canyon and Italy.

What is the last TV show you binged watched?

Suits.



What has been your most meaningful accomplishment so far?

Watching our son and daughter become parents. It’s exciting to watch them raise little humans that we get to claim as our grandchildren!

Describe what a perfect day outside of work would look like for you?

#1. Being with my grandkids. #2 Floating on a pontoon on a calm day with a good book. In ND, the “calm day” part is hard to come by and it seems the book never gets read! But that’s what dreams are for, right?

What career advice would you give to your younger self?

Be confident and quit worrying about what others think. You got this!

If you could make one rule for everyone in the world to follow, what would it be?

Be kind!

What type of books/movies do you enjoy?

Mysteries, thrillers, and psychological dramas in both movies and books.

If you could pick up a new skill in an instant what would it be?

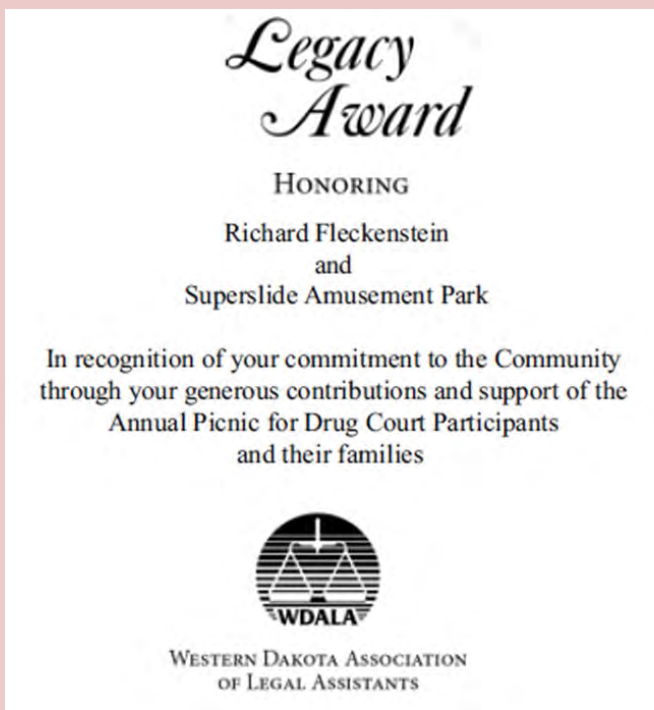
Playing guitar

WDALA Legacy Award

Richard Fleckenstein

WDALA has come to appreciate the importance of community involvement and to recognize the value of partnering with others to accomplish great things. Richard Fleckenstein, owner of the Super Slide Amusement Park in Bismarck, was recognized and honored as one of WDALA's partners in the community. For the last 12 years, Richard Fleckenstein has joined WDALA in providing a family-centered event for members of the Drug Court. He has generously donated wristbands as part of the Annual Picnic for Drug Court participants. Without hesitation, Richard has always said "yes" when we have contacted him for support. That means Mom, Dad, and the kids can enjoy an evening of food, fun, games, and rides - for free!

As an expression of WDALA's appreciation, Richard Fleckenstein was presented with the WDALA Legacy Award during the fall seminar. We are grateful to him for joining WDALA as members of a community where family & friends support each other and where Fun is important. The Award reads:



Get to Know . . . Donna Wunderlich, Court Administrator

What are your job duties?

Court Administrators provide overall direction to the clerk of court / juvenile court offices and perform audits of those offices to ensure compliance with law, policies, and procedures. We supervise, hire, evaluate, and train court personnel; develop and implement caseload management plans and calendaring systems; manage the budget; compile and analyze statistical data; and much more. As you can see there is never a dull moment!



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

Even while working in accounting, I continued to be interested in law. I earned an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies (and became a CP); then a Master's Degree in Public Administration from UND. Working on the Supreme Court's finance team allowed me to work closely with court administrators around the state. I was intrigued by the breadth of responsibility and I transferred into court administration in 2005.

What is a typical day like at your job?

The best thing about court administration is the variety of things we do. A typical day includes meetings with judges, clerks, reporters, juvenile and scheduling staff; preparing for and participating in committee meetings; traveling to various counties to meet with clerks, law enforcement, and county officials; communicating with litigants and attorneys to solve problems; collaborating with various department directors at the Supreme Court; and constantly reprioritizing the above.

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

I majored in accounting/business law in college and worked in accounting for 20 years before getting into court administration. I still love working with numbers, spreadsheets, and budgets but they are no longer the main portion of my work.

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

We would like attorneys and paralegals to know that court personnel function in a fast-paced and highly structured environment. We strive to timely manage the large volume of filings and hearings consistently and fairly.

What is the best/worst part of your job?

The best part of my job is the people! There really is no worst part. Even when dealing with some of the biggest problems, finding a solution is very rewarding.

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

Many pro se litigants think that I can/should give them legal advice.

What's something that has surprised you about your chosen career path?

I'm most surprised by the impact of addiction on all that we do.

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

Go for it! The sky is the limit.

If you could meet any historical figure, who would they be?

Thomas Jefferson.

Do you have any favorite quotes?

I'm a sucker for motivational quotes. Some that come to mind are:

Oprah Winfrey: "Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don't fight them. Just find a different way to stand."

Thomas Jefferson: "I'm a greater believer in luck and I find that the harder I work, the more of it I seem to have."

Ralph Nader: "The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."



A Quick Guide to the North Dakota Ethics Commission

By Attorney Logan Carpenter

On November 6, 2018, North Dakota voters went to the polls and approved initiated measure 1. As a result of this vote, the people added Article XIV to our state constitution creating the North Dakota Ethics Commission (“the Commission”). The constitutional provision explains the purpose of the Commission. It says, “In order to strengthen the confidence of the people of North Dakota in their government, and to support open, ethical, and accountable government, the North Dakota ethics commission is hereby established.” As a new constitutional entity, there are many questions about the Commission that come to mind.

Who serves on the Ethics Commission?

The Commission consists of five commissioners. The governor, the majority leader of the senate, and the minority leader of the senate must all agree on who to appoint as commissioners. Once appointed, commissioners serve four-year terms. The terms of the commissioners originally appointed have been staggered to ensure all the commissioners’ terms do not expire at the same time. The commissioners are not full-time employees but are paid for their participation at monthly regular and special meetings. The Commission also has three full-time staff members consisting of an executive director, general counsel, and an executive assistant.

Which of the three branches of government does the Ethics Commission fall under?

None! The Commission is an independent constitutional entity and is not part of any of the three branches of our state government.

What does the Ethics Commission do?

The Commission has two clear duties according to the North Dakota Constitution. First, it creates rules related to four distinct areas of state government: (1) transparency; (2) corruption; (3) elections; and (4) lobbying. Second, the Commission investigates complaints for alleged violations of its rules relating to these four areas, Article XIV, and related state laws. Another large portion of the Commission’s work is providing educational presentations and materials to those it oversees and North Dakota residents.

The Commission has adopted rules regarding the complaint process, gifts between lobbyists and public officials, conflicts of interest, and bias in quasi-judicial proceedings.

making complaints. You can contact the hotline at (701) 328-6000 or ethicshotline@nd.gov.

How does the Ethics Commission investigate complaints?

Once the Commission receives a complaint, it will inform the complainant the Commission has received it. The Commission will also inform the respondent that a complaint has been filed against the respondent with the Commission.

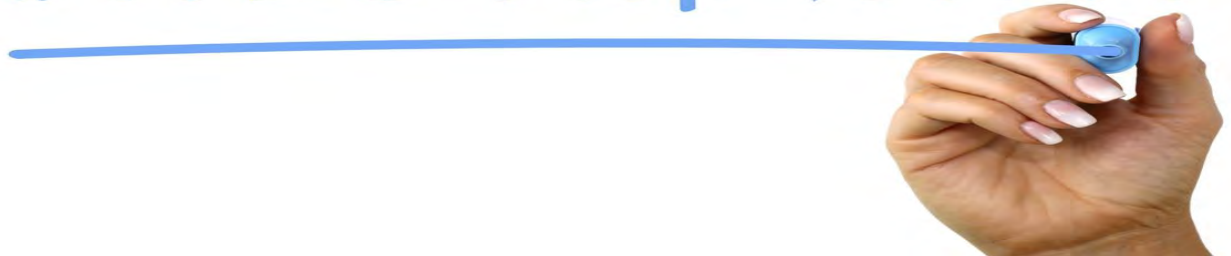
After the Commission notifies the complainant and respondent, there are two essential steps. First, the Commission will do an initial review of the complaint. This initial review involves determining if the Commission has personal jurisdiction over the respondent. The Commission will also determine if it has subject-matter jurisdiction over the conduct alleged in the complaint.

During the initial review, if the Commission lacks personal or subject-matter jurisdiction the Commission will summarily dismiss the complaint, meaning it will not investigate the matter further. If the Commission determines it has personal and subject-matter jurisdiction, it will ask the parties if they would like to informally resolve the complaint. This process is similar to a mediation. However, the parties are not required to participate in an informal resolution. If the complaint is not informally resolved, the Commission will move on to the second step.

The second step commences when the Commission begins its formal investigation of the complaint. This process involves collecting information and documents, conducting interviews, and gathering testimony. Once the investigation is complete, the executive director prepares an investigation report and recommendations for the entire Commission's consideration. The Commission then determines if a violation occurred and what penalty should be imposed, if any.

If at any time the Commission believes a complaint contains allegations of criminal conduct, the Commission must refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency with jurisdiction. If the law enforcement agency agrees to investigate the matter, the Commission cannot proceed with its own investigation until the criminal matter is complete.

INVESTIGATION



Can the Commission talk about the complaints it receives and the investigations it conducts?

No, state law makes all information related to the substance of a complaint confidential, unless the Commission needs to disclose information as part of its investigation. The Commission cannot even confirm or deny whether a complaint exists against a particular respondent. However, if the matter is not informally resolved and the Commission determines a violation has occurred, the complaint is no longer confidential.

Where do I go if I have more questions about the Ethics Commission?

Please visit the Commission’s website at ethicscommission.nd.gov, as it is regularly updated with the most current information. The Commission is also in the process of creating social media to communicate important updates with the public. Additionally, we encourage you to attend our meetings, which are livestreamed through Microsoft Teams. The links for our meetings can be found on the meeting agendas on our website. We are always happy to help with any questions you may have. You can contact us at (701) 328-5325 or ethicscommission@nd.gov. The Commission also regularly sends a speaker to various professional and civic organizations throughout the state to speak about the Commission’s work. If you would like us to come speak to your group about the Commission, please contact us.



Logan Carpenter serves as general counsel for the North Dakota Ethics Commission. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, magna cum laude, from the University of Jamestown in 2017. While at the University of Jamestown, Logan played alto saxophone in the concert and jazz bands, worked as a teaching assistant, and was selected as a College Fellow in Political Science. Following his undergraduate studies, Logan attended law school at the University of North Dakota School of Law where he graduated magna cum laude in 2020. During law school, he was actively involved as a member of the

International Legal Honor Society of Phi Delta Phi, as a lawyering-skills teaching assistant, and as the Managing Editor and Co-Symposium Editor of the North Dakota Law Review. Logan was inducted into the Order of the Coif and the Order of Barristers upon graduation.

After law school, Logan served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Gerald VandeWalle at the North Dakota Supreme Court. Thereafter, he continued his career as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Clare Hochhalter, Magistrate Judge for the District of North Dakota.

8th Circuit Historical Society

By Courtney Koebele, JD

The 8th Circuit Historical Society's mission is to “preserve and celebrate the rich history of the federal courts of the seven states that make up the Eighth Circuit.” The Historical Society has organized separate branches for each of the courts located in Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, as well as a branch for the circuit court of appeals.

After a period of relative inactivity, the North Dakota branch has been busy over the past few years. Current members of the ND Branch are Courtney Koebele, Suzanne Morrison, Katie Schmidt, Steven Lamb, US Magistrate Judge Alice Senechal, US District Judge Peter Welte and Clerk of the Federal District Court Kari Knudson. The committee meets on a bi-monthly basis by phone conference. I was appointed to the ND Branch by US Magistrate Judge Dewey Kautzmann in 1998 and have served as president since 2022. It has been a pleasure to serve with such capable members.

One project that took an immense amount of effort is the oral history project. The committee hired a professional videographer to record and edit the videos, done in a podcast style, and set up a YouTube channel to house them. The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals took over the YouTube channel and hosts all oral histories of retired judges throughout the 8th Circuit. The videographer, Matt Fern, has a family connection to the federal court. His grandfather, Al Emineth, was the official court reporter for the Bismarck federal courts for almost 50 years.

The committee started its oral history project with District Judge Patrick Conmy, whom I interviewed as his former law clerk. US Circuit Judge Ralph Erickson was interviewed by Mark Johnson, Professor of Political Science and History at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. US District Judge Daniel Hovland and US Magistrate Judge Charlie Miller were interviewed by Robert Umland, a longtime practicing attorney from Fargo, now retired. US Magistrate Judge Karen Klein was interviewed by her former law clerk and now state district court judge Nicholas Chase.

Our goal was to produce a history of the judge, being interviewed by someone they were familiar with to promote collegiality during the interview. I think we did a pretty great job.



William L. Guy Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Bismarck 1913



Bruce M. Van Sickle Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Minot 1915



William L. Guy Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Bismarck 1964



U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Devils Lake 1910



William L. Guy Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Bismarck 1999

Another recent project is the judges' portraits in both the Fargo and Bismarck courthouses. The committee resolved to create galleries in the courthouses that looked the same. Many of the pictures were sun-damaged and faded. Each courthouse had different portraits. And many of the judges did not even have a portrait.

The project completed all the pictures, framed all the pictures, repaired the sun-damaged photos, and re-framed the collection to prevent future damage. Both Fargo and Bismarck will have portraits of 14 district judges, five magistrate judges, and the Fargo courthouse will have three bankruptcy judges. The committee plans for a composite/collage photo display for the courthouses in Grand Forks and Minot. Clerk of Court Kari Knudson and Deputy in Charge Todd Dudgeon were instrumental in getting these completed.

The latest project is a court history book, written by Jeremy Fugleberg from the Fargo Forum. The committee hired Fugleberg, who plans on writing a book to collect, preserve and share the history of the US District Court in North Dakota. He seeks to make the history accessible, interesting, and meaningful to a lay audience using narrative storytelling techniques. The committee has received a Humanities ND grant to partially fund the work, as well as non-appropriated funds from the federal court. More projects are in the works, including an artifact collection.

It is rewarding being part of this committee and exciting to see its accomplishments. Please check out the oral histories, the portraits and other courthouse historical pictures at the North Dakota Federal Court's website's history section, www.ndd.uscourts.gov/history. Or take a look in person at the Bismarck or Fargo federal courthouses to see the photos, biographical plaques and name plates of the federal judges who have served our state.

Courtney Koebeler, JD, is the executive director of the North Dakota Medical Association, where she has headed the association and lobbying efforts for the past 12 years. She graduated from the University of North Dakota and received her juris doctorate from UND in 1991. She was a law clerk for US District Judge Pat Conmy and US Magistrate Judge Dewey Kautzmann. She was in private practice in New Ulm, MN, and Bismarck with Wheeler Wolf Law Firm for several years. Prior to serving at the North Dakota Medical Association, Courtney was the assistant bar admissions administrator for the North Dakota Board of Law Examiners from 2006 to 2011.



The Crash Reconstruction Process

By Trooper Jacob Jones



Most of you reading this article have been affected by a motor vehicle crash in some way. A study by Esurance found that about 77% of drivers have been involved in at least one crash. The average driver will submit one insurance claim related to a motor vehicle crash every 18 years. Crashes are common enough that most of us have been in one, we hear about them almost daily on the news, but they don't directly impact us very often. Crashes have sort of weaved their way into the acceptable realm. We all

know there are professionals out there trying to prevent crashes, injuries, and deaths but for the most part crashes are a part of life; an acceptable risk we assume for convenience in our lives. However, almost all crashes can be attributed to human factors. Very rarely are crashes true "accidents" as they are often called. When it comes to crash reconstruction, done by law enforcement, we are looking at crash cases where drivers are going outside of acceptable driving norms and entering the category of negligent, reckless, or sometimes intentional criminal behavior behind the wheel. The hard part about crash investigation and reconstruction is that we don't always know if someone was negligent or reckless when we arrive at the scene. Many times, troopers must quickly sort through the initial facts and circumstances of a case and make the determination to start a bigger investigation.

The North Dakota Highway Patrol has a crash reconstruction team made up of troopers from across the state. Currently we have 4 geographic regions with several members in each region. Everyone on the team is trained as a crash technician, which involves going to crash scenes and collecting evidence when requested. When a traffic trooper responds to a crash and has an indication that there may be circumstances that lead to criminal charges against one or more parties involved, they can request a member of our crash team to respond. The crash team member is issued specialized equipment which facilitates the collection of crash related evidence. Some of the equipment that we deploy in the field includes total station survey equipment, digital cameras, accelerometers, drones, crash data re-

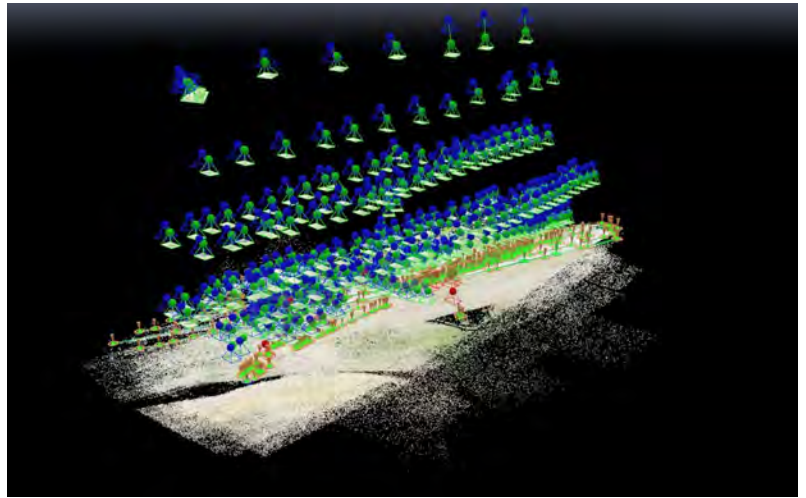
trieval tools (airbag module software and hardware), post-crash inspection kits, DNA collection kits, etc. We currently use the small unmanned aerial systems (drones) along with the total stations to document the large outdoor crash scenes quickly and accurately. Crash scenes, as crime scenes, present unique challenges compared to other crime scenes. Crash scenes can usually be several hundred feet long and are usually out in open public areas, such as roads, that may still have traffic on them and are difficult to preserve. The agency has used many different technologies over the years to complete this task in the most efficient ways possible.



As recently as 2020 the agency began using the drones and photogrammetry software to forensically preserve our crash scenes for future analysis. The process is extraordinarily quick compared to other methods and simply involves taking downward looking pictures with the drone in a specified pattern. We also collect a handful of reference points with our survey equipment and most of our on-scene collection is complete. Those drone photographs are then processed in our photogrammetry software, and we are essentially able to navigate the crash scene in a 3D virtual reality back at the office. Our on-scene evidence collection as far as capturing measurements and the physical roadway data has gone from several hours to around 30 to 40 minutes in most cases. This quicker process is safer for us officers and safer for the motoring public as we can get roadways opened faster and prevent secondary crashes due to detours and slowed traffic. We also get a higher quality visual scale diagram in most cases, which is great for courtroom presentations. The measurements we can collect in the photogrammetry software are accurate down to fractions of an inch. Those critical measurements of roadway evidence can help to determine vehicle positions prior to the crash and impact speeds of vehicles.



The above image is from the photogrammetry software. Each pixel in the point cloud is a specific common point found in multiple drone photographs.



This above image is from the photogrammetry software. The blue and green pyramids are actual and computed drone locations when the photos were taken.

We also process the vehicles involved in the crashes for useful evidence. Sometimes we don't know what will be useful during the initial phase of the investigation so for the most part we use a standardized process for the post-crash inspection. We go through the vehicles and document things such as interior damage, possible occupant ejection portals, occupant restraint status and usage, vehicle transmission and drive type, vehicle tire size, tread depth, air pressures, etc. We never know when certain vehicle items may be applicable to a case. Perhaps we have downloaded a vehicle's airbag control module, and the data indicates a vehicle speed prior to impact. We must consider the tire size that the vehicle was equipped with from the factory as that is a factor in what speed is displayed/recorded as the vehicle is programmed for a specific tire size. Knowing the current tread depth on the tire and the make and model of tire can assist in ac-



The above image shows the mesh created by the photogrammetry software which creates a photo-realistic model of the scene.

counting for a percentage difference of the actual vehicle speed versus what the vehicle speedometer/computer is displaying. The post-crash inspection process gets even more in-depth and challenging when commercial motor vehicles are involved. Our crash team relies heavily on our motor carrier enforcement troopers who specialize in commercial motor vehicle inspections on a day-to-day basis as there are many unique considerations and aspects with heavy trucks.

In the last decade, the technology in vehicles has increased significantly. For many years federal laws have required all vehicles to be equipped with airbags. Along with those airbags comes a control unit that helps the vehicle determine what safety systems to deploy in each crash. The airbag control module is equipped with sensors and accelerometers that measure the change in velocity over milliseconds. If a certain threshold is met, in only a few milliseconds, the unit will make the determination to deploy the restraints it has been programmed for. These systems have saved countless lives over the years. They have also provided investigators with critical data used in the reconstruction process as these modules will store data related to an event. We can use hardware and software to connect to the vehicles or directly to these airbag modules and obtain data such as vehicle speed, accelerator pedal percentage, steering wheel angle, brake application, yaw rate, etc.

In recent years vehicles have been equipped with active safety control modules. These modules are a part of the active safety systems related to automated emergency braking, adaptive cruise control, pedestrian protection systems, etc. The modules are often used in conjunction with RADAR sensors, LIDAR sensors, and cameras to monitor the environment around a vehicle. When a system is activated like the automated emergency braking, the module may record the automated event. We can then obtain that data through a download of the vehicle and sometimes see hundreds of pages of data related to closing speeds between hazard objects, latitude and longitude of the event, GPS time of the event, stability control system data, etc. While we investigators appreciate the cases where we get copious amounts of data, it isn't always the case. Even with all this amazing data, we must look at this data carefully and relate it to roadway and vehicle evidence. There can be instances when data is recovered from old events or events not related to the crash being investigated. There have also been cases where the data displayed is incorrect or outside what is physically possible. The data in an airbag module shouldn't just be accepted at face value unless it is verified and analyzed by a trained investigator.

Pre-Crash Data (Most Recent Event - table 1 of 3)

(the most recent sampled values are recorded prior to the event)

Time Stamp (sec)	Vehicle Event Recorder Status	Engine RPM	Speed, Vehicle Indicated (MPH [km/h])	Engine Throttle, % Full	Accelerator Pedal, % Full	Raw Manifold Pressure (kPa)	Service Brake	Brake Switch #2 Status
-5.0	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	75.0	64.3	94	Off	Open
-4.9	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	75.0	69.9	93	Off	Open
-4.8	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	75.0	75.0	94	Off	Open
-4.7	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	76.5	76.5	94	Off	Open
-4.6	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	83.2	78.1	93	Off	Open
-4.5	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	91.8	78.6	94	Off	Open
-4.4	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	96.9	78.1	94	Off	Open
-4.3	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	96.9	78.1	94	Off	Open
-4.2	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	77.6	94	Off	Open
-4.1	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	77.6	94	Off	Open
-4.0	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.0	76.5	94	Off	Open
-3.9	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	76.5	93	Off	Open
-3.8	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	76.5	94	Off	Open
-3.7	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	76.5	94	Off	Open
-3.6	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	99.5	75.0	94	Off	Open
-3.5	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	74.5	69.4	93	Off	Open
-3.4	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	74.5	68.4	94	Off	Open
-3.3	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	74.5	68.4	93	Off	Open
-3.2	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	74.5	68.4	93	Off	Open
-3.1	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	73.5	68.4	93	Off	Open
-3.0	Complete	3,200	115 [185]	73.5	68.4	93	Off	Open

The above snip is from an airbag module report. This vehicle was driven by an intoxicated driver who rear-ended another vehicle on interstate 94. This driver was convicted of Reckless Endangerment in addition to the DUI charge. The speed zone was 60 mph.

Also in recent years, cellphone usage and cellphone related evidence has been on the rise. We are all tethered to our phones, and everyone has a difficult time putting them down while driving. When a serious injury or fatality crash occurs and there is evidence that one or more of the drivers may have been distracted or didn't respond appropriately investigators are seizing cellphones more often. Warrants are obtained to search the phones and collect evidence from the time of the crash. New cellphones also have accelerometers built into them that track movement. We have investigated fatal cases where the forensic phone download will show the exact moment a cellphone is oriented from horizontal to vertical, facial recognition was used to unlock the phone and an email was opened. We have had cases of commercial motor vehicle drivers watching pornography on their phone when they rear-end a line of stopped vehicles. In the past, we may have reconstructed cases and concluded that the driver may have been asleep or distracted due to their lack of appropriate response. We may have been able to reconstruct the physical part of the crash, but the human aspect was left in question. The advancements in technology and forensics sometimes allow us to say definitively what a driver was doing when the crash occurred.

Often, a frustrating part of the reconstruction process is the time it takes to submit a case for prosecution. Our crash technicians will collect all the possible evidence in a case and submit it to our crash team coordinator for review. Sometimes after the initial collection of evidence phase, it can be determined that there will be no criminal prosecution regarding the crash. The crash team involvement in those cases is then complete. If the team coordinator determines, along with the investigating officer and state's attorney, that there will be prosecution, the case may be assigned for a full reconstruction analysis. In those cases, all the data and evidence are provided to one of our crash team analysts. The analysts typically have advanced training regarding specific types of crashes or methodologies in reconstruction. In some cases, the initial evidence leads to seeking more evidence collection or follow-up scene investigation by the analyst. There may be surveillance footage located for analysis, there may be chemical tests that become available, there may be a forensic phone download provided by another agency, etc. The totality of the evidence sometimes takes months to collect and then the analysis can be completed. Once the analysis is completed it is peer reviewed by another trooper before being submitted in our case. Not all cases lead to criminal convictions, in fact there are times when all the evidence comes to light and the analysis is completed, initial charges are dismissed in a case. There may have been probable cause to charge at the onset but when the case is complete the reconstruction shows a different story. While this lengthy process can be frustrating for attorneys, families, and the public, who all want answers, we must do the best job we can, and we must strive to get it right.

I was born and raised in North Dakota, and I am proud to still call it home for my family. I graduated from Minot State University in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. I worked as a correctional officer at the North Dakota State Penitentiary for one year and then I began my career with the North Dakota Highway Patrol in 2011. After the law enforcement academy, I was assigned as traffic enforcement trooper in Crosby, ND until May of 2013. I then transferred to the southwest region- Dickinson until May of 2020. While stationed in Dickinson I became a member of our crash reconstruction team as a technician in 2015. Two years later I attended an 80-hour reconstruction course in York, Pennsylvania through the Institute of Police Technology and Management. Since 2017 I have attended more than 500 hours of specialized training related to crash reconstruction and vehicle safety. In 2020 I relocated to the southwest region Bismarck and began a role as a full-time reconstruction team analyst. My primary duties consist of reconstructing serious injury and fatality crashes, collecting crash scene evidence, traffic patrol and other duties as assigned. I also teach basic crash investigation, intermediate crash investigation, and traffic incident management at the law enforcement academy in Bismarck.



Note: If you have any crash questions, you can reach out to Trooper Jones at jjones@nd.gov.

Meet the 2023-2024 WDALA Board of Directors

What do you think is your biggest contribution to WDALA's Board? I enjoy taking on new tasks and I love to plan events! I am quick to offer assistance whenever and wherever needed!

How long have you been a member of WDALA? I am coming up on my 5 anniversary in WDALA!!

What is your favorite part about being a member of WDALA? I really enjoy getting to know people. I like having a tribe of people to turn to when I have questions or just to share life's joy with!

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members? Share your talents with us! Are you good at planning, recruiting, writing, or social media? We love new ideas and would be so grateful for anything you have to offer the Association!

Tell us about your family. I have three daughters, ages 18, 16, and 11, and a dog named Moose. We are very close and we spend a lot of time with our extended family. We enjoy traveling and are working our way through the National Parks in the US.

If you could choose anyone as a mentor, who would you choose and why? My paternal grandmother is my mentor. She taught me a lot of life lessons about hard work, perseverance, and enjoying the little things.

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn? I would love to get my pilot's license. I love to travel and I think that by having another travel option available to me I would get to see more places!

What makes you happiest? I am happiest when being surrounded by those who have the best intentions and positive outlook. When you focus on being grateful, things just tend to go better.

Are you a night owl or a morning person? I am a morning person. I like to be up early before anyone else gets up and enjoy some coffee and a few quick chores or a tv show before the chaos of the day begins!

Anna Heinen -
President



Melissa Hamilton, ACP
1st Vice President



What do you like most about being on WDALA's Board? The wide variety of backgrounds we work in and learning from other members of the Board.

How long have you been a member of WDALA? I joined WDALA in 2004.

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members? Get to know your fellow members; attend a Region gathering, volunteer to help with the Santa Run or Drug Court or to serve on a committee, you can do as little or as much as you want, but you will not regret doing it!

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA? I have found lifelong friends and mentors through my WDALA membership. It also started me on the leadership path, starting as WDALA Secretary and ending as NALA President and coming back around to serve as First Vice President this year.

What would be your personal motto? How the heck did that happen? - I mutter that one a lot!

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn? How to fly a plane, I love to fly and always choose the window seat. With the way I drive, it probably will not happen!

What is your favorite way to spend an afternoon? Floating on a tube in a lazy river.

Are you a night owl or a morning person? Depends on the day and/or the time of year ☺

Kathy Johnson, CP
2nd Vice President



ReBecka Wohl, ACP
Secretary



What do you like most about being on WDALA's Board?

I love the interaction with other board members and feeling like we as a board are making changes for the better.

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA?

I never have to worry about missing my CLEs, and have been encouraged (pushed? haha) to continue learning and adding to my list of credentials. It's amazing the support I've found through WDALA to better myself as a paralegal.

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members?

Just start! It's a lot of fun and has provided me with tons of opportunities and friendships.

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn?

I would love to go back to school to learn court reporting - I plan to make time to do this in the future, once my kids lives slow down a bit.

What makes you happiest?

Traveling - I would travel every month if I could. I've been to roughly 38 states and plan to hit all 50! I also cannot wait to start traveling internationally and hope to take at least one out of country trip by my 40th birthday.

What is your favorite way to spend an afternoon?

Watching my kids play hockey, or any sport really. I've become acutely aware of how quickly this season of life goes, so I'm soaking it in.

Are you a night owl or a morning person?

Night owl, without a doubt. I'm lucky my bosses are flexible because mornings are not a strength.

How long have you been a member of WDALA?

Since September of 2021.

What is your favorite part about being a member of WDALA?

The privilege it has given me to connect with professionals from various legal backgrounds.

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA?

WDALA organizes regular events, conferences, which provide a platform for insightful discussions and knowledge sharing with other professionals. These events help me stay updated with the latest developments in the legal field.

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members?

Pursue continuing education. The legal field is continuously evolving, and staying competitive requires a commitment to ongoing learning. Seek out opportunities for professional development, such as attending seminars, participating in webinars, or obtaining certifications relevant to your career goals. Something I'm committed to improving on currently is the discovery process and how to most efficiently conquer the enormous task that producing discovery can sometimes be.

What are some of your favorite local spots to visit?

This sounds very Jersey Shore of me, but my favorite place to visit is the New Salem community gym. There are never more than two people there at a time so I really get free reign of the place and I can never come up with an excuse not to work out with it being just a couple blocks away.

Where is your happy place?

It was the plan to move back to Bismarck after a couple years, but the little town 20 minutes away has really turned out to be my happy place. Everything is within walking distance and my daughters seem to enjoy the independence they have with being able to walk to the grocery store or downtown to "Metro Perk" for, of course, a pumpkin spice latte. The commute time has also turned out to be an opportunity for us to talk about our day and for them to help each other with flashcards or do other studying. A forced study hall if you will. Sometimes you find happiness and opportunities in the most unexpected places.

Cassy Clark, CP
Treasurer



Ashley Miller, CP
NALA Liaison



What is your favorite part about being a member of WDALA?

My favorite part about being a member of WDALA is getting together with the other members. These are some amazing people that I have a lot to learn from. We all work in the legal practice but what we all do is so diverse and interesting.

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA?

I can safely say the WDALA members have helped my career change for the better. When I started working as a legal assistant, I was an accountant and had no legal background. With WDALA's help, I am now a CP with new employment, practicing areas of law that better suit me.

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members?

I'd like to encourage new members to attend our seminars, if they are able. We offer a wide range of CLE's with great speakers. Also, if you consider attending one of our events, please go for it. We will be happy to have you there!

Tell us about your family.

I have been married to my husband for 13 years now. We moved here to North Dakota from Colorado at the very beginning of our marriage. We have two children, ages 5 and 7, and absolutely love to do anything that involves being outdoors. My children would live in the backyard if I let them. We also have a 14-year-old dog, a 12-week-old puppy, and an 18-year-old cat.

What makes you happiest?

Being with my family makes me the happiest. I find myself speeding from work to pick up my kids because I can't wait to get home. We love spending our time together and going on adventures.

Are you a night owl or a morning person?

I am definitely a night owl. When I was a professional musician, this suited me well as I mainly worked in the evenings. It has been quite the change having children and a puppy who wake up full of energy every morning. Thank goodness for coffee!

What do you like most about being on WDALA's Board? The members! I enjoy everyone's company and willingness to help out. We are a great team!

What made you want to join WDALA's Board? I was asked and thought what the heck I'll give it a try! I am so glad I did!!!

What tips or advice do you have for new WDALA members? Don't be shy, reach out to the members for help! Seriously, we are all here to help you! We have many members in a wide variety of every area of law that if you need help with anything, I can guarantee you that one of us have encountered the same issue or knows how to complete said task. We are all here to help ease the daily stress that the legal field can create. We are here for you!!!

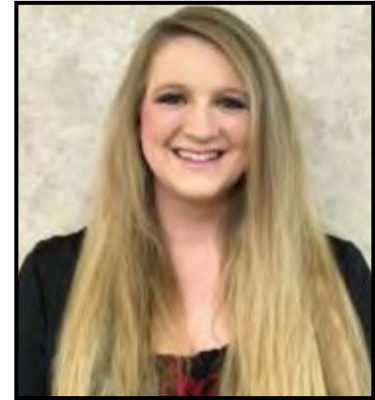
What makes you happiest? My family.

Where is your happy place? My home.

Tell us about your family. I have been with my husband for 26 years. We have a 17 year old son and a 9 year old daughter. We also have 3 very spoiled Siberian Huskies.

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn? Fly an airplane.

Holly Radke, ACP
Parliamentarian &
Region I Co-Director



Anna Oleksik, CP
Region I Director



How long have you been a member of WDALA? 5 years

What is your favorite part about being a member of WDALA? Going to the seminars and seeing all the other members. Our members are so inspiring!

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA? Yes, I recently got a new job at a firm that I only knew was hiring because of the job post that I came across in the WDALA email chain.

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn? Scuba Diving

What is your favorite way to spend an afternoon? Getting brunch with girlfriends

What makes you happiest? Being outside makes me happiest; swimming, hiking, biking, or just reading a book on the patio.

Andrea Johnson
Region II Director



What are you looking forward to the most in your current role on WDALA's Board? I am excited that our Region has new members and is expanding! I cannot wait for us to become a more active region!

How has your career benefited from being a member of WDALA? I have learned a lot from all of the wonderful seminars that I can apply to my career. Also, having a network of people to reach out to really helps.

What's something that you've always wanted to try or learn? I have ALWAYS wanted to learn how to play the guitar! I took a few lessons but just could not seem to catch on. I would love to try again.

What is your favorite way to spend an afternoon? In the summer – at the lake with friends being outside and enjoying the sunshine! In the winter – curled up with a cozy blanket, a book, and a glass of wine.

Fun fact that people probably don't know about you! I have been a volunteer firefighter for almost 9 years. I currently am the secretary for the Devils Lake Fire Department and the secretary for the Lake Region Extrication Team.

Trisha Kinnischtzke
Region III Director



What do you think is your biggest contribution to WDALA's Board? I have been involved in other organizations, both as a member and as a board member. I was also a head coach for 11 years at the varsity level. I believe my experience will be a benefit to my new position.

What made you want to join WDALA's Board? It's a great way to become more involved in the organization and a fun way to meet everyone!

How long have you been a member of WDALA? I'm a new member! After speaking with my colleague, Laurie Guenther, I decided to join. I recently attended my first WDALA Seminar in October and really enjoyed it!

Tell us about your family. I live in rural Bismarck with my husband, Scott, and four kids: Shea, 7; Talia, 7; Ezra, 5; and Kaia, 4.

What makes you happiest? Spending time with family and friends, vacations, and dancing!

Fun fact that people probably don't know about you! I've been involved with dance since I was young. I've participated in studio dance, dance team, and graduated from college with a Minor in Theatre Dance. I went on to coach my high school dance team for 11 years before I "retired" and became a judge for the North Dakota Association of Dance & Drill.

We asked . . . You answered

What are your favorite tips, tricks, and tools for Word?

- It is so simple and easy, but I really appreciate the auto-numbering of paragraphs!
- The *picture format* tab is my favorite tool that I use to modify/correct images inserted into documents almost daily.
- Mail Merge and Merge to PDF
- That any document on word can be transferred to a PDF for e-filing easily.
- Never trust spell check. Read everything word for word.
- Macros are where it's at - I use copy, past, select all and print all the time.
- Quick Parts: Use Quick Parts to create, store, and insert frequently used phrases or blocks of text in a Word document. I use this feature the most to insert electronic signatures/signature blocks for pleadings and letters. To open the Quick Parts Gallery, click Insert tab and then click on Quick Parts.
- Favorite tool in Word is the review and compare feature if you haven't tracked changes.
- I try to set up rules for words I misspell and/or words that are hard to spell. I also copy and paste a lot.
- Not sure if this is really a tip/trick/tool but I love the templates on Word for making a certificate, flyer, calendar, etc. Honestly, my favorite thing about Word probably sounds ridiculous to many but I love how I can just print an envelope and it automatically grabs the address off the letter. I really hate writing addresses on envelopes so naturally this makes sense why it's my favorite. Lol.



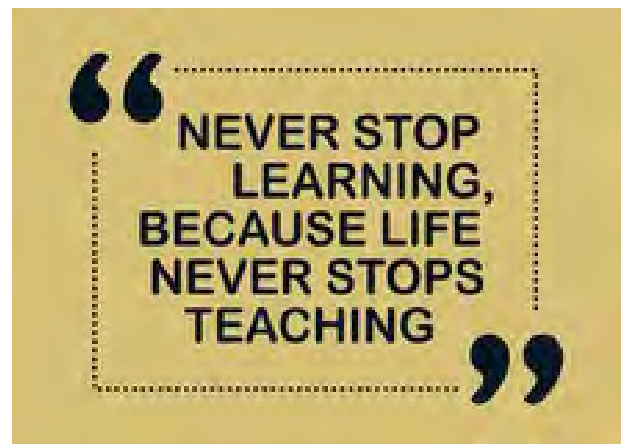
Do you listen to any podcasts and/or follow any blogs? If so, which podcasts and blogs?

- Crime Junkie, The Deck and Decoding Couples podcasts.
- Mel Robbins Podcast
- The Mindset Mentor
- Perfectly Paralegal
- Joe Rogan Experience on Spotify
- You Flourish Company
- Paralegal Boot Camp
- Paralegal Voice on Legal Talk Network
- Podcasts: Crime junkie and Dateline.
- Nope. I listen to music and read a lot of random articles that interest me.
- I really enjoy Midwest Murder and New Heights (with the Kelce brothers).
- I try to listen to the new episodes of The Paralegal Voice on Legal Talk Network. I don't really follow any blogs but follow a few paralegal related pages on Facebook – mostly WDALA's Facebook page.
- No, I just have not been able to get into these! My mind wanders too much!
- I love podcasts! I listen to many true crime ones. My favorites are Dakota Spotlight and Midwest Murder. Dakota Spotlight focuses on crimes in North Dakota, I got hooked on them when they did a few episodes on Barbara Cotton who vanished from Williston in 1981 at 15 years old and never found. They just recently did several episodes on the RJR/Mandan murders starting on October 4, 2023. Midwest Murders just did an episode on the RJR murders also on October 16, 2023. My cousin that lives in Garrison, ND just started a true crime podcast with her daughter, it is called "Minors of Mayhem", and is about children who commit murder. They have 7 episodes so far and it's really good!!!



What's one thing you learned this year?

- There is no way to fully prepare for a final goodbye.
- Friends and colleagues are a blessing beyond measure.
- I need to be especially kind to everyone I meet today because I have no idea what may be happening in their personal lives.
- Professionally, I would say I learned more about how important it is to connect with each client. Personally, I learned that it is okay to be able to say that I need some time to myself to be able to recharge.
- Reducing my time on social media is so much better for my mind! Hard to give up completely, but reduction has been a step in the right direction.
- Different attachment styles in relationships and how it affects how you show up in all relationships. (Marriage, friendship, work relationships, and family relationships)
- That it is OK to say no, especially when your mental health is fragile. No has always been hard for me, and it's a work in progress, but it's so important!
- 20 grams of protein is more effective for energy and alertness than 2 pots of coffee
- I learned how self-funded medical insurance works with a third-party administrator.
- Yams and Sweet Potatoes are not the same
- I've learned that exercise has an incredible power to bring you out of a funk and benefit your mental health.
- Sometimes you have to decide to not sweat the small stuff and let things go.
- That time really does go by fast. I always say it and always knew this but this year it has really hit me and I am feeling it. My son is graduating this year and will be 18 in a few short months. Even though I am excited for his future and incredibly happy with the young man he has become, I miss him being little. He really did grow up too fast on me. I'm not ready for him to be on his own and not need me anymore.





Education Report

By Holly Radke, ACP

Wow what a year this has been! I feel like the year has barely started and somehow we are nearing the end of the year. I would like to thank the WDALA members for trusting me to serve these last four years as your First Vice-President. I have learned an abundance these past few years and I have enjoyed getting to know some of the members better as well as the amazing connections that I have made through this position. I am excited for the future of WDALA. Thank you everyone for everything, including educating me on certain areas and having patience with me! I am sincerely going to miss the adrenaline rush of preparing for the seminars and creating professional relationships with all the speakers. I am so glad I took that leap four years ago and volunteered to be on the Board. You should really consider getting involved with one of the committees or serving on the Board. You will not regret it!!!

The 2023 WDALA Fall Seminar was a success! Everything went smoothly with holding it both in person and virtually. I was absolutely ecstatic with our attendance. We had 20 in-person (4 of them were in-person and virtual) and 41 virtual for a total of 61 attendees!!! Seriously, how amazing is that!!! We received \$6,025.00 in registration fees and the expenses were \$3,023.49 for a profit of \$3,001.51. The seminar was held on Monday, September 11, 2023 and Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Bismarck. The seminar was approved by NALA so our members that attended were able to obtain 13.0 hours of CLE credits, (11.0 Substantive and 2.0 Ethics). SBAND also approved our seminar and attorneys were able to obtain 13.0 ND CLE credits (11.0 ND CLE plus 2.0 Ethics). We were excited to be able to offer such a large number of CLE credits to our members and our North Dakota attorneys. Combined of our two seminars for 2023 we were able to offer 19.0 CLE credits (17.0 Substantive and 2.0 Ethics). We wouldn't be able to host these seminars if it wasn't for our members help with planning the seminars and all you amazing paralegals attending and supporting WDALA!!! Thank you all!!!

The 2023 WDALA Annual Meeting was held at 11:00 a.m. of Tuesday, September 12, 2023 during the Fall Seminar. Most of the members that attended the Seminar stayed for the Annual Meeting and we had a few more members join us both in person and virtually. We had a great turnout and had more than enough members for a quorum. At the annual meeting members voted on candidates for WDALA offices and the Officer Installation took place. We awarded Richard Fleckenstein with Super Slide Amusement Park with the Legacy Award. We recognized Shannon Barth, Anna Oleksik, and Bonnie Banks for 5 years with WDALA, Charlene Smith with 10 years, Jen Defoe with 25 years, Laurie Guenther with 35 years and Dianne Taix with 50 years!!! These ladies are amazing and their many years of service is outstanding. I have always looked up to Dianne and admired her professionalism and kind heart. She is full of compassion and patience. She has served WDALA well throughout the years. With the help of you attending the seminar we were able to continue to support Drug Court and were able to make a donation to this amazing program. Region III had their auction baskets displayed at the seminar and boy were they amazing baskets! The law firm I work for scored two baskets and both Megan and I were over the moon with our winnings. Great job Region III!!!

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

- **Compliance Insights: Common Pitfalls in Employment Law**
Presented by Attorney Nate Svihovec, ND Department of Labor and Human Rights
- **Protecting your Client's Assets: Trusts, Insurance Products and Cowboy Cocktails**
Presented by Attorney Randall Borkus, Borkus Law Group, LTD & Attorney Tom Kalil, Kalil Law Firm, PLLC
- **The Intersection of High-Tech Stalking and Domestic Violence**
Presented by Steven Bradley, Safety and Technology Expert
- **Our Family Wizard**
Presented by Steven Bradley, Safety and Technology Expert
- **Hot Topics from the 2023 N.D. Legislative Session**
Presented by North Dakota Legislative Council Attorneys Christopher Joseph, Liz Fordahl & Dustin Richard
- **At your Service: How the AG's Office Can Help**
Presented by Attorney Mary Kae Kelsch, Office of Attorney General
- **Chad Isaak Case Review**
Presented by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Gabrielle Goter & Special Agents Joe Arenz and Alex Droske (he wasn't able to present but he did a lot of the preparation and put the videos together, it was simply amazing)

We were very fortunate to have the amazing line up of presenters as we did and that they took the time out of their day to educate us. The education committee worked very hard on this seminar. Everyone worked so well together that everything just came together so perfectly on this seminar. I was really pleased with everything and it was by far my favorite seminar I have ever attended. I swear every year our seminars just keep getting better and better!!! Non WDALA ones that I have attended are sometimes boring and putting you to sleep or losing your interest. Not this one. I was zoned in on every presentation!!!

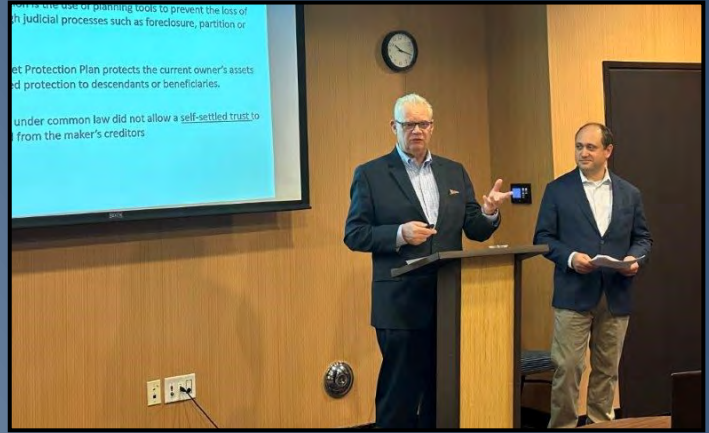
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Thank you everyone for making me feel welcomed and part of this group! I truly appreciate each and every one of you!!!

WDALA Fall Seminar



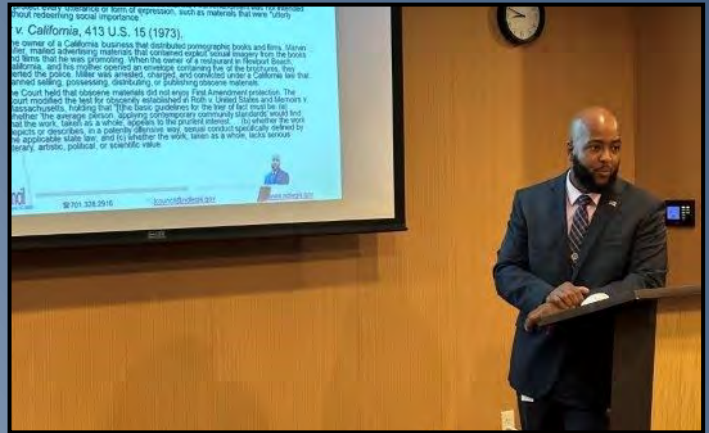
Attorney Nate Svihovec



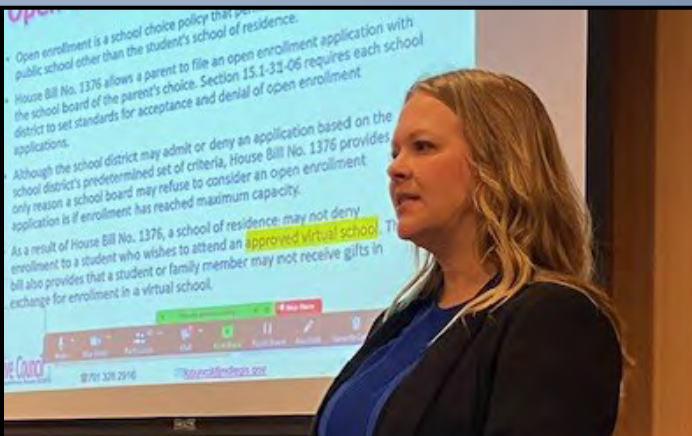
Attorneys Randall Borkus and Tom Kalil



Steven Bradley, Safety and Technology Expert



Attorney Christopher Joseph



Attorney Liz Fordahl



Attorney Dustin Richard



Attorney Mary Kae Kelsch



Attorney Gabrielle Goter and Special Agent Joe Arenz



Laurie Guenther, ACP presenting a Legacy Award to Richard Fleckenstein, Owner of the Superslide Amusement Park



Holly Radke, ACP presenting a donation to Tasha Nagel on behalf of Drug Court



2022-2023 Officers/Executive Committee and Board of Directors



2023-2024 Officers/Executive Committee and Board of Directors

1st Vice President's Report

By Melissa Hamilton, ACP



The WDALA Fall Seminar was held September 11th and 12th at the Courtyard by Marriott in Bismarck. The seminar was well attended, and the evaluations came back very positive, along with ideas for improvements for future seminars.

The Education Committee met on October 17, 2023, to begin planning for the 2024 Spring Seminar and the 2024 Fall Seminar and Annual Meeting. WDALA will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary at the 2024 Fall Seminar. We also discussed resuming quarterly luncheon teleseminars and brainstormed ideas, with the plan to launch in January.

If you have an idea for a topic or speaker, please feel free to reach out to me or any member of the Education Committee – we are excited for the upcoming year of paralegal education!



Treasurer's Report

By Cassy Clark, CP

Our Association's funds have increased this quarter after the productive Fall Seminar! The Treasurer balance for the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants as of October 13, 2023, is \$14,902.57.

FOLLOW NALA:

Facebook: **NALA - The Paralegal Association**

Website: **www.nala.org**

NALA Liaison's Report

By Ashley Miller, CP



There was no scholarship drawing this year as nobody applied. The scholarship amount has now increased from \$250 to \$375 to accommodate the price increase of the NALA CP exam.

If anyone is considering taking their CP or ACP exam, this is a great opportunity to consider and take advantage of. The now \$375 scholarship can be used for the exams and all education materials, including CLE's. I would like to encourage everyone to visit NALA's website and take a look at the available webinars, CLE's, seminars and other education materials.

The 2024 NALA Conference will be held July 11 – 13, 2024 in Louisville, KY at [the Louisville Marriott Downtown](#). I will be sure to forward any information I receive regarding options for virtual and in-person attendance for the conference.

SAVE THE DATE!

2024

Nala **N**

CONFERENCE & EXPO

JULY 11-13
LOUISVILLE, KY
OR VIRTUAL

KNOCK YOUR CAREER OUT OF THE PARK WITH **N** NALA
THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

A promotional graphic for the 2024 NALA Conference & Expo. The background is dark blue with a white silhouette of a city skyline. The text is in white and orange. At the top, it says "SAVE THE DATE!". Below that is "2024". The main logo features "Nala" in a white script font followed by a large white "N" in a square. Below the logo is a white banner with "CONFERENCE & EXPO" in orange. Underneath the banner is a baseball bat and ball icon, followed by the dates "JULY 11-13", the location "LOUISVILLE, KY", and "OR VIRTUAL". At the bottom, it says "KNOCK YOUR CAREER OUT OF THE PARK WITH" followed by the NALA logo and "NALA THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION".

Region I Report

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



Region I is standing strong with 5 members. We haven't been able to meet for a few months but now with the Fall Seminar behind us we will have more time to get together (we hope). We are currently planning on participating in the upcoming Santa Run again this winter and also have some community projects that we are lining up to participate in this coming year. We will keep pushing forward and continue our mission to recruit more members for our area. The future for Region I is looking bright!!!

Region III Report

By Trisha Kinnischtzke



It feels like summer just ended and fall finally arrived, but with the current temps, winter is upon us! I attended my first WDALA seminar in September and I thought the speakers were fantastic. Thank you to everyone involved!

Region III lunches have started up again and we had several attendees in October. Thank you to those who were able to attend given my last minute invite! We will continue to meet for lunch the second Wednesday of the month at A&B Pizza South:

- **November 8th**
- **January 10th**
- **February 14th**
- **March 13th**
- **April 10th**
- **May 8th**

Region III is preparing for the Drug Court Christmas project and will continue volunteering as we near the holidays. It's the 10th anniversary of the Santa Run! The Santa Run will be held on December 9, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Region III Director. I'm looking forward to serving this organization and meeting even more new faces!

Region III Volunteer Projects

The Santa Run

By Laurie Guenther, ACP

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, the Bismarck Santa Run will celebrate 10 years of making a positive difference in the lives of those in recovery from addiction. The underlying theme of the Santa Run is one of hope and support.

This year, the Santa Run is excited to partner with the Bismarck Cancer Center to bring together two communities of people in need of hope and support, those in recovery from addiction and those in recovery from cancer.

Candy Schafer and Laurie Guenther coordinate volunteers for the reception food and drinks, bag check, photo ops, same day registration, information and directions, etc. Get your jolly on and come out to volunteer. It's a fun time! Please let Candy (Candy_Schafer@ndd.uscourts.gov) or Laurie (lguenther@ndcourts.gov) know if you would like to volunteer for about 3 hours on Saturday morning. Volunteers get a free long sleeve Santa Run t-shirt.

On Friday evening, December 8, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. a free program will feature a screening of the documentary film "The Courage to Run with Chip Gaines and Gabe Grunewald", with post-film comments by Dr. Justin Grunewald. Beacon of Hope awards will be given out and the Santa Run will look back at the last 10 years. WDALA is proud to have been a part of the Santa Run from the beginning.



Events on Saturday, December 9, include something for everyone!

- 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.: The Making of a Snow Sculpture with Team North Dakota lecture.

The Santa Run has commissioned the national champion snow sculpting Team North Dakota to create a giant snow sculpture on the Capitol lawn to celebrate the holiday season.

https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/team-north-dakota-wins-the-2023-u-s-national-snow-sculpting-championship/article_60cd5186-a4d9-11ed-b06a-133c712ae90f.html

- 9:15 a.m.: Children’s Story Time with Miss Sparkles (Limited to the first 50 children).
- 9:45 a.m.: Pre-race ceremony
- 10:00 a.m.: Santa Run 5K
- 10:10 a.m.: Ultra-Cool Mile
- 10:30 a.m.: Post-race reception

Registration is open. Visit <https://www.bismarcksantarun.com/>.



Drug Court Christmas Project

By Laurie Guenther, ACP and Melissa Klimpel, ACP

Region III is ramping up for its 13th annual Drug Court Christmas project.

WHAT DO WE DO: WDALA provides gifts for 5 families identified by the Adult Drug Court program as most in need of help. We also deliver cookies to Drug Court. We need donations, shoppers, gift wrappers, and bakers!! Armed with a wish list from the families, shoppers don't have to guess what to buy. We buy a clothing item and toy for the children and a clothing item and family game for the adults. We get wish lists before Thanksgiving so shoppers can take advantage of Black Friday shopping deals. We have a wrapping party which doubles as our Region III monthly meeting/Christmas party. An elf provides pizza and pop and we wrap and box up treats to our heart's content. Gifts are presented to the families before Christmas.

WAYS TO HELP: If this sounds fun, rewarding, and heart-warming to you....here are some ways to help:

Donations (Due Monday, November 13th): You and/or your employer can make a donation to purchase Christmas gifts. You can pay by check (payable to Melissa Klimpel), cash, Zelle, or Venmo.

Bake: Make 6 dozen Christmas goodies.

Shop: Help shop for the Christmas gifts. The more, the merrier, to divide and conquer. You can look through the wish lists and see if anyone/anything piques your interest or matches with your skill set of items the participants need.

Gift wrapping/package cookies/pizza party: Wednesday, December 13th at 5:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Melissa Klimpel by December 11th so we have a head count for pizza.

Take cookies to Court: Friday, December 15th at 8:30 a.m. Deliver Christmas goodie boxes to the Drug Court participants at Drug Court (Burleigh County Courthouse).

Gift Delivery: Monday, December 18th at 3:30 p.m. Deliver gifts to the drug court participants and their families at the Parole/Probation Office, 601 Channel Drive, Bismarck.

If you are interested in helping with the Drug Court Christmas Project, let us know!



Officers/Executive Committee and Board of Directors



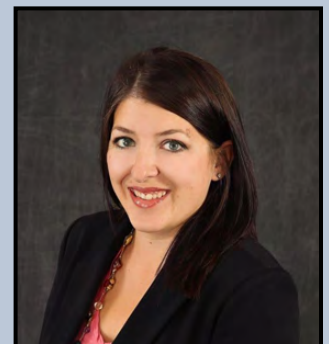
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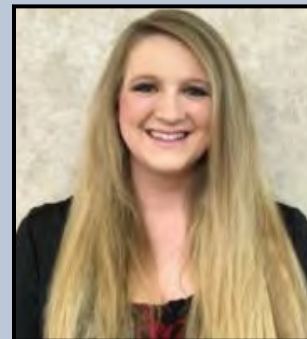
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Parliamentarian &
Region I Co-Director
Holly Radke, ACP



Region I Co-Director
Anna Oleksik, CP



Region II Director
Andrea Johnson



Region III Director
Trisha Kinnischtzke

WDALA's Committees

Education

Melissa Hamilton, ACP (Chair); Stephanie Howe; Anna Heinen; Ashley Miller, CP; Jen Defoe, ACP; Megan Klym; and Melissa Klimpel, ACP

Membership

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

Finance/Budget

Cassy Clark, CP (Chair)

CLA Chairman

Ashley Miller, CP

Nominations/Elections

Andrea Johnson and Melissa Klimpel, ACP

Legal Assistant Day

Megan Ontis and Ashley Miller, CP

Auditing

Holly Radke, ACP

Ethics/Professional Development

Melissa Hamilton, 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; Laurie Guenther, ACP; Candy Schafer, CLA; Andrea Johnson; and ReBecka Wohl, ACP

Sponsorship

Anna Heinen; Kimberly Perkuhn; and Dehan Schwan

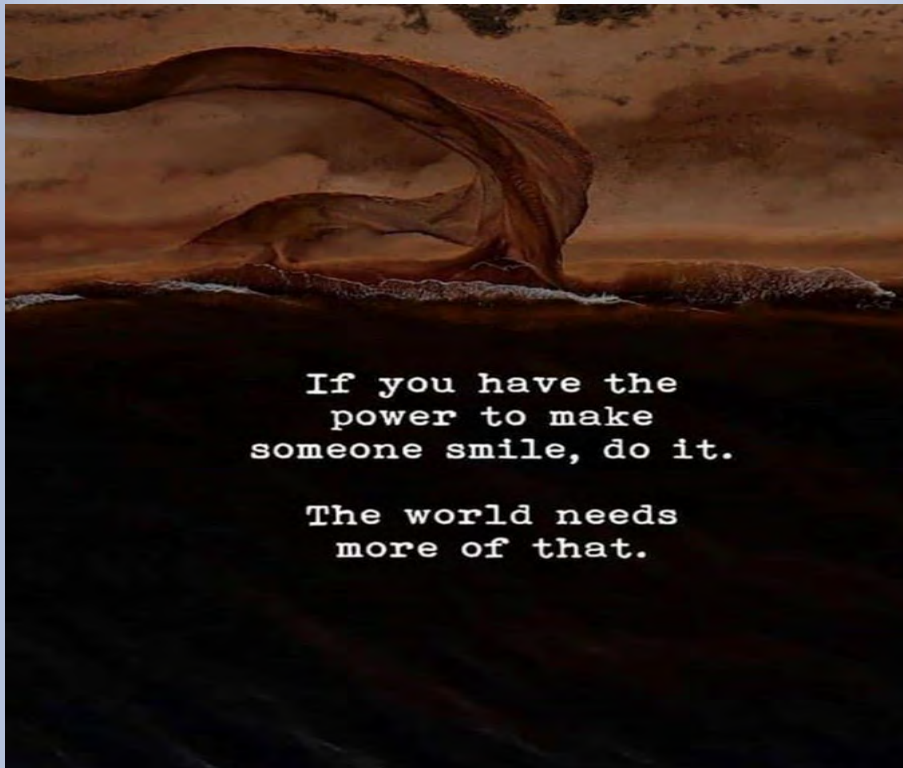
40th Anniversary

Trisha Kinnischtzke; Candy Schafer, CLA; and ReBecka Wohl, ACP



5 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ATTORNEYS

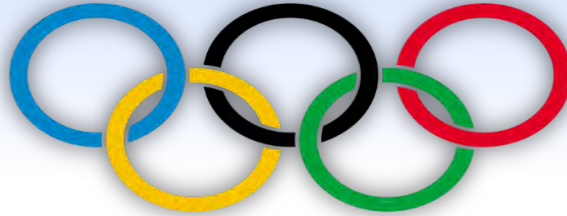
- Just reprint/resend whatever it is they are looking for.
- Be ready to explain why that cost is necessary, even if it is obvious.
- Don't tell THEM "it depends."
- Follow up on your follow up's follow up.
- If you aren't being yelled at, you're doing a good job.



If you have the
power to make
someone smile, do it.

The world needs
more of that.

WDALA SPONSORS



The Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors for their generous support of WDALA throughout 2023.

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Gold Level (\$250)

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November 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 Daylight Saving Time Ends	6	7 Election Day	8 Region III Luncheon at A&B	9	10	11 Veterans Day
12	13 Bonnie Banks, CP 	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Michelle Christie 	23 	24	25
26	27 Linda Hagen Mathern, CP 	28	29	30		

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 Cassy Clark, CP 	6	7	8	9 The Santa Run
10	11	12	13 Region III Gift Wrapping Party	14 Ashley Miller, CP 	15 Region III at Drug Court	16
17	18 Region III Gift Delivery	19 Becky Hille- rud-Johnson 	20	21	22 Shari Erdman, ACP 	23
24	25 	26	27	28	29 Kimberly Perkuhn 	30
31 						

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Region III Luncheon at A&B	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			