

Central Florida Paralegal Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1107 Orlando, FL 32802 (407) 672-6372

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CENTRAL FLORIDA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC. Monthly E-Newsletter

CARPE DIEM - November 2024



Hello CFPA Friends!

Gratitude: the quality of being thankful, readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness; the state of being grateful

November is the perfect month to focus on showing those around us how much we appreciate them and for being a part of our lives.

In this, my last written message to you as CFPA President, I want to tell you all that I am grateful for each and every one of you! This year has been such a time of tremendous growth, learning, and a truly rewarding experience serving as your President.

2024 has been a year of growth for this organization in so many wonderful ways. We have tried some new things for our membership/social events, branched back into the world of in-person CLE's, and were able to renew old friendships and create new ones!

A special thank you goes out to our AMAZING 2024 Board Members. Each of you has given so much by way of your time and talents. Your contributions have made such an impact!

Another special thank you goes out to our INCREDIBLE Patron Members for your unwavering support not only for this organization in general, but your support in our daily work. Each of you truly makes our lives easier!

To the 2025 Board, I am looking forward to hearing your innovative ideas and concepts that you will bring to the table as I will continue to serve with you as a Director under incoming President, Deborah Kallas. I can't wait to see the new ways CFPA will continue to empower paralegals and reach new heights!

Finally, I look forward to seeing you all at the Holiday Party on December 6, 2024, at the Great Southern Box Company. This is an exciting new location not only for our party, but in the area so, please, grab a friend and come check it out to support our charity, Britt's Bunch! I am pleased to say that Jan and Britt will be joining us at the Holiday Party and are looking forward to meeting you all as well.

In closing, I will leave you with a little bit of November trivia. Don't forget to vote on November 5! November 11 is Veteran's Day in the U.S. and Remembrance Day in Canada. The birthstone for November is topaz and the ancient Greeks believed that topaz could make a wearer invisible. Topaz is also believed to bring longevity and wisdom! It was also believed that if a tree shows buds in November, the winter will last until May!



Associate:

Denisha Stearns

Student:

Bianca tomassini

For Membership Information and Application

CLICK HERE

ALREADY A MEMBER??

If you have recently changed jobs, moved or just have a new email address, PLEASE make sure that you update your membership records by notifying the Membership Committee so that you stay up-to-date with all events:

Email Us



11/20/24 CFPA CLE 11/21/24 Bingo 12/6/24 Holiday Party 12/31/24 Renewal Dues

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you all again for allowing me to serve as your President and for following along this year and the support you have given. I believe that CFPA is an incredible organization full of wonderful people, all sharing a strong passion for the paralegal profession. Please continue to reach out at any time with ideas, thoughts, suggestions, or ways you would like to help for CFPA in 2025. Remember the Board is here for you!

Happy Holidays and here's looking to new adventures in 2025!!

Deborah: you're up!

Sincerely,

Denise L. Marsters, FRP CFPA President 2024





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Denise L. Marsters, FRP

<u>CFPAPresident@cfpainc.or</u>



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Click Here to Register



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Jodi Peterman, FRP

<u>Director2@cfpainc.org</u>



Aimee Chentnik, CP
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Florida Registered Paralegal status

By: Mark D. Killian July 30, 2024

New rules have kicked in that allow paralegals to qualify for the Florida Registered Paralegal Program by work experience alone.

Earlier this year, the Florida Supreme Court amended Bar Rule 20-3.1 to create an option for someone to become a Florida Registered Paralegal "via an attestation of paralegal work experience from an employing or supervising attorney."

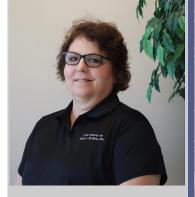
Specifically, "Designation by Attestation" allows paralegals to qualify under the FRP Program if they have five years of work experience out of the eight years immediately preceding the date of the application. Paralegals who apply under this subsection will also be required to show proof of completing 30 hours of general continuing education, 10 hours of ethics or professionalism, and 3 hours of technology. All courses must be accredited by The Florida Bar, the National Association of Legal Assistants, or National Federation of Paralegal Associations to count for this requirement.

The amendments were included in a rules package the court approved in May in In Re: Amendments to Rules Regulating The Florida Bar — Miscellaneous Petition, Case No. SC2024-0030. The amended FRP rule became effective July 8.

The FRP program is voluntary and allows paralegals who meet certain minimum educational, certification, or work experience criteria, and who agree to abide by an established code of ethics, to refer to themselves as a Florida Registered Paralegal. There are currently 4,661 RFPs.

For more information, visit the **FRP webpage**, which contains a link to the updated rule, application, and attorney attestation form.

Reprinted from the Florida Bar News https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-news



Martha Giller

<u>Director4@cfpainc.org</u>



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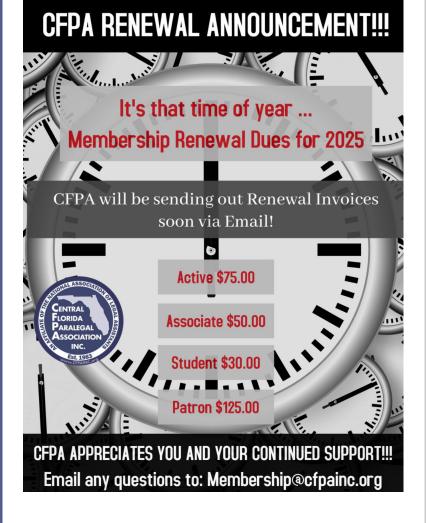
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Federal Court Suspends Florida Attorney Over Filing Fabricated Cases Hallucinated by AI

By Bob Ambrogi on March 14, 2024

Just a few weeks ago, I wrote about two more cases of AI-hallucinated citations in court filings leading to sanctions, and now comes the case of a Florida lawyer suspended from practice after filing cases that were "completely fabricated."

On March 8, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida suspended attorney Thomas Grant Neusom from practicing in that court for one year, after which he will be eligible to apply for reinstatement.

n ordering the suspension, the court adopted the report and recommendation of its grievance committee, which issued a report in January finding that Neusom violated rules of the court and Florida's Rules of Professional Conduct through a series of actions, including having filed pleadings that contained frivolous legal arguments based on fabricated cases.

The matter was brought to the attention of the

Newsletter - Carpe Diem

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Evelyn Quintana Director of Business Development

disciplinary committee after Neusom's opposing counsel, Nabil Joseph, was unable to find the cases and asked Neusom to furnish text versions. Neusom "provided nonresponsive and evasive answers to the request for the cited authorities," according to the committee.

When the committee asked Neusom about the pleadings during a telephone interview, he said that "he used Westlaw and Fastcase and may have used artificial intelligence to draft the filing(s) but was not able to check the excerpts and citations." In a subsequent written response, he failed to offer any explanation for the fabricated cases "or provide any sense of understanding of the seriousness of the situation."

Based on this, the committee found that Neusom had not only failed to exercise the reasonable due diligence required of an attorney, but that his conduct went "beyond a lack of due diligence as some of his legal authorities were completely fabricated."

"Whereas we understand that artificial intelligence is becoming a new tool for legal research, it can never take the place of an attorney's responsibility to conduct reasonable diligence and provide accurate legal authority to the Court that supports a valid legal argument," the committee wrote.

Based on the committee's recommendations, Senior U.S. District Judge John E. Steele issued an order March 8 suspending Neusom from practice in that court for one year.

Reprinted from Paralegal Brief and LawSites https://www.lawnext.com

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Newsletter Recognition:



Interested in being a Sponsor of this event? Please reach out to Yolanda Fuhrmann at **PublicRelations@cfpainc.org**

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CFPA's 2024 Charities



www.brittsbunch.or

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Volunteering in Orlando

If you have been looking for ways to give back to your community, volunteering can be a great way to get started. Volunteering is also a great way to meet new people, gives you a sense of purpose, can increase your social skills and self-esteem, and can help you gain professional experience.

The following is a list of great places to volunteer in Orlando. So next time you find yourself with a couple of extra hours in your day, find a cause that aligns with you and volunteer!

> Second Harvest Food Bank Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando Orange County Animal Services Give Kids the World Coalition for the Homeless Ronald McDonald House Harbor House of Central Florida Habitat for Humanity United Way of Central Florida The Warrior Foundation The Mustard Seed of Central Florida Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Florida Russell Home for Atypical Children

This is just a small list of the many opportunities available in Orlando. If you know of additional volunteer opportunities or would like to provide suggestions, please email

communityservice@cfpainc.org.

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Fla. Justices Sanction Paralegal For Immigration Practice By: Lynn LaRowe

The Florida Supreme Court on Thursday told a paralegal and the immigration legal services businesses she has operated that she must reimburse clients who were misled into believing they were working with licensed attorneys.

The court also "permanently enjoined and restrained" Joanny Nin Mojica and several active and inactive companies she has managed from engaging in the unauthorized practice of law in the Sunshine State. The companies listed include Latinos Legal Services LLC and Latinos Justifiable Reliance LLC, which is the entity named on a **LinkedIn** page for Joanny Nin, one of several aliases listed for the paralegal in the court's order.

The order directs Mojica and the companies listed to reimburse nearly \$10,000 to two former clients, pay the state a civil penalty of \$5,000, and pay the Florida Bar for its costs in an amount to be determined. The order also notes that the complainants are free to seek "further relief

through civil proceedings."

Mojica is accused of holding herself out as a lawyer to clients in danger of deportation and with other immigration matters. An April petition from the Florida Bar points to advertising on social media and a Tampabased Spanish radio station, including a September 2020 **Facebook** post that described Latino Legal Services as a "law firm" with attorneys on staff.

The second count of the bar's petition involves a man who was under threat of deportation and "desperate to visit his sick mother" in his native Cuba when he engaged Mojica after hearing the radio ad in 2018.

"Respondent Mojica told Mr. [Nelson] Blanco that she was an immigration attorney and ex-attorney or prosecutor for the **Department of Homeland Security** and immigration court," the petition said, further accusing Mojica of filing documents with **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** that identified her as an attorney.

When Blanco's application for employment authorization was denied in 2020, he attempted to contact Mojica, but got no response, the petition said. He reportedly learned that Mojica is not a lawyer after visiting with immigration attorney Lisette Sanchez.

"Mr. Blanco learned that the money orders he gave to respondent Mojica for payment to the Department of Homeland Security referenced above were changed to be made payable to respondent Latinos Legal Services and deposited into respondents' bank account," the petition said.

After Blanco filed an unauthorized law complaint in 2020, he received a refund from Mojica in 2021 for the \$9,300 he had paid her, the petition said.

The petition's third count involves Maria Eusebia Flores, who hired Mojica for an immigration matter in 2017. Believing that Mojica was a lawyer, Flores paid her \$7,000, which the Florida justices have ordered be repaid within 30 days.

According to the petition, Mojica went so far as to appear in Orlando with Flores before an immigration judge. Flores eventually sought counsel from Sanchez, who advised her that Mojica is not a licensed attorney. Flores filed a complaint with the Florida Bar in 2022, the petition said.

"Respondent Mojica has refused to provide a refund to

Ms. Flores, despite numerous requests," the petition said. "Ms. Flores is in fear of deportation because of respondents' handling of her immigration case."

The petition's fourth count involves Angel David Berrio Escobar, who sought Mojica's help with an immigration matter in June 2017. Mojica appeared with him before an immigration judge in Orlando, but "because of Mr. Berrio Escobar's limited English, he was unable to understand what was said between the judge and respondent Mojica during the September 25, 2018 hearing," the petition said.

Mojica continued to "represent" Escobar in immigration matters until 2022, when he sought advice from a licensed immigration attorney after being unable to contact Mojica, the petition said. That attorney determined that a notice of removal had been filed against Escobar in 2019 when he failed to appear for a hearing that had been set in court at the 2018 appearance with Mojica in Orlando, the petition said.

Escobar filed a complaint with the Florida Bar in November 2023; Thursday's order gives Mojica 30 days to reimburse his \$2,130.

The petition's final count involves Carlos Carcamo Herrera, who has been deported from the U.S. Mojica is accused of falsely claiming on government documents that she was "an accredited representative of Latinos Justifiable Reliance" and requested that she be listed as Herrera's legal representative.

Mojica's LinkedIn page identifies her as manager of Latinos Legal Services of Florida LLC and states: "Latinos is a great solutions agency for all those in need of document preparation and understanding we are not attorneys!"

Mojica could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday. Representatives for the Florida Bar did not return a request for comment.

The Florida Bar is represented in-house by Joshua E. Doyle, Susan Papagikos, Jeffrey T. Picker and Maria L. Torres.

Counsel information for Mojica was not available Thursday.

The case is the Florida Bar v. Mojica et al., case number SC2024-0494, before the **Supreme Court of Florida**.

Reprinted from Law360.com

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MEMBER MATTERS

with Debbie Dollar, Membership Chair



IN THE KNOW: Join CFPA on Facebook, Instagram, and Linkedin and stay up-to-date on all of our events!!

CFPA INVOLVEMENT: CFPA is a top association because of our members and their involvement with events, committees, community outreach, and networking. If you are someone who excels in these areas please reach out and we would be happy to discuss getting you involved!

CFPA is looking for members who have time to join and help us grow and excel CFPA! Please contact membership at: membership@cfpainc.org.

MEMBERSHIP MENTORS: Katheline Stryker, Caroline Wilkerson, and Jennifer Diminich.

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Hello Friends –

Wishing everyone a joyous holiday season as we enter the last two months of the year. I am striving to be grateful for every day during this busy time of year despite the added activities, work projects and stress that we may face as we finish out 2024.

Call for Proposals for the 2025 Affiliate Exchange at NALA's 50 th Conference & Expo in Atlantic City. NALA is looking for proposals – relevant topics of interest to paralegal associations that can be presented at conference next summer. Do you have an idea that will make our association stronger? Leadership, membership retention, engagement techniques, enhancing membership experience - the possibilities are endless! Please reach out to me if you have a good suggestion and I will gladly help you draft the proposal and make it happen! Deadline to submit proposals is December 31, 2024.

Upcoming webinars:

Tort Talks Series: Understanding Torts Through Case Study. This four-part live webinar series is designed to guide paralegals like you through the fundamentals of tort cases and help enhance your skills in case preparation and litigation.

November 12, 2024, at 1pm CT: Part 2: Plaintiff's Presentation of Witnesses and Exhibits Explore the techniques plaintiffs use to prepare and present compelling testimony and evidence.

December 6, 2024, at 12pm CT Part 3: Defendant's Presentation of Witnesses and Exhibits: Discover the defendant's approach to presenting witnesses and exhibits.

January 16, 2025, at 1pm CT: Part 4: Elements of a NIED Claim Examine the elements of Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress (NIED) claims and how they can be proven.

For more information and to register click here - <u>W2434</u> - <u>Tort Talks Series: Understanding Torts Through Case Study - NALA</u>

December 5, 2024 – 1 pm CST – IP Issues in Probate Cases

This webinar explores managing intellectual property (copyrights, trademarks, patents, trade secrets, publicity

rights) in probate cases. To register: <u>W2427 – IP Issues</u> in Probate Cases – NALA

If you missed attending NALA's 2024 Conference, the conference bundle is now available as on-demand webinars. The bundle includes 43 CLE Hours: 5.5 Legal Ethics, 34.5 Substantive and 3.0 Non-Substantive. To order or more information, click here: **Conference Bundle**,

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about NALA. <u>carolinecwilkerson@gmail.com</u> or <u>nalaliaison@cfpainc.org</u>

Looking forward to seeing everyone at our Holiday Party December 6th!

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about NALA. <u>carolinecwilkerson@gmail.com</u> or <u>nalaliaison@cfpainc.org</u>.

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I hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Carpe Diem. We would love to hear from you! Have you written an article that has been published that you would like to have placed in our newsletter? Does your attorney write articles that he or she would like to share with our group

for publishing? If you are interested in writing an article for the newsletter let me know.

Big THANKS to accurateserve, Milestone Reporting, NorthStar Legal, and S.K.I. Investigations for sponsoring the newsletter for 2024!!

Thank you, Cassie Snyder, ACP, FRP Editor

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