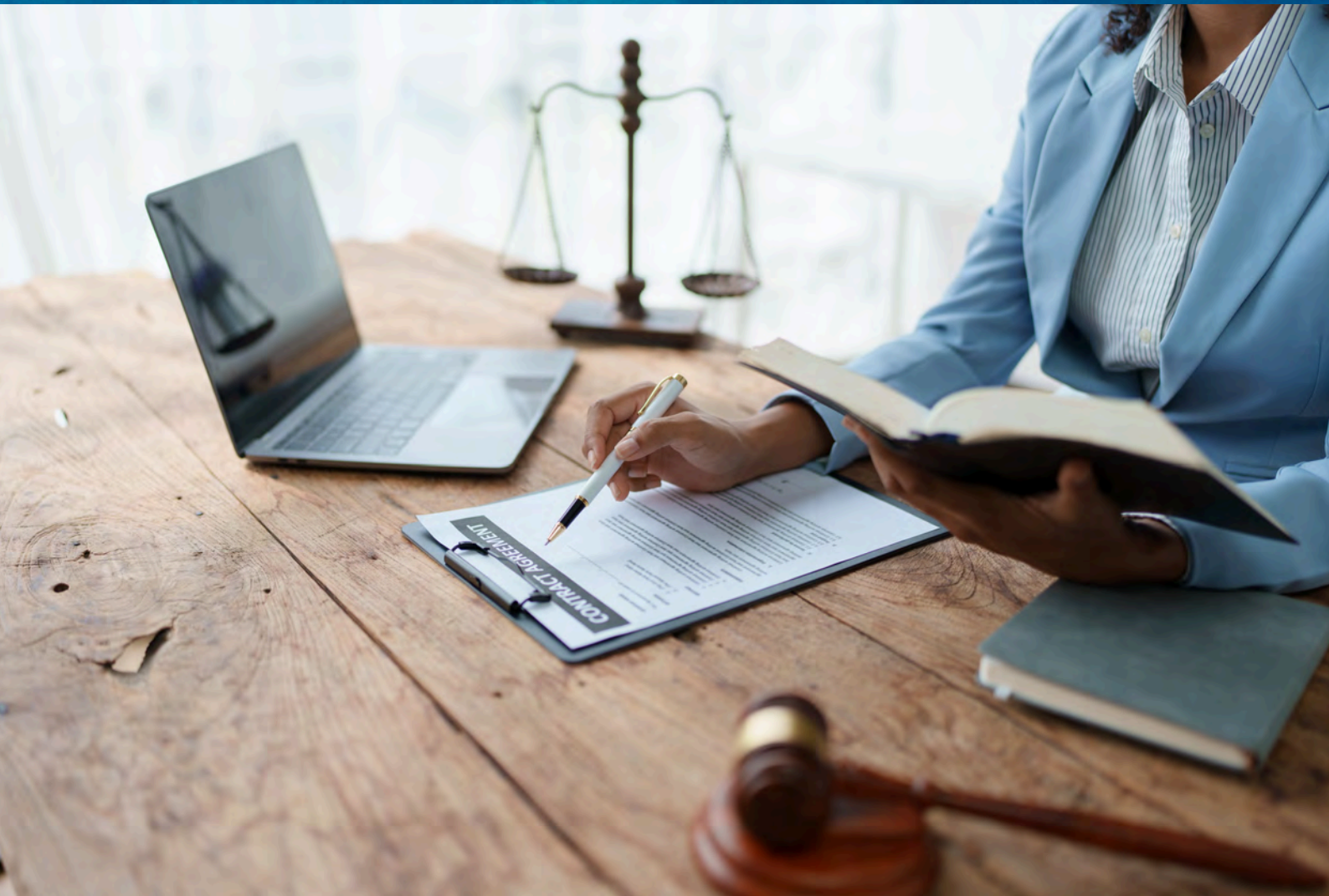


SUMMONS

WDALA

An Association for Paralegals/Legal Assistants



NOVEMBER 2024

www.wdala.org

From the PRESIDENT

Hello Members! And welcome to the new fiscal year in WDALA! I hope you all enjoyed your season of Fall! It's always a nice transition from the warm summer months into the holiday season. I still dislike the shorter daylight hours this time of year, but I very much love the holidays!

I don't know about you, but I am excited to begin WDALA's new fiscal year! We have the same Board Members as last year which makes the transition less work and the momentum continue. 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 and we are already in full swing for the upcoming Santa Run and our Drug Court Christmas project! Be on the lookout for the emails containing all the details!

In regards to the Paralegal Outreach program, we are still in communications with UTTC and their paralegal program and we are working on getting a new brochure together to address paralegals as well as Attorneys. We have arranged a booth at the SBAND seminar in Bismarck in the summer of 2025 for name recognition and to forward information to the Attorneys on how to utilize paralegals within their practice. If you are interested in being a part of either of the outreach events, please let me know!

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 2024-2025 year!

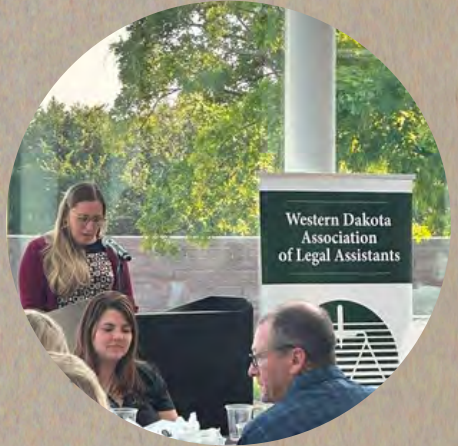
Anna Heinen



TABLE *Of* CONTENTS

WDALA's 40th Anniversary	4
Member Spotlights	7
Empowering Change: The North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project	12
North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition	15
Get to Know . . . Kari Knudson	17
United Tribes Technical College Paralegal Program	19
WDALA's Officers/Executive Committee and Board of Directors	21
1st Vice President's Report/WDALA Fall Seminar	22
2nd Vice President's Report/Treasurer's Report/ NALA Liaison's Report/Region Reports	27
We asked . . . You Answered	30
WDALA's Committees	35
Birthdays	36

WDALA's
 40th
 Anniversary
 Celebration



WDALA
 An Association of Paralegals/Legal Assistants
 INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE ITS
40th Anniversary
 SEPTEMBER
 MONDAY 9 2024
 5:00 PM: SOCIAL 5:30 PM: PROGRAM
 Northern Lights Atrium
 ND Heritage Center
 612 East Boulevard Ave, Bismarck
 RSVP to Melissa at mklimpel@smithporsborg.com by August 15th





Candy Schafer

*Congratulations
to WDAALA's
Legacy Award
Winners*



Laurie Guenther, ACP



Melissa Klimpel, ACP

- ✦ Candy Schafer
- ✦ Laurie Guenther, ACP
- ✦ Melissa Klimpel, ACP
- ✦ Smith Porsborg Schweigert
Armstrong Moldenhauer &
Smith Law Firm



Brian Schmidt & Mitch
Armstrong on behalf of
Smith Porsborg
Schweigert Armstrong
Moldenhauer & Smith
Law Firm



**40th Anniversary
Celebration of**

WDALA

An Association of Paralegals/Legal Assistants

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY 9 2024

Northern Lights Atrium
ND Heritage Center
612 East Boulevard Ave, Bismarck

Thank You!

The Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors for their generous support:

- Bair Law Firm - Mandan*
- Crowley Fleck PLLP - Bismarck*
- Lori Haug, Court Reporter - Williston*
- Kalil Law Firm PLLC - Williston*
- Legacy Design - Minot*
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- McGee Hankla & Backes - Minot*
- Mulloy Law PLLC - Bismarck*
- Revive Law Group - Mandan*
- Vinje Law Firm - Bismarck*
- Wheeler Wolf LLP - Bismarck*



<p>Welcome Anna Heinen</p> <p>Recognition of WDALA Members Trisha Kinnischtzke</p> <p><i>Founding Members</i></p> <p><i>Past Presidents</i></p> <p><i>Past Presidents of NALA - The Paralegal Association</i></p> <p><i>WDALA Board of Directors 2023-24</i></p> <p>History of WDALA Ashley Miller, CP</p> <p>Legacy Award Winner Anna Heinen</p> <p><i>Smith Porsborg Schweigert Armstrong Moldenhauer & Smith Law Firm</i></p> <p>Legacy Award Winners Melissa Hamilton, ACP</p> <p><i>Candy Schafer</i></p> <p><i>Laurie Guenther, ACP</i></p> <p><i>Melissa Klimpel, ACP</i></p> <p>Concluding Remarks Anna Heinen</p>	<p>WDALA's Founding Members</p> <p>Janice Eslinger * Marilyn Feland * Pam Gaab Patricia Hanson * Betsy Harris * Lois Holman Dot Jorde, CLA * Vicki Kunz, ACP * Cindi Larson Jeanne List * Jeanine Rodvold * Lorraine Scanson Shannon Wagner * Linda Young</p> <p>WDALA's Past Presidents</p> <p>1984-1986 Dot Jorde, CLA 1986-1989 Vicki Kunz, CLA 1989-1991 Janice Eslinger, CLA 1991-1992 Vicki Kunz, CLAS 1992-1994 Candy (Pederson) Reilly, CLAS 1994-1996 Connie Sundby, CLA 1996-1998 Carol Degenstein 1998-1999 Luanne Duchsherer, CLAS 1999-2000 Luanne Duchsherer, CLAS; Jennifer Schreiner, & Michelle Erdmann, CLA</p> <p>2000-2002 Carol Solberg, CLA 2002-2004 Laurie Guenther, CLAS 2004-2006 Michelle Erdmann, ACP 2006-2008 Lorelee Clay 2008-2012 Melissa Klimpel, ACP 2012-2014 Shari Erdman, CP 2014-2015 Leigh Johnson 2015-2017 Melissa Hamilton, ACP 2017-2019 Afton Basden, CP 2019-2022 Alice Johnson, ACP</p>
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WDALA's Past Presidents: Vicki Kunz (1986-1989; 1991-1992); Candy (Pederson) Reilly (1992-1994); Laurie Guenther (2002-2004); Lorelee Clay (2006-2008); Melissa Klimpel (2008-2012); Leigh Johnson (2014-2015); Melissa Hamilton (2015-2017); Afton Basden (2017-2019); and Alice Johnson (2019-2022). WDALA Current President: Anna Heinen.

Member Spotlight

How long have you been a member of WDALA?

3 years

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

The education provided and networking with others in the field.

What company do you work for?

Melling & Roseland Law, PC and the Adams County State's Attorney.

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

I was initially hired as the bookkeeper and realized I had an interest to get more involved with the legal side of things.

What do you think is the most important skill that a successful professional needs to have?

Never say, "that isn't my job."



Stephanie Howe

What is the last TV show you binged watched?

Three Women on Starz.

What do you love most about your job?

The ever-changing day-to-day can be overwhelming at times, but each day at work is filled with interesting challenges. Helping clients succeed is also rewarding.

What is one professional success story that you're proud of?

We had a client who recently lost her husband. The hospital was trying to bill her for a \$25,000 shot he received before his passing. While we don't work with Medicare, I researched the medication and found that the hospital should have obtained pre-approval before administering it. We referred her to an attorney who specializes in Medicare claims, and the bill was successfully voided. She has been incredibly grateful, as she was considering taking out a loan against her home to cover the debt. As a token of her appreciation, she made me embroidered pillowcases and stops by with cookies whenever she can. 😊

What's a cause that you are passionate about?

Mental health and addiction in Western North Dakota.

What is on your bucket list?

Traveling to Ireland.

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

Fly a plane.

What is something that you are proud of about yourself?

My ability to find common ground and empathize with others.



TRAVELING TO IRELAND



Member SPOTLIGHT

Andrea
Johnson



How long have you been a member of WDALA?

I have been a member of WDALA for 5 years.

What company do you work for?

I work for Yunker Law, P.C., in Devils Lake, ND. Attorney Jack Yunker and I both used to work for Traynor Law Firm and when Jack decided to start his own firm, he asked me to go with him. After being at the same firm for 12 years it was a scary decision, but I went for it!

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

I love being a WDALA member because of the inclusiveness of the group. Everyone supports each other and is always ready to answer a question.

What is on your bucket list?

So many things! Seeing the tulips in bloom in the Netherlands, sky diving, running a marathon, seeing Eminem in concert, living a long and happy life, visiting all 50 states, and becoming a master gardener are the first things I could think of!

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

Ha, I think my cat, Tigger, would say I am really quite rude when I call him Mr. Fats. He would further say it is not appropriate for me to judge his weight that way when, after all, I am the one who feeds him.



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

The career advice that I try to live by is to not take everything home with me. Not the work itself, but the feelings and emotions tied to work. There are days when I leave work feeling sad, upset, or very weighed down with a particular case. I am an incredibly empathetic person, and I take client's feelings to heart. I now allow myself the first half hour after work to feel all the feels and then move on with my night. There is nothing I can do for anyone once I leave the office and, by realizing this, I am able to be a better wife, stepmom, and friend outside of work as I don't have all the client worries in my head. This advice was given to me by my Aunt Kathi who worked with abuse victims.

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

I have always wanted to work in the legal field. I think it all started by reading John Grisham books and watching Matlock with my parents. I am fascinated by the law and how it can be interpreted so differently depending on what side of a case you are on. I did take the LSAT after getting my B.S. in Paralegal. Despite being accepted to law school, the timing just didn't feel right, and I decided to work as a Paralegal for a year before applying again. After that year I decided a paralegal is exactly what I want to be and never looked back. Even after 18 years of being a paralegal, the law still fascinates me as I believe there is always something new to learn.

What do you love most about your job?

What I love most about being a paralegal is the feeling of constantly learning. No two cases are ever the same and there is always a new way to look at a situation. Even things that I do on a very routine basis, such as the drafting of a Complaint, are always different from case to case so no day is ever dull. Jack handles a lot of different matters such as having an Indigent Defense Contract on the Spirit Lake Reservation, family law, insurance defense, personal injury, Nelson County prosecutions, and the list goes on. By Jack having such a diverse practice, he and I are both able to learn a lot about many aspects of the law, not just one specific section. The legal field itself also seems to be constantly changing to evolve with the times.

What is something that you are proud of about yourself?

I am proud that I am a volunteer firefighter. I always had wanted to be involved with the fire service. My Dad was a fire fighter until his asthma progressed to the point where he had to quit. When I was 30, much older than the average person who decides to be a firefighter, I finally faced my fears and joined the City of Devils Lake Fire Department. It was way outside of my comfort zone, and I had a lot of learning to do, but I stuck with it. I have now taken many classes through the fire service and am a HazMat Technician and also recently just passed my EMR test. I have now been in the fire service for 10 years and I am SO glad I pushed myself to do something new!

If you had a month off to travel anywhere you desire, where would you go?

If I had a month to travel anywhere, I would go everywhere! Ha! I for sure want to go to the Netherlands when the tulips are in bloom. That is something I MUST do in my lifetime. I would go to Ireland and then eat some delicious Italian food in Italy. After those travels, I would round out my month by ending on a nice warm beach in Fiji.

What type of books/movies do you enjoy?

I really love any type of mystery whether it be a book or a movie. I especially enjoy crime mysteries and murder mysteries. My Mom was also really into mystery books, so I think I definitely got this from her! In addition, I really do love a good comedy!

If you could switch lives with any one person for one day, who would you choose and why?

I do not have a specific person in mind but someone insanely rich. I just cannot fathom being able to have a day filled with pampering, luxury, a shopping spree, and fancy dinners. I would like to try it – just for a day.

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

I would love to be able to play the guitar! I took a few lessons when I was younger, but I really did not catch on. I think it would be so fun to be able to just pick up and play any song you wanted on a guitar. I would then play in a band as I think that would be a BLAST!



EMPOWERING CHANGE: THE NORTH DAKOTA PROTECTION & ADVOCACY PROJECT



By Attorney Anna Rackley

In a world where navigating the legal landscape can be overwhelming, especially for marginalized populations, the **North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A)** serves as a critical lifeline. Established in 1977, this federally mandated agency is dedicated to advancing the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities. Through advocacy, education, and legal representation, P&A empowers individuals to access the resources they need to thrive in their communities, ensuring that no one is left behind.

A Mission of Equality and Inclusion

At the heart of P&A's mission is a commitment to **equality and inclusion**. P&A is driven by the belief that individuals with disabilities deserve full participation in all aspects of life—whether in education, employment, or civic engagement. Their efforts focus on upholding the **civil, human, and legal rights** of people with disabilities, particularly those who may be unable to advocate for themselves due to barriers like stigma, lack of knowledge, or institutional resistance.

P&A's vision is a world where individuals with disabilities can live, learn, work, and engage without the fear of discrimination or exclusion. This commitment is reflected in their ongoing efforts to dismantle systemic barriers that prevent individuals from achieving their full potential.

Comprehensive Services to Empower and Support

P&A offers an extensive range of services designed to meet the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. These services are not only geared toward immediate legal or advocacy support but also aim to empower individuals for long-term success:

- **Advocacy Support:** P&A's advocates assist individuals in navigating complex systems such as education, healthcare, and government services. Whether advocating for reasonable accommodations in schools or ensuring access to necessary medical care, P&A's advocates work tirelessly to ensure that individuals' rights are respected and upheld. For instance, P&A has successfully intervened in numerous cases of discriminatory practices in schools, ensuring that students with disabilities receive equal educational opportunities.
- **Legal Representation:** For those facing legal challenges, P&A has a dedicated legal team that assists advocates with their cases or works directly with clients. This team specializes in matters involving discrimination, access to public services, and civil rights violations. P&A attorneys are equipped to handle complex legal issues, ranging from fair housing violations to employment discrimination. They frequently litigate on behalf of individuals whose civil rights have been violated, ensuring accountability and justice.

- **Information and Referral Services:** Navigating one's rights can be a complex and overwhelming process. P&A provides essential information and referral services, offering guidance on available resources, legal rights, and the steps needed to address individual concerns. Whether an individual needs help understanding their legal protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or requires support navigating Medicaid, P&A serves as a trusted resource.

Specialized Programs Tailored to Unique Needs

P&A enhances its advocacy through a series of specialized programs, each designed to address the distinct needs of various populations within the disability community:

- **Protection & Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities (PADD):** This program supports individuals with developmental disabilities in accessing vital services such as education, home and community-based programming, and protective services. PADD also works with families, caregivers, and community organizations to promote inclusive practices and ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities can lead fulfilling and independent lives.

- **Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI):** For individuals with mental health conditions, PAIMI plays a pivotal role in safeguarding their rights, addressing instances of abuse or neglect in mental health facilities, and promoting access to community-based support. This program also advocates for the integration of individuals with mental health needs into mainstream society, reducing the stigma often associated with mental health conditions.
- **Assistive Technology Program:** Access to the right tools and technology can make all the difference in fostering independence. P&A's Assistive Technology Program helps individuals acquire devices that improve their daily lives, from communication aids to mobility devices. This program also advocates for the expansion of assistive technology in public schools and workplaces, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access the tools they need to succeed.
- **Voting Access Program:** Voting is a fundamental right, and P&A's Voting Access Program ensures that individuals with disabilities can fully participate in the electoral process. This includes addressing physical barriers to polling places, ensuring that accessible voting machines are available, and providing education on voting rights and procedures. Through this program, P&A ensures that the voices of individuals with disabilities are heard at the ballot box, empowering them to influence policies that affect their lives.



EMPOWER

Focus Areas in 2025

Every year, P&A seeks public comment on important issues affecting disabled individuals. In 2025, P&A's focus areas are:

- Abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Community inclusion, which includes issues such as advocating for community-based services and living, education, employment, assistive technology, and voting; and
- Criminal and juvenile justice.

The Profound Impact on Communities

The work that P&A does reverberates far beyond the individuals they directly serve. By advocating for more inclusive and accessible communities, P&A is driving social change that benefits everyone. Research consistently shows that when individuals with disabilities are fully integrated into their communities—whether through employment, education, or civic engagement—society as a whole prospers. The economic contributions, unique perspectives, and cultural diversity that individuals with disabilities bring can enrich our collective experience.

Moreover, when communities are designed to be accessible and inclusive, they become safer, more innovative, and more vibrant places for all residents. Through their advocacy, P&A is not only improving individual lives but also fostering a more equitable and just society for everyone.

How Paralegals Can Make a Difference

As paralegals, there are numerous opportunities to get involved and contribute to P&A's mission. Here's how you can make an impact:

- **Raise Awareness:** Spread the word about P&A's services within your legal community and beyond. Sharing information with clients, colleagues, and community groups can help individuals connect with vital resources they might not otherwise know exist.

- **Volunteer Your Expertise:** P&A welcomes the support of legal professionals. You can volunteer your time and skills to assist with legal research, document drafting, case preparation, or even administrative support. Every contribution helps P&A extend its reach and amplify its impact.

Resources for Continued Learning

For more information on how you can support the work of the North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project our website offers comprehensive details on P&A's programs, upcoming events, and engagement opportunities. By staying informed and involved, you can play a crucial role in advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities across North Dakota.



Anna Rackley works at Protection & Advocacy (P&A) in North Dakota, where she focuses on advancing disability rights, particularly in the realm of educational access and equality. In her role, Anna conducts legal research, supports litigation efforts, and engages in policy advocacy to help protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Her work is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities can access the services and opportunities they deserve.

Anna earned her Juris Doctor from the University of North Dakota School of Law in May 2024. During law school, she gained substantial experience in civil rights and social justice work, interning with notable organizations like the Innocence Project Clinic, Public Justice, and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. These opportunities allowed her to contribute to cases involving criminal justice reform, educational equity, and systemic discrimination, further fueling her passion for advocacy.

North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition

By Attorney Seth O'Neill

The North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition is a statewide organization representing the 19 domestic and sexual violence advocacy centers in North Dakota. Across the state, these organizations provide essential services to victims of domestic and sexual violence. These services include safety planning, assistance with obtaining a protection order, emergency shelter, and crisis intervention services. These services are free, confidential, and available in all corners of the state.

Too often, we don't think about domestic violence until these tragedies happen, until we find out someone we know is experiencing domestic violence. But domestic violence happens in every community. Every year, thousands of North Dakotans seek help in navigating violent relationships. [Data from the North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition](#) shows that in 2023 alone, 6,131 new victims of domestic violence were served by 19 domestic violence victim advocacy centers across North Dakota. Nationally, [about 1 in 4 women](#) have experienced some form of sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner.

With these rates of violence, everyone knows someone who has experienced domestic violence, even if that person hasn't shared their story.

The North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition provides supportive services to our member organizations and various statewide entities as we work towards ending domestic and sexual violence in North Dakota. We also provide training and certification to Rule 34 Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Advocates. This training consists of 42 hours of initial training and 12 additional hours each year on topics related to domestic violence protection orders and sexual assault restraining orders as approved by North Dakota Supreme Court Administrative Rule 34. A Certified Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Advocate may assist a petitioner with filing a domestic violence protection order or sexual assault restraining order. In addition, an advocate is allowed to sit with a petitioner during court proceedings. This assistance provides helpful emotional and technical support as a victim navigates the protection order process.

Another service we provide is training to domestic violence intervention programming providers through the [North Dakota Alliance to End Partner Abuse](#). Currently, there are eight programs who are members of this alliance. These programs meet standards set forth by the Alliance to ensure quality programming to domestic violence offenders across the state. North Dakota Century Code 12.1-17-13 requires that a sentence for certain crimes against an intimate partner include an order to complete a domestic violence intervention program. The programs in the North Dakota Alliance to End Partner Abuse providing programming consisting of 24 sessions of at least 1.5 hours each session. This programming has proven to be effective at reducing law enforcement involvement and criminal charges among program graduates.

Overall, our coalition is focused on providing safety and support to current victims of domestic and sexual violence and stopping future violence from occurring. It is our vision to live in a violence-free North Dakota.

If you or someone you know has experienced domestic or sexual violence, free and confidential help is available 24/7. Visit the [North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition \(NDD SVC\)](#) website to view a directory of domestic and sexual violence victim advocacy centers and find support near you.



Seth O'Neill works to end domestic and sexual violence through his role as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition based in Bismarck. He is an attorney, social worker, and lifelong learner.



GET TO KNOW . . .

Kari Knudson,

CLERK OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT

What are your job duties?

As Clerk of Court, I am responsible for managing the administrative activities of the Clerk's Office and overseeing the performance of the statutory duties of the office. I consult with and make recommendations to the bench regarding court policies and procedures. I direct the staff responsible for processing civil and criminal cases, the issuance of process, and the maintenance of official records in the custody of the court. I also oversee the court's budget and spending plan, including purchasing, juror payments, restitution payments, and other accounting functions. I am also responsible for the automation and information technology services, statistical analysis and reporting requirements, inventory control, and human resources management. Of course, none of this is accomplished without our talented staff located in both Bismarck and Fargo.

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

I always wanted to go to law school, which I did. But I never envisioned using a law degree to work in the unique legal position of Clerk of Court.

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

After law school, I was fortunate to serve as a law clerk to former Justice Dale V. Sandstrom, of the North Dakota Supreme Court, and U.S. District Court Judges Patrick A. Conmy and Daniel L. Hovland. I thoroughly enjoyed working for judges and in the court systems. After being a law clerk for several years, I was hired as the Chief Deputy for the Federal District Court and held that position for over 15 years before I became Clerk of Court.

What is a typical day like at your job?

I'm not sure there is one. Each day brings new challenges and problems to solve. I'm often involved in financial transactions, participating in discussions about filing practices, and interacting with staff, judges, law clerks and the public.

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

I would read more, spend more time in my garden, attend as many concerts as possible, and spoil my two basset hounds more (if that's even possible).

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

The Clerk's Office is here to help you. If you have a filing question, an attorney admission question, or if you are unsure of a local practice, procedure, or rule, please reach out to either our Bismarck or Fargo office. It's often much easier for you (and for us), if we can address questions early.

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

Be open to opportunities as they appear. If I had created and stuck to a roadmap of what I thought my career would be, it would not have included the path I ended up taking.

Do you have any favorite quotes?

A passage from the book "Anatomy of a Murder" by Robert Traver resonated with me when I first read it and still does: "The very slowness of the law, its massive impersonality, its insistence upon proceeding according to settled and ancient rules – all this tends to cool and bank the fires of passion and violence and replace them with order and reason." Those of us who work in the legal profession often become frustrated with its slow pace. But this passage reminds me that the slow pace is purposeful – it gives parties and the court time to make wise decisions based on sound reasoning and away from the heat of the moment.

What's the best piece of professional advice you've ever received?

Surround yourself with good people. I work with some of the best people in the legal profession. They have all chosen careers in public service and work hard to serve the citizens of North Dakota each day.

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

The Thursday Murder Club series by Richard Osman. I love a good British murder mystery series. The books are set in a retirement community, with funny and entertaining characters.

What is the best place you ever traveled to?

I enjoy attending concerts and have been lucky enough to attend several at the Hollywood Bowl, in Los Angeles, and Red Rocks, in Denver. They are at the top of my outdoor venue list.

What tips or advice would you give someone starting a new job?

Don't fret over making a mistake. Learn from it and don't repeat it.



Kari M. Knudson graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1995 and the University of North Dakota School of Law in 2001. She served as a law clerk for the Honorable Dale V. Sandstrom of the North Dakota Supreme Court; and the Honorable Patrick A. Conmy and the Honorable Daniel L. Hovland of the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota. She has worked for the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota since 2002, and currently serves as Clerk of Court. She resides in Bismarck.



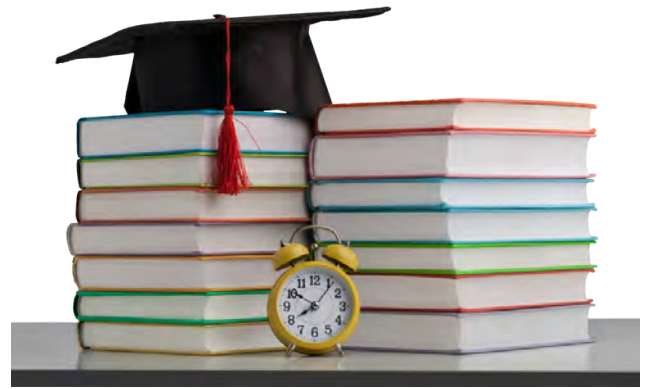
UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE *Paralegal Program*

By Attorney Luke Turner

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) Paralegal (PAR) Program was launched in August 2022 with its first cohort of students graduating in May 2024. The UTTC PAR program is a two-year Associate of Applied Science degree exclusively online program under the Criminal Justice (CJU) Department umbrella designed to prepare students for careers in the public sector – Tribal, Federal, and State/Local governments – along with the private sector. The program is geared toward students that have family and employment commitments during the traditional school/workday.

PAR OL courses are 'self-paced' meaning that Modules – akin to school weeks/chapters – are open and available for students to learn materials and complete assignments throughout the week. This model assists working students that cannot attend traditional 'school day' courses. It also simulates the rigors of working as a paralegal where time management and the ability to submit high-caliber products on-time or early is crucial to assisting attorneys, judges, and other legal personnel with employer objectives.

Students take a traditional general education curriculum consisting of English, Public Speaking, Arts, Humanities, and Math and Science lecture and lab courses, among others, in conjunction with twelve 'core' PAR major specific courses geared toward Tribal Government, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Criminal Law, and nine 'core' PAR courses ranging from the Introduction to Paralegal Studies survey course to focused courses on Family Law, Real Property, Torts, and beyond. For more information on PAR, CJU Associate and/or Bachelor of Science degrees, and other UTTC majors, please visit the Academics page on the UTTC website at <https://uttc.edu/academics/> and look to the right under the 'Programs & Degrees' heading for Paralegal, Criminal Justice, and all other UTTC majors. For questions beyond the website, please email PAR Instructor Luke Turner at lturner@uttc.edu.



Luke Turner is the United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) Paralegal (PAR) instructor and a licensed attorney in North Dakota. Turner was born and raised in Bismarck, ND and attended Bismarck State College, Minot State University, and earned a Juris Doctor from the University of North Dakota School of Law and a Master of Public Administration with an emphasis on Health Administration from the University of North Dakota College of Business & Public Administration. He has developed and taught courses at UTTC since 2021 and is an unabashed and undaunted lifelong Chicago Cubs fan. Go Cubs Go! In his spare time, he enjoys exercising, watching professional basketball and baseball, and late 1960s and early 1970s American muscle cars; especially the Dodge and Plymouth offerings.



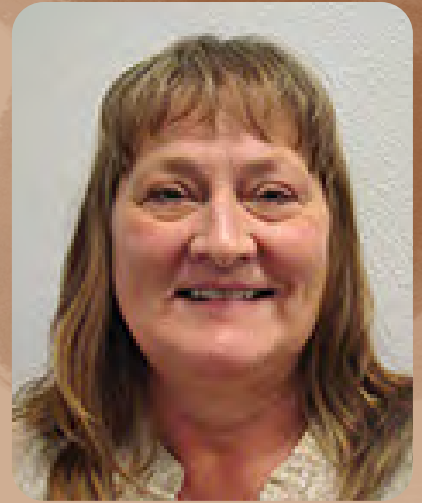
WDALA'S OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Anna Heinen



1st Vice President
Melissa Hamilton, ACP



2nd Vice President
Kathy Johnson, CP



Secretary
ReBecka Wohl, ACP



Treasurer
Cassy Clark, CP



NALA Liaison
Ashley Miller, CP



Region I Director &
Parliamentarian
Holly Radke, ACP



Region II Director
Andrea Johnson



Region III Director
Trisha Kinnischtzke



1st Vice President's Report

The WDALA Education Committee (Melissa Klimpel, ACP; Ashley Miller, CP; Megan Klym; Kimberly Perkuhn; Dehan Schwan; and Anna Heinen) are excited to start planning educational opportunities for WDALA members for 2024-2025.

Thank you, Melissa, Ashley, Megan, Kimberly, and Dehan for volunteering to serve on the Education Committee for 2024-2025. Planning has started for a luncheon teleseminar, as well as the Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 seminars. If you have a topic you would like to see covered, please reach out to me.

The WDALA Fall Seminar was held September 9-10, 2024, at the North Dakota Heritage Center, in Bismarck. WDALA members who attended the seminar in person received a 40th Anniversary blanket. All in-person seminar attendees received a WDALA sparkle pen to commemorate 40 years of WDALA.

The seminar started with a Keynote Address by North Dakota Attorney General, Drew Wrigley. NALA President, Cheryl Nodarse, ACP, followed with an interactive game on NALA and paralegals - the top three attendees who had highest received chocolates from Michigan. Assistant Professor of Law, UND School of Law, Blake Klinkner rounded out the morning with Cybersecurity, Legal Ethics -- legal ethical duties related to cybersecurity. The afternoon was filled with a presentation by Stacy Schaffer, Founder and Executive Director 31:8 Project, James Shaw, Supervisory Special Agent, State of North Dakota, and Analena Lunde, Victim Witness Specialist, ND Bureau of Criminal Investigation on Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Combat Trafficking and Exploitation: A Collaborative Approach. WDALA members brought donations for the 31:8 Bravery Backpacks and WDALA donated in the honor of all the seminar speakers to buy backpacks and items for the backpack program. More information on the Bravery Backpacks program can be found at <https://www.318project.org/bravery.html>.





WDALA

The next morning started with a presentation by Mike Bolme, Investigator, Burleigh County States Attorney's Office on an Introduction to Empathic Strain and Building Resiliency. The WDALA Annual meeting and lunch followed. The afternoon was rounded out with a presentation by Justice Doug Bahr and Justice Lisa Fair McEvers on Appellate Practice for Legal Assistants/Paralegals, providing attendees with great tips on assisting attorneys with the preparation before appearing before the Court. Their presentation was followed by Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Clerk - ND Supreme Court, on Updates at the Supreme Court, including the new public portal. Ms. Hulm showed the public portal, answered questions and provided tips and tricks on using the new portal.

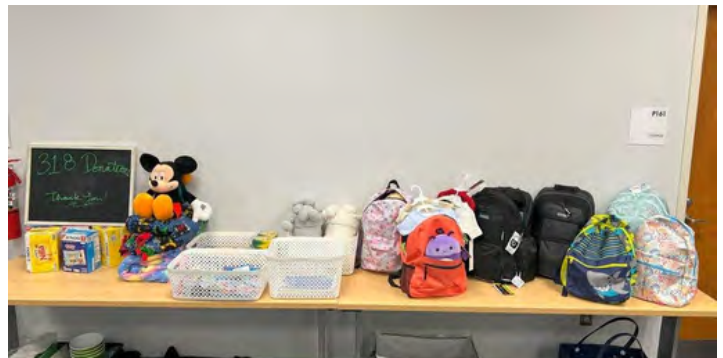
Seminar evaluations came back very positive – thank you for providing your feedback – it helps improve planning for future seminars. There were 44 attendees, 27 in-person and 17 virtual for total registrations of \$5,425 – seminar and anniversary gift expenses were \$3,620.54. The seminar made a profit of \$1,804.46.

Melissa Hamilton, ACP





WDALA FALL SEMINAR



31:8 Project - Bravery Backpacks

Thank You
for your donations!



2024-2025 Officers/Executive Committee and Board of Directors:
Trisha Kinnischtzke; Holly Radke, ACP; Ashley Miller, CP; Cassy Clark,
CP; ReBecka Wohl, ACP; Kathy Johnson, CP; Melissa Hamilton, ACP;
and Anna Heinen



Congrats!

Dehan Schwan was awarded with WDALA's Scholarship at the annual meeting on September 10, 2024. WDALA has been offering a yearly Scholarship since 2011. The Scholarship program was established to assist WDALA members with the expense of continuing education. The Scholarship funds can be applied towards a NALA education sponsored event.



Drew Wrigley



Analena Lunde

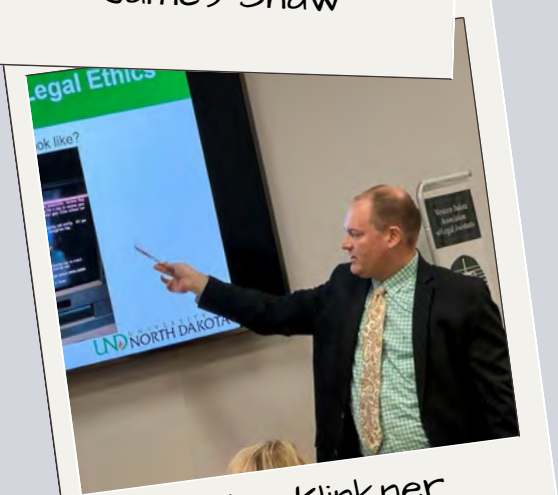


James Shaw



Cheryl Nodarse

WDALA FALL SEMINAR SPEAKERS



Blake Klinkner



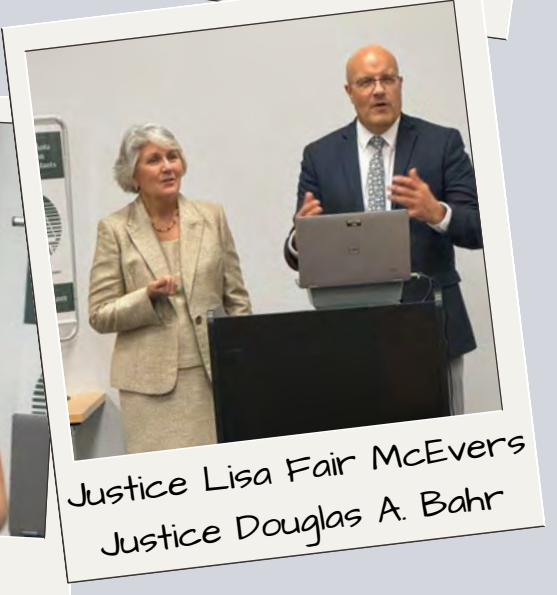
Petra H. Mandigo Hulm



Stacy Schaffer



Mike Bolme



Justice Lisa Fair McEvers
Justice Douglas A. Bahr

2nd Vice President's Report

As of this date, our membership stands at 37 members: 31 Active, 1 Associate, and 5 Emeritus. We did have a new member for September, 2024. We welcome Michelle Renner as an Active Member. Welcome Michelle!

If anyone needs to contact me or has any questions regarding membership, you can email me at kjohnson@ndcourts.gov.

Kathy Johnson, CP



Treasurer's Report



Greetings WDALA!! It has been a very productive last couple months for WDALA with much to celebrate. I hope you all enjoyed the fall seminar as much as I did and had a chance to look through the photos and brochures from seminars over the years. It is clear our association is a strong one with an interesting history and bright future.

The treasurer balance for the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants as of October 14, 2024 is \$11,576.56.

Cassy Clark, CP

NALA Liaison's Report

Our scholarship winner was announced during our fall seminar at the Heritage Center in Bismarck. Congratulations Dehan Schwan!!!

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. Your \$80 member credit can be applied towards all education.



The 2025 NALA Conference will be held July 10 – 12, 2025 in Atlantic City, New Jersey at the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City. I will be sure to forward any information I receive regarding options for virtual and in-person attendance for the conference.

Ashley Miller, CP

*Save
the
Date*

NALA's

2025 Conference & Expo
and 50th Anniversary
July 10 – 12, 2025
Harrah's Resort Atlantic City
Atlantic City, New Jersey

Region III Report

Happy Fall! I hope you were able to participate in the WDALA Fall Seminar in September. The speakers were excellent and the 40th anniversary celebration was wonderful! Thank you to everyone involved in putting on a fantastic event.

Region III lunches started up again in October. We will continue to meet for lunch the second Wednesday of the month at A&B Pizza South:

- November 13th
- January 8th
- February 12th
- March 12th
- April 9th
- May 14th



The elves are already at work preparing for the Drug Court Christmas project! More details to come, but mark your calendars for some fun!

- Dec. 16 at 5:30 pm: Gift wrapping/package cookies/pizza party
- Dec. 17 at 3:30 pm: Gift delivery
- Dec. 20 at 8:30 am: Cookies to Court

There are changes coming for The Santa Run this year. It will not be organized by Judge Dave Reich and his wife, Ann, but it is still being held! They are turning the “reins” over to the organizers of the Mandan Holiday Lights. It will be held in Mandan in conjunction with the festival of lights in Dykshoorn Park. It is sure to be magical! Registration is expected to start soon. We’re waiting for information on whether they need volunteers so stay tuned!

Trisha Kunnischtzke

We asked . . . You answered!

Do you have a side business? If yes, what is it? You can also provide the name, website address, and social medial information so other members can check it out.

- Klym Peaks - Home bakery check me out on Facebook 😊 (Megan Klym)
- My husband and I have a camper/boat storage business near Lake Sakakawea State Park. Lake Junction Storage, LLP at the junction of Highway 83 and 200 at the turn to Pick City/Riverdale. (Laurie Guenther)
- I own BrickBus, a lego resale business. We buy/sell/trade in all things Lego. You can find us on FaceBook, Instagram, WhatNot and Bricklink @brickbus! (Becka Wohl)
- Nope. One job is stressful enough!
- No
- I'm a bookkeeper for a company with several different business schedules.



What **font** do you use for emails, letters, and pleadings at work?

- Arial
- Mostly Arial, but sometimes Times New Roman, letters Times New Roman, and pleadings Times New Roman
- For emails I use Book Antiqua (11) and for all letters and pleadings I use good ole Times New Roman (12).
- Calibri
- Times New Roman or Arial
- Century schoolbook 12 for everything!
- Pleadings and letters are Times New Roman 12. Emails are Arial 12.
- Calibri for emails and any legal document we use Arial.

Book Antiqua **Arial** **Times New Roman**
Century Schoolbook **Calibri** **Book Antiqua**
Calibri **Times New Roman** **Calibri**
Arial **Arial** **Century Schoolbook**
Century Schoolbook **Book Antiqua** **Times New Roman**

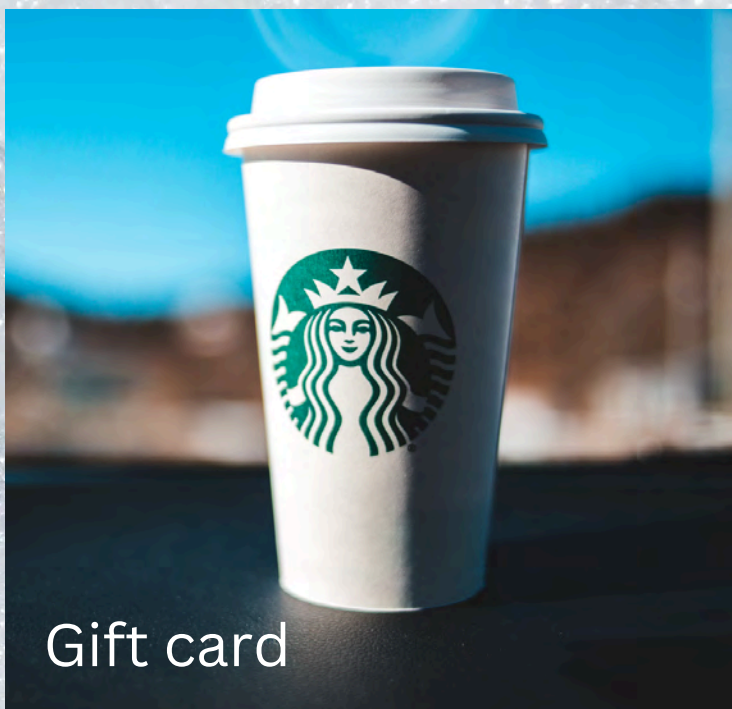
If you could eliminate one common workplace practice, what would it be and why?

- I hate clocking in and out. I didn't used to have to do it, but our HR got out-sourced, and now we are required to. Just realized I forgot to clock in this AM! So now I have to e-mail someone to fix it. Sigh.
- I would eliminate the common practice of allowing walk-ins in law offices. The people who abuse this at my office are generally suffering from mental health issues and/or addiction and it often creates an uncomfortable situation while using up valuable working hours.
- Email strings that are 20 emails long, by the time you get to the end it has taken several days when you could have a quick call and be done.
- Notice of motion. If you served someone with a motion, they clearly already have notice...
- Dress codes! Sometimes I enjoy dressing up, some days I do not! On days there are not clients scheduled and I just want to focus on a project, I would love to do so in comfy clothes!
- The "normal" 8-5 hours. I would love to be able to come in and get my work done and leave for the day. Life is too short to sit around at the office when work is slow.
- The one thing I would eliminate is allowing your receptionist do legal assisting. Don't come for me, let me explain! I think the position at reception is so overlooked, sometimes even looked down on. Often it's an entry level position, but people who are truly good at it are worth their weight in gold! Of course some people want to climb the ladder, and I think that's amazing, but they are two separate positions for a reason. It is often so hard for the person in reception to stay on top of phones already and then to tack on legal work, it rarely works and you end up seeing burn out, frustrations over pay, things being missed because they are being asked to do more than they have time for, etc. I wish more firms saw the value in having a true receptionist, and if/when they are ready to move to a legal assistant roll, would allow them to make the jump cleanly by also hiring a new receptionist, instead of expecting one person to do both positions... which is often just too much. It's my biggest pet peeve about the industry.

WE ASKED . . . YOU ANSWERED

Thank you to everyone who
sent in their answers.

Giveaway Winners!



Gift card

**Andrea
Johnson**



**Megan
Klym**

WDALA SPONSORS

WDALA gratefully acknowledges the following sponsors for their generous support throughout 2024.

Bair Law Firm - Mandan

Crowley Fleck PLLP - Bismarck

Lori Hauge, Court Reporter - Williston

Kalil Law Firm PLLC - Williston

Legacy Design - Minot

MacMaster Geltel & Siewert, Ltd. - Williston

McGee Hankla & Backes - Minot

Mulloy Law PLLC - Bismarck

Revive Law Group - Mandan

Vinje Law Firm - Bismarck

Wheeler Wolf LLP - Bismarck

WDALA's Committees

Auditing

Holly Radke, ACP and Becky Kocourek, CLA

CLA Chairman

Ashley Miller, CP

Education

Melissa Hamilton, ACP (Chair); Melissa Klimpel, ACP; Ashley Miller, CP; Megan Klym; Dehan Schwan; Kimberly Perkuhn; and Anna Heinen

Ethics/Professional Development

Melissa Hamilton, ACP

Finance/Budget

Cassy Clark, CP (Chair)

Historian

Laurie Guenther, ACP

Legal Assistant Day

Ashley Miller, CP and Shannon Barth

Membership

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

Nominations/Elections

Andrea Johnson and Dehan Schwan

Public Relations

Melissa Klimpel, ACP (Summons Editor); Anna Heinen (Facebook & Website); Andrea Johnson; Melissa Hamilton, ACP; Stephanie Howe; and Candace Schafer

Sponsorship

Trisha Kinnischitzke and Cassy Clark, CP

State Bar/NDTLA Liaison

Ashley Miller, CP

Student Liaison

Ashley Miller, CP and ReBecka Wohl, ACP



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

November 13	Bonnie Banks
November 22	Michelle Kessler
November 27	Linda Hagen Mathern
December 5	Cassy Clark
December 14	Ashley Miller
December 22	Shari Erdman
December 29	Kimberly Perkuhn



I lost a fight in court to
build a house on my land.
I'm not **dwelling** on it.

i before e

Except when your foreign
neighbor Keith receives eight
counterfeit beige sleighs from
feisty caffeinated weightlifters.

Weird.

“ Helping
someone is
what life is
all about.”