



# reporter

DECEMBER 2024

VOLUME 53 / ISSUE 12

## IN REVIEW...

- 1** **Helpful Hints I: Good Grief!**  
*A Not One Size Fits All Guide to Holiday Despair*
- 1** **President's Message:**  
*LAPA Holiday Benefit Gala: Supporting Pasadena Union Station Homeless Services*
- 5** **The Inside Biz: The Significance of Adhering to the Business Judgment Rule**
- 6** **Helpful Hints II: Watch Out!**  
*Billable Hours, Flat Fees on the Rise*
- 7** **LAPA's Crossword Puzzle:**  
*Complete the Crossword Puzzle & Learn Some Interesting Facts*
- 9** **Paralegal Perspectives: A Glance Into Their Lives:**  
*Gina Rosales*
- 12** **MCLE CA Employment Law Seminar Recap:**  
*Winding Down the Year with Employment Law*
- 14** **In The Time of COVID-19:**  
*Looking Forward Despite COVID-19*
- 15** **MCLE Discovery Seminars Recap:**  
*Fresh Takes on Litigation Strategy Discovery, Depositions, & Mediation*
- 18** **LAPA Reading Corner:**  
*The Velvet Rope Economy: How Inequality Became Big Business*  
*In Defense of Looting: A Riotous History of Civil Uncivil Action*

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Calendar of Events	3
NALA Certification Ad	3
Thanks to Conf. Sponsors/Exhibitors Ad	3
LAPA Newsletter Advertising Ad	8
Newsletter Submission Ad	14 / 18
LAPA Career Center Info	19
LAPA Crossword Puzzle Answer Key	19
CASA Essential History Program Ad	22-23
LAPA Diversity & Equality Statement	24
Freelance Paralegal Listing Flyer	24
LAPA MCLE Seminar Ad	25
LAPA Holiday Benefit Gala Ad	26
NALA/College of the Canyons CP Ad	27
LAPA Members Only Benefit Ad	28
Bet Tzedek Volunteers Flyer	29
LAPA's New & Renewing Members	30
LAPA Member Benefit Health Insurance	30
LAPA Looking for Directors Ad	30
LAPA Board of Directors	31
Sections, Committees & Other LAPA Info	31
LAPA Member Benefit Dental Insurance	31
Newsletter Submission Ad	32

## HELPFUL HINTS I



# Good Grief! A Not One Size Fits All Guide to Holiday Despair

by Travis Chow, LAPA Executive Vice President

*"Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, 'Where have I gone wrong'. Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'" – Charlie Brown*

Many are familiar with the stages of grief—disbelief, denial, bargaining, guilt, anger, depression, and acceptance. Yet grief is neither linear nor universal; it is a deeply personal experience that varies from person to person. The holiday season often intensifies feelings of grief, as traditions and memories serve as poignant reminders of loss. Amid all the mishegoss of holiday planning, it's important to take a moment to breathe and focus on what truly matters. Below is a simple, incomplete list intended to offer ideas for navigating grief in a way that feels right for you and at a pace that honors your unique journey.

*continued on page 2*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



# LAPA Holiday Benefit Gala: Supporting Pasadena Union Station Homeless Services

by Jonathan Dang – LAPA President

This holiday season, the Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) is proud to host its annual Holiday Benefit Gala, a celebration of giving, unity, and purpose. The event will take place on December 12th, 2024, at the Pasadena Hilton, bringing together members of the legal community and beyond to support a cause close to our hearts: Pasadena Union Station Homeless Services.

For over 50 years, Union Station Homeless Services has been a beacon of hope for individuals and families facing homelessness in the greater Los Angeles area. By offering comprehensive services—from emergency shelter and supportive housing to job readiness programs and mental health resources—Union Station empowers its clients to regain stability and rebuild their lives.

*continued on page 3*

## HOLIDAY EXPECTATIONS

Set realistic expectations for yourself. Remember, it's your choice whether to participate in something—you don't have to please everyone. Take this time to reflect and decide if you want to take on past expectations and responsibilities. It's okay to step away from situations that make you uncomfortable. While some solitude can be healthy, avoid completely isolating yourself from family and friends. Strive for balance in your interactions and commitments.

## ALLOWING EMOTIONS

It's important to acknowledge and allow your emotions, especially since they may feel amplified during the holiday season. Give yourself permission to feel without judgment—it's okay to experience joy and enjoy the holidays while also feeling sadness and missing your loved one.

## HELPING OTHERS

Helping others during the holiday season can be a healing way to cope with grief. By focusing on the needs of others, you can shift some of your attention away from your own pain and find a sense of purpose and connection. Acts of kindness, whether

JOIN LAPA ON...     & [WWW.LAPA.ORG](http://WWW.LAPA.ORG)

## LAPA REPORTER

*The Reporter* is published monthly by the Los Angeles Paralegal Association. The news and views presented express the authors' views and not necessarily those of LAPA. Publication of any article or advertisement does not imply endorsement of the opinions, products or services offered. LAPA assumes no responsibility for verifying facts offered by contributing authors or in reprinted articles. Readers should consider information contained in these articles as guidelines to be independently confirmed as to timeliness.

©2024 Los Angeles Paralegal Association. All rights reserved.

### THE ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL DEADLINE IS THE 5TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.

Articles and news items should be directed to LAPA at [editor@lapa.org](mailto:editor@lapa.org). Inquiries about making a submission should be directed to LAPA at [info@lapa.org](mailto:info@lapa.org).

Inquiries about advertising placement, applications, membership materials and address changes should be directed to LAPA at [admin@lapa.org](mailto:admin@lapa.org).

Articles will be published as space permits. The Newsletter Committee reserves approval and edit rights on any article submitted.

The Los Angeles Paralegal Association is a non-profit, mutual benefit corporation and is tax exempt within the meaning of section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. Membership dues and donations to LAPA are not tax deductible as charitable gifts, but may be deductible as related business expenses. LAPA suggests that you consult your tax advisor in this regard.

it's volunteering, offering support to someone else who's struggling, or simply spending time with loved ones, can bring moments of comfort and meaning. It reminds you that even in times of loss, there is still room for compassion and shared joy. Helping others can also strengthen bonds with those around you, providing a sense of community and support that can be especially comforting during a season often filled with reminders of what's missing.

## ASK FOR HELP


Taking care of yourself is essential—whether that means taking a nap, journaling your thoughts and feelings, or finding another form of self-care that works for you. It's also important to seek support from family, friends, and colleagues, and remember to pace yourself. If you find that you need more support, it's completely normal to reach out to a psychologist or therapist. Your well-being is a priority, and seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

## NO CORRECT WAY TO GRIEVE

Grief is a deeply personal experience, and everyone processes it in their own way. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. The anticipation, the holidays themselves, and the aftermath can each present different challenges, making it important to find a balance that works for you. Flexibility and compromise are key as you navigate through these emotional moments.

## IN THE END

The holiday season is often filled with unrealistic expectations, overwhelming commitments, financial stress, and even anxiety, making it easy to lose sight of what truly matters. What's important can vary for each person, and there is no one "right" way to grieve during this time. As Charlie Brown wisely said, "Things take time," but it's how we spend that time that truly counts. Wishing you peace and comfort this holiday season. Merry Christmas!

*Travis Chow is currently the Paralegal Coordinator at Collins + Collins LLP. Prior to this role, he freelanced at several private practice firms in Southern California. He holds certifications as a Social Media Intelligence Expert and Cyber Intelligence Professional, and he is also a licensed California Realtor and Notary Public. With the support of the Walter T. Shattford and San Gabriel Valley Bar Association Legal Scholarship, he earned a Paralegal Certificate from Pasadena City College, along with an associate degree in Social Behavioral Science, Humanities, and Paralegal Studies. Additionally, he obtained a Paralegal Certificate and a bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from the University of La Verne. *

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DECEMBER

- 4- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at [president@lapa.org](mailto:president@lapa.org).
- 5- **MCLE: LAPA Litigation Section - Medical Billing** – Online via Zoom; 12:00-1:00 PM; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5962925> for updates, more information & to register.
- 11 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at [president@lapa.org](mailto:president@lapa.org).

12 - **LAPA's Holiday Benefit Gala** – Pasadena Hilton, CA; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5948306> for more information & to register.

### JANUARY

- 8- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at [president@lapa.org](mailto:president@lapa.org).
- 15 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at [president@lapa.org](mailto:president@lapa.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - cont. from page 1

The gala will feature an elegant evening of entertainment, dining, and networking, culminating in a special program that highlights the transformative impact of Union Station's work. Guests will have the opportunity to contribute directly to these life-changing programs through silent auctions, raffles, and donations.


LAPA's commitment to community service is deeply rooted in the principles of the legal profession: fairness, compassion, and advocacy. By aligning with Union Station Homeless Services, this year's gala extends these values beyond the courtroom, reminding us all of the profound difference we can make when we come together to address urgent social challenges. In 2024, LAPA increased its various community service presence through volunteering for events such as the Public Counsel's Run for Justice and the Los Angeles Food Bank.

"We are thrilled to support such an impactful organization," said LAPA Director Jacqueline Loza.

"Homelessness is a pressing issue in Los Angeles, and it's our privilege to partner with Union Station in their mission to create brighter futures for those in need."

As we gather to celebrate the season of giving, we invite attendees to reflect on the power of community and the importance of extending a helping hand. Together, we can ensure that Union Station continues to serve as a source of hope and dignity for those who need it most.

To join us at the Holiday Benefit Gala or to learn more about how you can support Union Station Homeless Services, please visit <https://ushs.org>. Let's make this holiday season truly memorable—for us and for those we serve.

*Jonathan Dang is currently a Paralegal with Freeman Mathis & Gary LLP. In his diverse career, he previously worked for a fortune 100 insurance company, private law firms, and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. Jonathan Dang is also currently enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves. Aside from LAPA, he also serves on the board of directors for the University of La Verne's Legal Studies Program and Mt. San Antonio's Paralegal Program. *

## NALA THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION NEWS



### SHOW OFF YOUR CP® DIGITAL BADGE

CPs, do you know how to make your digital badge work for you? After you accept your badge, update your social profiles and email signature to feature your new accomplishment. This can help you if you are:

- Looking for a new role at your organization
- Interested in being contacted about job opportunities
- Looking for new skills and credentials

[Credly](#) provides a plethora of information about the paralegal field and its opportunities. At the bottom of your badge profile, click "Insights" to see available jobs, salaries, job locations, and much more!

### RETIRING SOON?

If, after many years of service to the paralegal community, you are nearing retirement, please remember to submit the [CP® Retired Form](#) to NALA so you do not lose your hard-earned credential. Your certification status will be updated to "CP® Retired," and you will no longer be required to earn CLE. If you have questions, please contact us at [cle@nala.org](mailto:cle@nala.org).

# Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors





A monthly column where sponsors and/or vendors share helpful hints

## The Significance of Adhering to the Business

### Judgment Rule

by Rima Hagggar – Freeman Mathis & Gary, LLP.

On October 16, 2024, in *Tuli v. Specialty Surgical Center of Thousand Oaks, LLC*, the California Court of Appeal affirmed a trial court decision finding that abandoning one's fiduciary duties and dismissing the business judgment rule can lead to severe consequences. This rule is a presumption that the directors of a corporation make business decisions on an informed basis, in good faith, and in the honest belief that the action taken was in the best interests of the company. Courts defer to board judgments that can be attributed to any *rational* business purpose. (*Katz v. Chevron Corp.* (1994) 22 Cal.App.4th 1352, 1366 (*Katz*)).

In the complex world of business partnerships, especially in the medical field, maintaining clear communication and adhering to fiduciary duties is paramount. From 1997 to 2005, Randhir Tuli, though not a medical doctor, played a significant role in establishing a series of surgery centers alongside experienced surgeon Dr. Andrew Brooks.

Their innovative business model aimed to provide cost-effective alternatives to hospitals, enabling surgeons to retain more profits by reducing overhead costs. Initially, Tuli and Brooks shared ownership equally. In 2005, Symbion, a Tennessee-based entity, purchased substantial ownership interests from Tuli and Dr. Brooks, investing in various surgery centers. Symbion purchased substantial ownership interests in every surgery center, excluding a "Specialty Surgical Center," of which it only acquired a 1% interest with options for future purchases, indicating a desire for deeper involvement in the business.

Symbion played a vital role in crafting the operating agreement for Specialty Surgery Center, particularly advocating for a "terminating event" provision to



protect the company from disruptive members and ensure bad actors within the company did not negatively impact it.

As Tuli became increasingly inactive in the business, tensions began to surface. Despite his lack of involvement, Tuli continued to withdraw substantial profits from the business, frustrating his colleagues. When his colleagues sought to buy Tuli out, he refused, setting the stage for a major conflict.

Matters escalated when Tuli sent a threatening letter to potential investors, suggesting criminal liability for his partners without any factual basis. This letter prompted the other members to issue Tuli an ultimatum: rectify the situation within 30 days or face expulsion from the company without compensation. As a consequence of ignoring their warning, Tuli was removed from the business.

Following his ousting, Tuli engaged in a decade-long legal battle against his former partners. However, the trial court consistently dismissed his arguments, reaffirming the legitimacy of his expulsion and highlighting the significance of the business judgment rule. The trial courts focused on the operating agreement's "terminating event" provision designed to protect the company from bad actors. Tuli's actions, particularly the damaging letter, were deemed disruptive and harmful to the business.

The California Court of Appeal upheld the lower court's ruling, emphasizing the importance of good faith in business dealings. Tuli's decision to send the unfounded letter not only violated his fiduciary duties but also posed a threat to the company's reputation and operational integrity.

This case serves as a critical reminder for entrepreneurs and business partners of the importance of adhering to fiduciary duties and maintaining the integrity of business operations. By

*continued on page 6*



## Watch Out Billable Hours, Flat Fees on the Rise

by Mariejo Plaganas

According to the Legal Trends Report published by Clio, which collected data from tens of thousands of legal professionals in the U.S. that provide insights about how technology is currently being used by legal professionals, flat fee billing has increased by 34% from 2016. Law firms that utilize AI also utilize this fixed fee basis. As AI automation reduces hourly billable work, this shifts the spotlight onto the less common pricing type in the legal field for its predictability and transparency for both firms and clients. Legal professionals that responded in Clio reports comment on the upward trend for its benefits.

One legal professional said that “flat fees provide clarity and prevent unexpected costs, fostering trust between the client and service provider.” Ultimately, I can see how focusing on the quality, and not quantity of time spent on work builds rapport between the two parties. The focus is shifted from the process to the end-product. There’s a simple and clear result for what the client is paying. For example, if a legal professional billing x amount of time and the client has questions on said time, then the two parties will ensue in discourse clarifying that specific task. However if it was purely flat fees, then the client can focus on the final legal product instead of all the stepping stones it took to get there. Ultimately, there’s potential for less time to be spent evaluating how the time is spent. Flat fees allow the clients, especially those who are not looking for surprises, to know what they’re spending their money on since it was clear from the beginning. On the other side, there is potential for that rapport to be ruined if the lack of time tracking affects the law firm’s accountability for the actual work spent on the service provided.

“It is easier, and in high-volume settings, keeps things simpler,” said another legal professional. Flat fees are attractive to clients because collecting payments

are immediate. This saves tons of time spent from managing clients and sending numerous emails of follow up. And how many times have you heard someone in the legal office— in any professional office might I add— express disdain for their email inbox? In addition to that, It’s not uncommon for bad email hygiene to be prevalent amongst us all. The legal office is no stranger to that. Flat fees provide an advantage in that aspect— simple tracking of payment and product. The downside? Flat fees run the higher risk of unpaid fees over time. The lack of follow up decreases payment motivation.

While billable hours still remain the common practice, flat fees are coming back as a key trend of 2024. I think there’s something to be said about providing clarity in legal product and payment collection in these increasingly busy times: loyalty in legal services and predictability in financial planning. These key fundamental traits are truly precious in the legal workplace— especially in law where it’s still a business at the end of the day. Overall from the perspective of the legal professional reading this article, I hope flat fees ease the burden to focus on quality and not quantity.

*Mariejo Plaganas is a Litigation Paralegal at Yoka | Smith, LLP. Prior to receiving her paralegal certificate, she received her B.S. in Environmental Toxicology and has published authorship from her undergraduate research featured on PubMed and Environmental Science & Technology. Besides her LAPA Newsletter involvement, Mariejo enjoys going to the gym, visiting museums, and playing beach volleyball. [LinkedIn](#)*

### THE INSIDE BIZ - cont. from page 5

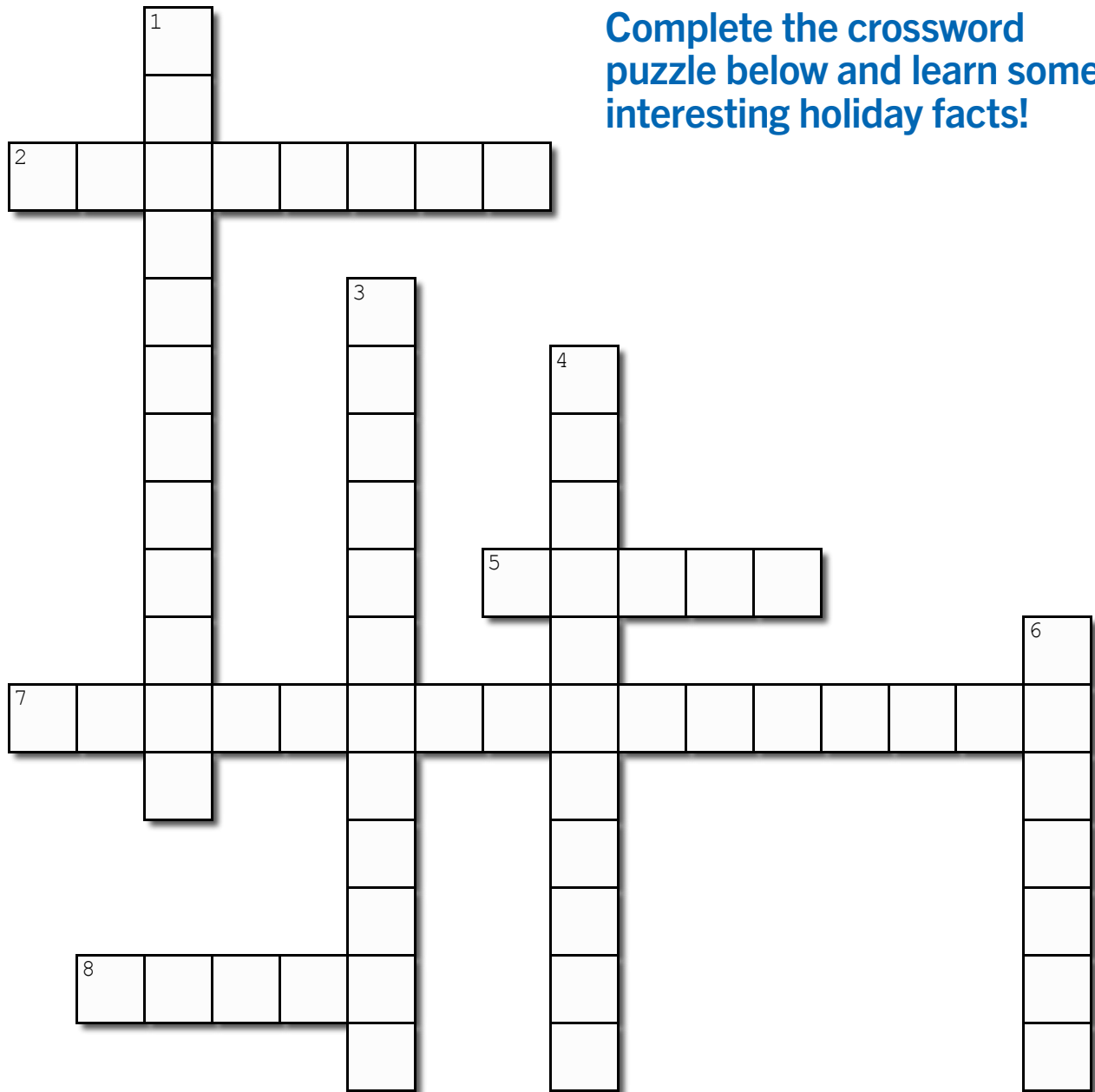
learning from this cautionary tale, partners can foster a healthier, more collaborative business environment that prioritizes mutual success and stability.

Please do not hesitate to contact Rima Hagggar at rima.hagggar@fmglaw.com or your FMG relationship partner to learn more.

*Rima Hagggar is an Associate in Freeman Mathis & Gary’s downtown Los Angeles office. Rima received her Bachelor of Arts from California Polytechnic University, Pomona and her Juris Doctor from University of California, Hastings, College of the Law. While in law school, Rima clerked at the Downtown Los Angeles and San Mateo District Attorneys’ offices where she gained valuable courtroom experience. Rima also gained experience clerking at Plaintiff’s firm where she worked on wildfire cases in order to obtain settlements for families impacted by California wildfires. Prior to joining the team at FMG, Rima was working at a civil defense firm in San Francisco where she worked on various tort related matters. [LinkedIn](#)*

# December Crossword Puzzle

Complete the crossword puzzle below and learn some interesting holiday facts!



**ACROSS:**

2. This island nation in the Central Pacific is the first location to ring in the New Year each year.
5. The commemoration of Kwanzaa revolves around honoring the \_\_\_\_\_ principles of African heritage.
7. This plaza in New York reportedly has the largest Menorah in the world.
8. Kwanzaa celebratory symbols include a mat, candle holder, seven candles, ear of corn, unity cup, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**DOWN:**

1. The first president to celebrate Hanukkah at the White House.
3. In December, Walt Disney released his first cartoon featuring \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was the second name that the Anglo-Saxons had for December.
6. The earliest recorded festivities in honor of a new year's arrival date back some 4,000 years to ancient \_\_\_\_\_.

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 19



# YOUR BIG ANNOUNCEMENT GOES HERE.

Are you interested in advertising  
for our newsletter?

Reach hundreds of paralegals,  
students, and readers all over  
Los Angeles County.

For inquiries,  
Email Tracey Booth at [Admin@lapa.org](mailto:Admin@lapa.org)

---





*A recurring column where we delve into unique experiences and insights of paralegals. We ask engaging, thought-provoking questions to a featured paralegal, offering a glimpse into their daily life and career.*

## Gina Rosales

Very Experienced Paralegal –  
Loeb & Loeb LLP

### ***Describe a typical day for you as a paralegal. What are your most common tasks and how do you manage your time effectively?***

As soon as I wake, I check my calendar reminders for the day. On any given day, I have 30-40 cases for which I am responsible for and varying in tasks. I assist and work with attorneys on both the Estate Settlement (Trust Administration) side, as well as the Trust/Probate Litigation side of the practice.

Common tasks are the preparation of petitions, once filed to make sure notice is given, check for probate notes, and make sure that notes are cleared for any upcoming hearings. After the hearings, follow up with the attorney regarding the outcome of the hearing, pull the Court's minute order, prepare the order after hearing.

On administrations, there a list of tasks, such as lodging the will with the court, sending out the trustee's notification, and statutory notices that need to go out when someone passes, the tasks are very similar for out of court estate administrations and court supervised administrations. I am also in charge of keeping active checklists for each estate administration I am working on, this greatly helps with time management, and lets the whole team know exactly where we are on the status of the administration, keeps the administration moving forward meeting all the deadlines, and avoiding duplicative work. The firm's interoffice tools to keep organized work wonders with time management and task assignments. I am spoiled as the processes at Loeb are like a well-oiled machine, keeping the administrations running smoothly.

### ***What's the first thing you do when you get to the office in the morning? How does it set the tone for your day?***

Well, to be honest, it's not work, it's the niceties. I do that first thing. You'd be surprised how far taking a few

minutes of your time to say hello and good morning to the team goes. How does it set the tone for your day? It makes it light and friendly.

## CAREER INSIGHTS

### ***What inspired you to become a paralegal?***

I moved to Los Angeles to attend court reporting school. I was working nights word processing at a law office and attending court reporting school full-time during the day. After a year, the repetitive motion for 12 to 15 hours a day took a toll on my hands. I was diagnosed with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. My doctor said I didn't realistically have a career in court reporting as he was recommending surgery.

### ***Was there a defining moment or person that influenced your career choice?***

The next day, I asked the attorneys I was working for what a paralegal did that was different than what I had been doing. Preparing their documents, keeping them organized, assisting with hearing folders and binders, clearing probate notes, prepping discovery, etc.....they said "none" there was no difference, other than having a certificate from a school that said you completed the training (they forgot to mention there was a difference in pay). By this time, I had been working in a law office for about 7 years. So I went to Loyola Marymount University and received my paralegal certificate.

### ***What's the most rewarding part of being a paralegal?***

The most rewarding part has been to assist people that have been in need of assistance and don't have the means to obtain legal assistance, and seeing them in a better place when the work was done.

### ***Can you share a specific example?***

The first time, the cleaning lady in the small office building where I was working, brought me an eviction notice her elderly mother had received. She tried to explain what had been going on for a few years, a slew of wrongdoings. I asked her to bring her mom to the office after hours and see if there was something that I could do to help. The mom (who was the tenant), told other tenants and brought them to me, and I listened to their hardships and began preparing letters to the county on their behalf. The result of my efforts was that they all received mandated financial assistance

*continued on page 10*

to move. Due to the language barrier, they would have never received any assistance. They were very grateful. They sent me the most beautiful flowers and a card. It was a good day! In addition, I have been very lucky to work in firms that dedicate a lot of time to giving back to the communities they serve by way of working on pro bono matters. Due to confidentiality issues, I cannot be specific, but when a child is saved from entering the system and goes with a family who loves them, it's very rewarding to see. When you see children who suffered in this country, who would not be able to assimilate life in the country of their origin receive their resident status is very rewarding. I could go on and on. My advice is be passionate, empathetic, and give back when you can.

## COMPENSATION

*What is the salary range for your field and your experience?*

I have worked in a law office for 37 years and have worked as a paralegal for approximately 30 years. For someone with 5+ years' experience the salary range is from \$100,000 to \$175,000 (I am being specific to paralegals "in Los Angeles" with more than 5 years' experience in Trust and Estates, if you know how to prepare estate and gift tax returns, you will be on the high end of the salary range).

*What factors do you believe most influence a paralegal's salary, and what advice would you give to others looking to increase their earning potential?*

My opinion is that "knowledge" in your practice area is what most influences your salary. Keep abreast of the ever changing laws, rules and procedures. I am not certified (CP or ACP) but have been told by others that the real money came when they received their certification.

## CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS

*What has been the most challenging case you've worked on, and how did you overcome the obstacles?*

Most challenging cases for me have been cases that bring out a ton of human emotion. I am too sensitive. I did not overcome the obstacles, I left working in those practice areas.

*Can you recall a moment when your work made a significant difference in the outcome of a case?*

Yes, my attorneys went to trial, and when they came back, they were elated, first because they won, and second because the judge made a comment that it was a pleasure to have them in his courtroom and commended them on the organization of their documents for trial. It was very satisfying to hear that my hard work was noticed and appreciated by the judge (and the attorneys). Yay me!!

## SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

*What skills do you think are essential for a successful paralegal, and how do you continue to develop them?*

The ability to look things up. "When in doubt look it up." When you don't know how to do something, look it up. When you know something looks wrong or is off, look it up. That is our job, to make sure things run smoothly, that documents get served and filed timely, that we keep our attorneys organized. If you see an attorney is overwhelmed, ask how you could to help with that matter or any matter you could take off their plate. Be helpful. If the task is not in your job description, it doesn't matter.

*Have you taken any courses or certifications that you found particularly valuable for your career?*

Yes, for my area of law, I take anything probate, trust litigation, trust administration, tax, and real estate related, it keeps me apprised of the ever changing administrative procedures, laws, etc. Always take advantage of the opportunity to hear from the judges in your area of law. Those courses/talks will let you know exactly what the judges want and expect in their courtroom. I find the most useful information in these types of courses.

## TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

*How has technology changed your role as a paralegal? What tools or software do you find indispensable?*

Technology has changed "everything" in law, cite checking, research, preparing pleadings, filing documents with the court, everything. Indispensable software: Microsoft Office suite, I can't do without Word, Excel, Adobe, iManage, and DocuSign. My favorite search tool is Google.

*continued on page 11*

*Can you recommend any specific apps or software that make your job easier and more efficient?*

Aside from the ones named above, in my practice area GEMS, and EstateVal.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

*How do you balance the demands of your job with your personal life?*

I cannot tell a lie, I did not do well in this department, I dedicated a lot of my time to work. My parents were very essential and very hands on when my children were little, they did the heavy lifting. I take no credit.

*Do you have any tips for maintaining a healthy work-life balance?*

Stand your ground, set boundaries, and stick to them, don't let the important stuff pass you by. Remember, you don't get a do over. Make no mistake, your family is most important. Don't be bullied into committing to work when the most important activity that day should have been going to your son's or daughter's Christmas program at school. The litigation practice is very demanding with deadlines for getting things done, preparing for a hearing, mediation, or trial. I received comments that would make me feel bad or guilty about taking time off "It's not a good time right now" or "You know the tight deadlines we are up against." Know that your time away from work to attend school functions is protected by law (CA Labor Code section 230.8).

*What activities or hobbies do you engage in outside of work to unwind and de-stress?*

I love to travel, I try to travel as often as possible. For my stay at home activities, I am a spider, I knit and crochet. I also love to cook for my family and friends, it gives me great satisfaction when they're happy and content. Food does that to people, at least my people.

## ADVICE FOR NEW PARALEGALS

*What advice would you give to someone just starting out as a paralegal?*

Like the work you are doing. In this business you must have great work ethic, persevere in all things you do, and care about your work product. Shoddy work is unacceptable.

*Is there something you wish you had known when you began your career?*

Not that I can think of.

*What are the common mistakes you see new paralegals make, and how can they avoid them?*

Something very simple, "read your work!"

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

*Can you share a memorable story from your career that highlights the unique aspects of being a paralegal?*

I have been very lucky, and have worked on many high profile cases. I do have many memorable highlights for many of those cases. Unfortunately, I cannot disclose anything.

*What's the funniest or most unusual thing that has happened to you at work?*

Years ago my boss forgot he had an educational event he had to speak at. When I finally found him, he was at the gym. He asked me for help so I quickly went to his house to pick up the things he needed me to take to him. When I stepped out the front door, to my surprise, I was greeted by the police commanding me with their bullhorn. I was so scared, startled, and embarrassed. Apparently the neighborhood watch people saw me trying to enter his house through the front door, then saw me having trouble opening the back gate and called the police. Oof!

## FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

*How do you see the role of paralegals evolving in the next five to ten years?*

I am not the most tech savvy person. A bit old school I'm afraid, but I see this profession evolving with technology. Not the other way around, as there's the belief that the paralegal profession will be obsolete because of A.I. I don't believe that at all. Now, instead of researching thousands of documents for thousands of hours, the new litigation apps can narrow the search, and minimize the manpower involved in monstrous sized cases. Wish I could do that or be a part of that.

*What changes would you like to see in the legal profession that could benefit paralegals?*

In other states, paralegals can be retained for legal services in certain areas of law. In this state, we cannot

*continued on page 12*



## Winding Down the Year with Employment Law

by Alyssa Cope

November 2024. The start of a new month, our days have fallen back an hour, and the air is clouded with questions about who the next leaders and policymakers of the United States will be. These changes have left many of us restless. Despite the anticipation and stress so common on Election Day, we came together to talk about a subject that affects all of us: California Employment Law. People from all phases of their careers gathered together to engage in this talk from the comfort of their homes. This included those looking to enter the field (like myself), to paralegals, lawyers, and students. We did so preferably over a cup of hot coffee and a warm lunch for the overcast day.

The chat was filled with sharp questions, personal thoughts, and insightful comments. Emilia Arutunian was on the receiving end of these questions and offered educated and thorough answers to each one. Emilia has great perspective; as a lawyer, she has worked on both ends of legal disputes. She defended employers for 6 years before transitioning to her current position

representing employees wronged by their employers.

One comment Emilia made that struck me is that paralegals are basically attorneys. Although, of course, not by title. This highlights the fact that paralegals do a great deal of the work that attorneys do, and grow close to the cases they work with and know the law well. It takes effort, focus, and dedication to do this and it helps to know that our work is valuable and worthwhile.

The presentation covered a broad range of areas related to California law. We talked about at-will employment, illegal discrimination, workplace harassment, retaliation, leaves of absence, and wages and hour cases (among other subjects).

At-will employment means that either the employee or the employer can end their agreement whenever, with or without cause. However, if the reason for the termination is illegal, then a case can be made. Illegal discrimination is an example of this, and it occurs when an employer treats an employee differently because they are a member of a protected category. This does not only occur for current employees but also during the job search, when an individual is sending in applications or engaging in interviews. This is something I am familiar with as a recent college graduate. When sending in applications, it is helpful to know that our demographic information cannot legally be used to our detriment to select or reject applications. *continued on page 13*

### PARALEGAL PERSPECTIVES: A GLANCE INTO THEIR LIVES - cont. from page 11

provide legal advice nor be retained for legal services. Attorneys do not like poor clients. So many people do not have access to legal assistance. I would like for there to be some legislative change that would allow paralegals to provide services to people who would otherwise not have access to legal assistance. But, realistically, I don't see that happening in California.

#### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

***If you could go back in time, is there anything you would do differently in your career?***

Yes, I would have continued going to school.

***What motivates you to keep going on tough days?***

The sense of responsibility, commitment, and wanting to succeed. And, love, the love for my family, and myself.

***Do you have a personal mantra or source of inspiration?***

Yes, I do... Here it goes: 1. I am a good listener, friend, and mom. 2. I am strong and capable, I am willing to learn. 3. I work hard, am unstoppable, and I am grateful for all that I have.

---

*Gina Rosales is a paralegal with 30 years of experience handling probate, trust and estate administration and litigation matters. Gina has experience assisting with all aspects of estate planning and administration matters, including preparing and filing various probate court pleadings, assisting with discovery and trial preparation and preparing deeds and accompanying documents. In addition, she has provided key support in litigation matters including deposition preparation, trial preparation, trial hearings and mediation and arbitration. Currently serving as Treasurer on the Los Angeles Paralegal Association Board of Directors. [LAPAL](#)*

Discrimination takes on many forms, such as discrimination towards one's race, religion, gender, and age. There is an aspect to the protected characteristics of age that shocked me, however, and it may shock you too. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protects individuals 40 or older from age discrimination in California. I thought this type of discrimination may have occurred further down the line, such as in one's 50s or 60s, but not as early as 40!

Emilia brought up an interesting new protected class to be introduced in California in 2025: having a driver's license. This means that employers cannot discriminate based on whether an individual has a driver's license, unless particular conditions are met, such as driving being one of the functions of the job. This makes sense to us UberEats and DoorDash fans who love a good meal delivered to the house after work. Unless, of course, we can expect someone to deliver via bicycle.

I believe there is increased awareness of disabilities in the United States, and with this, greater understanding of them. I am familiar with many types of disabilities protected under California law, such as deafness, blindness, and HIV/AIDS. However, as someone who has a background in psychology, I did not know that both anxiety and insomnia are protected disabilities in California (among other psychological conditions). This makes sense when we understand the definition of a disability made by the Civil Rights Department of the State of California. A disability is broadly defined as conditions that impose limits on a major life activity. The progress we have made in integrating mental health concerns into our policies is a huge leap in the scientific community that speaks volumes about how far we have come as a country.

Importantly, we spoke about wrongful termination. Wrongful termination occurs when a public policy has been violated and is the reason for the employee's termination. As suggested by Emilia, wrongful termination can be a complex case. This can be demonstrated through an example. A woman believes her employer treats the women at her company differently. He provides the men with opportunities such as frequent promotions and raises but often criticizes his female employees for being too "emotional" and does not offer them opportunities to expand their skills in the same ways he does for the

men. As a result, the woman is exposed to stress. She often does not meet deadlines and her work does not meet quality standards; she argues that this is due to the stress of discrimination. The woman was terminated from the company. The woman believes she was terminated because of gender discrimination, but a case can also be made that her termination was due to underlying performance issues at work. In this example, it is possible that the woman filing the complaint may not have a solid case to take legal action because it appears that discrimination is not the "substantial motivating reason" for her termination.

Emilia highlighted that it is critical that we document concerns when they occur by writing them down. She noted that in some cases, she suggests that her clients not even take phone calls. Rather, keep all communication in writing. I asked her what form of communication would be best, and she suggested that email (from a personal account) is generally a good way to go. We should remember this when we believe that steps may need to be taken to protect ourselves and the people we care for.

I learned a lot from this "crash course" on California Employment Law. Clearly, no one presentation can cover all ground on this subject. Nonetheless, we were presented with an abundance of information in such a compact talk. Whether we are new to law, would like to revisit the law, or even if we are from other states and wondering how employment laws differ, there is so much to learn about California employment law. As Emilia stated, "something unfair isn't necessarily illegal." This is why it is so fundamental to be aware of the laws so we can accurately identify when a law has been broken and take action to protect ourselves and our corporations.

As we look ahead to the new year with upcoming changes in power and policy, I hope that we do not cease to learn and collaborate together with ease, acceptance, and tolerance. We are all on this paralegal path together. Here's to all the work we do, the people we support, and the bonds we create through our shared focus and values. Here's to 2025!

*Nicole Davis, ACP is a Freelance Litigation Paralegal that has worked in the industry for 8 years. She is a self-proclaimed law nerd that loves to study the law and help others advance their own career.* 



## Looking Forward Despite COVID-19

by Deena Bowman

Living with the COVID-19 virus has changed our means of enjoying recreational and cultural pursuits. However, good times can still be experienced – albeit in different ways. December ushers in holiday celebrations and events.



### GO WILD IN MOORPARK AT THE TEACHING ZOO

The Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College has opened its “Wild Lights” holiday adventure on the campus grounds. On select nights in December, the zoo transforms into a light-displayed wonderland. Note: The college has advised that this is not an animal-centered event. Some animals enjoy the lights, and some sleep through the night. The event time is 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm; for exact dates in December and to purchase tickets, go to: <https://zoo.moorparkcollege.edu/holiday-lights/>.



### ENJOY A CHANUKAH CELEBRATION AT THE ORIGINAL FARMER’S MARKET

Gather with friends and family on Thursday, December 19, from 3:30 pm -5:30 pm for Chanukah fun, including youth performances by JLA, Lego menorah building, and Chanukah crafts and sing-a-longs. The celebrations continue into the New Year with a special menorah lighting hosted by Miracle Mile Chabad and Chanukah music by DJ Shalom on January 1. All activities take place on the Market Plaza. For further information, please visit: <https://prod-cms2.fmla.appbloks.site:8444/orgs/global/model/0c44a773-1c43-4559-b80e-09bfe465856c/generic/b5dd9970-6a38-48e0-b274-1b1532159abf/blob/e5f4abf0-a9bf-4699-8de2-8ff12b252ac4>.

*Deena Bowman is a Senior Legal Analyst at the State Compensation Insurance Fund in Monterey Park, California. Deena earned her paralegal certificate from the University of West Los Angeles, and she was a former Director at Large with LAPA.*



## Be a Part of the LAPA Newsletter

Book Reviews, Write Legal Articles, Advertise Your Business, New Legal World Trends, Tell Us About Recent Events and More!

Visit: <https://www.lapa.org/news> to see previous publications.

Questions or Submissions please send to Mariana Lui at [mariana.s.lui@gmail.com](mailto:mariana.s.lui@gmail.com).

Deadline to submit Articles or Ads is the first of the month by 9pm to be considered for the following issue.



## Fresh Takes on Litigation Strategy

by Sophia Ramirez

On Tuesday November 12, Mikaela Dixon and Allison Melendez delivered a sharp, focused session at the LA Paralegal Meeting. Their practical insights into discovery strategy and litigation management were especially valuable as someone getting their first taste in the legal field.

### DISCOVERY PHASE 1

The meeting began with pleadings, emphasizing the importance of understanding the “why” behind each action taken in litigation. We discussed the complaint as a legal document that outlines the allegations made by the plaintiff against the defendant. It must include a demand for relief, the plaintiff’s causes of action, and a factual basis for the claims. The purpose of the complaint is to clearly present the facts supporting the claim, which requires thorough due diligence and investigation prior to filing. Additionally, it’s essential to be aware of any discussions that may take place before serving the defense.

### UNDERSTANDING THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

A critical aspect of litigation that was emphasized during the meeting is the statute of limitations. Paralegals must know the specific deadlines that govern the time frame within which a lawsuit can be filed, and Dixon and Melendez stressed how their calendars are practically sacred documents - something I’ve quickly learned to appreciate.

For personal injury cases in California, the default statute of limitations is typically two years. However, exceptions exist, particularly for government cases, which require filing within six months. By proactively managing these deadlines, paralegals can help ensure that cases are filed timely and that clients have the best chance for a successful outcome.

### VENUE SELECTION: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Choosing the appropriate venue for filing a lawsuit is a critical decision directed by the attorney. The presenters walked us through how factors like incident location and defendant residence combine

with practical considerations - like San Bernardino’s notorious backlog - to inform filing decisions.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER SERVICE

Service of process is a crucial step in litigation, as it formally notifies the defendant that they are being sued. A summons must include details about the case, such as the names of the parties involved and a copy of the complaint. When serving a corporate entity, it’s essential to deliver the documents to an authorized agent for service of process, which can typically be found through a business search on the Secretary of State’s website.

Their emphasis on double-checking proof of service and managing multiple sub-entities stressed how one small oversight could derail an entire case.

### FINAL THOUGHTS ON PLEADINGS & DISCOVERY

The meeting covered critical insights into pleadings and discovery, underscoring that rules and requirements vary significantly by court. Paralegals must be familiar with their specific jurisdiction’s procedures when filing a complaint. For instance, in Los Angeles, an addendum and a statement of location are required, whereas other jurisdictions, like San Bernardino, may have different rules.

Responsive pleadings, including answers, counterclaims, and cross-claims, play a vital role in the litigation process. When crafting an answer, it’s important to review the complaint carefully and respond to each allegation by admitting, denying, or stating insufficient knowledge. Additionally, this is the stage to assert affirmative defenses.

### STATUTORY OFFER TO COMPROMISE (SECTION 998)

Another important topic was the statutory offer to compromise, commonly known as a 998 offer. Successfully “beating” a 998 can result in the opposing party having to pay costs, making it a strategic tool in litigation. The presenters emphasized the risks of going to trial, which can lead to substantial financial consequences. Clients ultimately decide whether to accept a 998 offer, but it’s essential for paralegals to help them understand the implications of their choices. Timing can also be crucial; serving the 998 closer to trial may exert additional pressure on the other side. If representing multiple clients, it’s necessary to include language specifying “joint and separately” in the offer.

*continued on page 16*

## ISO SEARCHES AND CLIENT PREPARATION

ISO searches are invaluable for uncovering any claims filed under the client's name over the past decade, including health and workers' compensation claims. This information can help jog the client's memory about prior incidents or complaints, ensuring they are adequately prepared for depositions.

## WRITTEN DISCOVERY

Finally, the presenters discussed the timing and specificity of written discovery. They advised waiting until enough information has been gathered before serving discovery requests and tailoring them to fit the case's needs. California Code of Civil Procedure sections 2030.030 through 2030.410 outline various forms of interrogatories and requests for admissions, with an increasing focus on social media inquiries. Being strategic and informed in this area is crucial for effective case management.

While these fundamentals might seem like second nature to veterans of the legal field, Dixon and Melendez's engaging presentation style - complete with real-world mishaps and hard-earned wisdom - made these crucial concepts click for me. Even though I work primarily in medical records, learning about the discovery process has helped me in my role tremendously. Their skill in turning what could have been a straightforward procedural overview into an engaging session (with a healthy dose of humor) showed me that even the most technical aspects of litigation can be both manageable and, dare I say it, actually fun to learn.

---

## Discovery, Depositions, & Mediation

On Wednesday November 20, at the LA Paralegal Litigation Meeting, led again by Mikaela Dixon and Allison Melendez, provided invaluable insights into Phase 2 (Discovery) and Phase 3 (Mediation) of the litigation process. The presenters shared practical advice on handling depositions, preparing clients for independent medical exams (IMEs), and navigating the complexities of mediation. Drawing from their extensive experience, Dixon and Melendez helped explain these critical phases, providing both seasoned and newer paralegals with strategies to improve their work.

## DISCOVERY PHASE 2

Dixon and Melendez emphasized the importance of offering the plaintiff's deposition early in the case. This not only sets a strong foundation for the facts but also prevents any unpleasant surprises later on. The timing of this offer, as well as the notice requirements, are strategic decisions typically made by the attorney, with at least 20 days' notice required to schedule the deposition. Paralegals play a critical role in ensuring that clients are ready to testify. The presenters recommended holding multiple meetings with clients—both plaintiffs and defendants—to review the process and answer any questions. In particular, clients should be reminded that depositions can take a full day, so they should plan accordingly. It's essential to explain that answers should be concise, avoiding long, narrative responses, which can complicate the record and lengthen the process. This is especially important when multilingual clients are involved, as lengthy answers can easily get lost in translation.

An important tip shared during the meeting was the necessity of having written discovery responses on hand before the deposition. This ensures that attorneys and paralegals have a clear understanding of the case before they sit down with the client. It's also helpful for avoiding any information that may appear for the first time during the deposition. As for Requests for Production of Documents (RFPD's), Dixon and Melendez advised giving no fewer than three days for document production, even if the deadline technically falls closer to the deposition date. Proper calendaring and advance preparation are essential for ensuring everything runs smoothly.

When it comes to the deposition itself, paralegals should go over key ground rules with the client beforehand. This includes explaining that the client is testifying under oath and may be subject to penalties for perjury. It's also important to check in with the client about any health concerns that might affect their ability to participate, as breaks are allowed if fatigue sets in.

Dixon and Melendez also covered important procedural details. For example, they explained how to avoid the common pitfall of a "blind notice"—scheduling a deposition without checking if it works for the other side. Additionally, after the deposition,

*continued on page 17*



clients have 30 days to review and correct their transcript. Paralegals should be proactive about ensuring that corrections are made on the record, as this can prevent issues during trial.

### INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS (IME): NAVIGATING THE PROCESS

Another crucial component of Phase 2 is the Independent Medical Examination (IME). While referred to as “independent,” Dixon and Melendez pointed out that these exams are often not truly impartial, as they are arranged by the defense. Paralegals must help clients prepare for an experience that is typically biased against their interests. A critical first step is to ensure the client understands that the IME doctor is not bound by the usual confidentiality rules that govern doctor-patient relationships. This helps set the client’s expectations.

Clients should also be aware of their right to have a nurse or observer present during the IME, which can help ensure that the examination proceeds fairly. Additionally, paralegals should monitor the number of IMEs allowed based on the number of injuries claimed in the case, as this will dictate how many examinations the defense is entitled to request. Finally, it’s essential to remind clients that the defense often hires private investigators (subrosa) to observe them during the IME, and the IME doctor’s office must be within 75 miles of the client’s home.

### MEDIATION: PREPARATION & STRATEGY

As the meeting shifted to Phase 3, the discussion moved to the nuances of mediation. Mediation is an essential step in litigation, and the preparation leading up to it can make or break a case. Dixon and Melendez emphasized the importance of ensuring that both sides have the same set of documents, such as medical records and bills, well in advance of the mediation. This ensures that the mediation is focused on the core issues rather than on missing paperwork.

For paralegals, drafting the mediation brief is an essential task. Dixon and Melendez shared a helpful framework for organizing the brief:

- **Introduction:** Begin with a concise summary of the case and its key issues.


- **Liability:** If relevant, include any liability issues and how they impact the case.
- **Medical Treatment Timeline:** Outline the client’s medical treatment and any significant findings.
- **Defense Medical Exam:** Summarize the defense’s medical exam findings, including any concessions that might be useful for your side.
- **General Damages:** This is where the client’s story can be told. Use photos and other compelling evidence to humanize the case.
- **Settlement Position:** Include any 998 offers and provide examples of similar cases from your firm that resulted in favorable outcomes.

In addition to document preparation, paralegals should also work with the client to set expectations for the mediation process. A pre-mediation meeting is a great opportunity to review the client’s goals, explain potential settlement amounts (and what they’ll net after attorney fees and costs), and discuss any liens or outstanding bills.

If mediation doesn’t result in a settlement, paralegals should be prepared for a mediator’s proposal, a neutral figure suggested by the mediator to help both sides reach an agreement. However, this proposal is only binding if both parties agree to it.

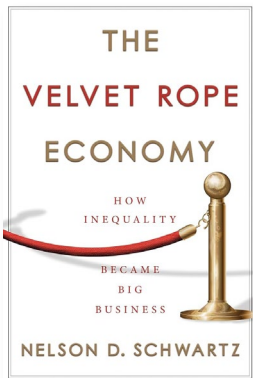
### CONCLUSION

Dixon and Melendez’s session provided paralegals with a comprehensive understanding of how to manage key elements of the discovery and mediation phases of litigation. Their practical advice on preparing for depositions, managing IMEs, and crafting effective mediation briefs was both actionable and insightful. Whether it’s ensuring clients are well-prepared for their depositions or organizing a mediation brief that tells a compelling story, their tips will help paralegals stay one step ahead in the litigation process. With the right preparation and strategies in place, we can make these complex stages much more manageable and ultimately help drive better outcomes for clients.

*Sophia Ramirez is a Legal Assistant at Countrywide Trial Lawyers. A recent graduate of Connecticut College, Sophia earned degrees in Psychology and Data Science, offering a unique analytical approach to her role in the legal field despite having no prior background in law. Outside of work, she is a soccer coach, enjoys playing tennis, and loves traveling and hiking with friends.* 

A recurring column that reviews books focusing on voices and subjects that reflect the diversity of the human experience

by Deena Bowman



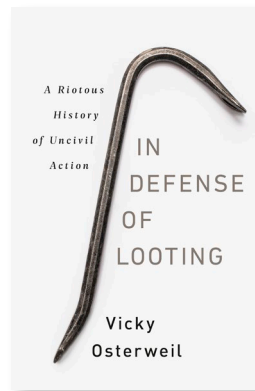
## The Velvet Rope Economy: How Inequality Became Big Business

by Nelson D. Schwartz

Disbelieve the thought that being on hold for 25 minutes when calling your bank or another financial service provider means you're in a call surge during peak service hours, declares business reporter Nelson D. Schwartz. Your "CLV" or "customer lifetime value" determines how much your business is worth to whoever you call—a higher number means better service. This is just one example of living in *The Velvet Rope Economy*, where, for a price, a person can live a friction-free life on the side where all their needs are anticipated and tended to. On the other side of the rope for working- and middle-class Americans, it has become Darwin's Law, from securing an empty seat on the plane and enduring long lines at the

amusement park to more fraught situations such as a college acceptance or even a hospital bed. The danger of this growing divide and established practice in American society, Schwartz posits, subtracts from our social capital and leaves us with a profoundly segmented society. 🏛️

2020, 339 Pages, Doubleday, \$28.95, hardcover. Also available for checkout from the Los Angeles Public Library in book form, eAudiobook and e-Book.



## In Defense of Looting: A Riotous History of Civil Uncivil Action

by Vicky Osterweil

The term "looting" usually brings to mind mobs smashing store windows and grabbing goods -- certainly not as a method of liberation, much less as a means of oppression. Yet Vicky Osterweil's book, *In Defense of Looting*, asks the reader to consider looting during social unrest in American history as an impromptu means of wealth distribution taken by the poor who seldom own any real property in their own communities. Through her argument, Osterweil weaves the history of violent protests in America, which sparked the social change from the slave revolts in the South to the more recent #BlackLivesMatter and Indigenous peoples' climate change movements. 🏛️

2020, 279 Pages, Bold Type Books, \$28.00, hardcover. Also available for checkout from the Los Angeles Public Library in book form, eAudiobook and e-Book.

LOS ANGELES PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

Invites You To

# WRITE FOR OUR NEWSLETTER!

Students, paralegals, everyone! We want you to write for the Los Angeles Paralegal Association newsletter! Email [admin@lapa.org](mailto:admin@lapa.org) for more info.



Join one of the nation's premier paralegal associations:

**The Los Angeles Paralegal Association**

Please visit [www.lapa.org](http://www.lapa.org) for detailed information about LAPA membership benefits.

# Employers, Find Quality Talent **TODAY!**



The Los Angeles Paralegal Association's Career Center is the leading source for attracting top talent

- > POST JOBS
- > RECEIVE RESUMES VIA EMAIL
- > SCREEN RESUMES
- > HIRE QUALIFIED TALENT

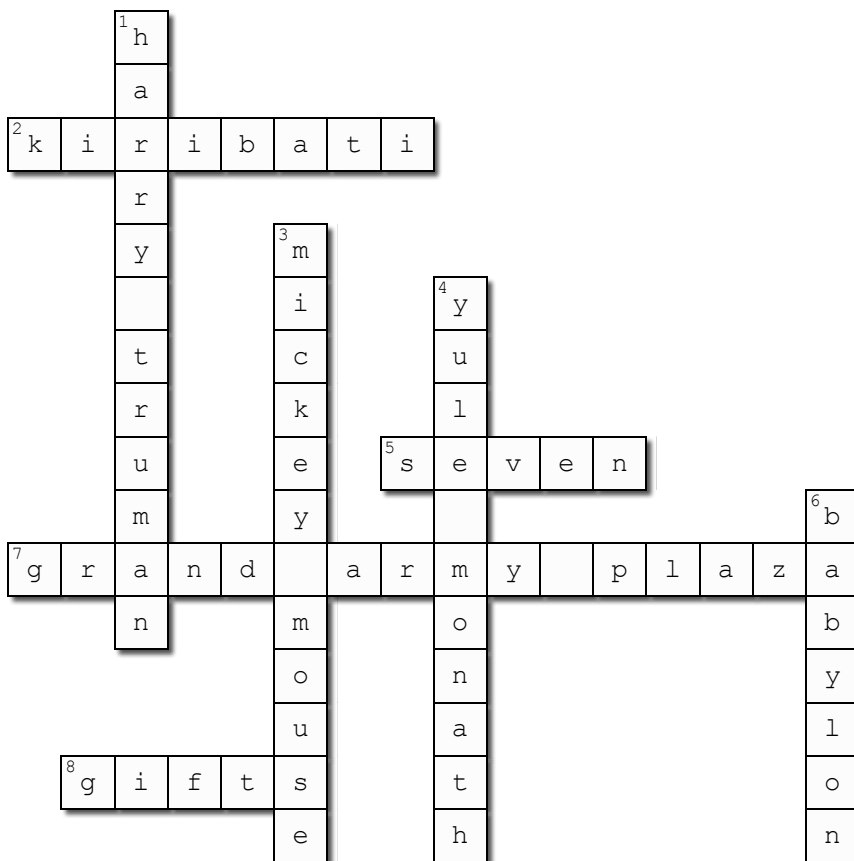


[www.lapa.org](http://www.lapa.org)



ASSOCIATION  
CAREER NETWORK

## LAPA'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE - cont. from page 7



## ANSWER KEY

### ACROSS

- 2. Kiribati
- 5. Seven
- 7. Grand Army Plaza
- 8. Gifts

### DOWN

- 1. Harry Truman
- 3. Mickey Mouse
- 4. Yule Monath
- 6. Babylon

# Proud Supporter of LAPA



**TRIAL PRESENTATION**

**MOCK TRIALS**

**LEGAL GRAPHICS**

**VIDEO EDITING**

**EQUIPMENT RENTAL**

**FOCUS GROUPS**

**INTERACTIVE TIMELINES**

**JURY RESEARCH**

Contact us to see how we can assist with your upcoming Trial.

Ph: (805) 705—7777 | [alicia@aquinotrial.com](mailto:alicia@aquinotrial.com)

[www.aquinotrialservices.com](http://www.aquinotrialservices.com)



## CAREER EDUCATION

# PARALEGAL

Fullerton College's ABA-approved Paralegal Studies Program provides the education and skills necessary for graduates to work under the supervision of an attorney as a critical member of the legal support team in all areas of law. Our program aids students in finding employment in this ever-growing, fast-paced, and challenging field.



**PLEASE NOTE:**

The Fullerton College ABA-approved Paralegal Studies Program does not prepare students for law school or the practice of law. Under California's Business and Professions Code, Section 6450 (et seq.), a paralegal may not market his or her services to the public, but must work under the direct supervision of an attorney licensed to practice law.

### DEGREE/CERTIFICATE OFFERED

We offer both an Associate Science degree and Certificate in Paralegal Studies. Visit our website to view the degree and certificate requirements.



### ENROLL ONLINE AT:

<https://admissions.fullcoll.edu/>



### VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### START HERE:

PLEG 101 F -  
Introduction to Paralegal Studies



#### QUESTIONS? CONTACT:



**(714) 992-7032**



[buscis@fullcoll.edu](mailto:buscis@fullcoll.edu)

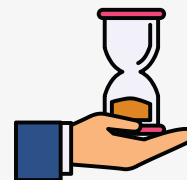


<https://buscis.fullcoll.edu/>

## Child Welfare in Los Angeles County



As of January 2021, there are 38,243 children/youth in the Los Angeles Child Welfare System.



Most children are in the child welfare system for about 2+ years.

**Black & Hispanic children encompass**

**81.5%**

**of children/youth in care.**

High turnover rates in child welfare professions create gaps in knowledge and care, and limit youths' access to consistent and appropriate supports.



In an overwhelmed system, L.A. County professionals face the daunting task of making complex, life-changing decisions about a child/youth's overall well-being.

## The Solution? The Essential History Program!

The Essential History Program aims to help social workers, attorneys and judges make trauma-informed decisions about the young people they serve. Through this program, a CASA volunteer reviews the entirety of a child/youth's case file and produces an objective and comprehensive report that highlights key historical events for the young person while in the system.



### Program Goals

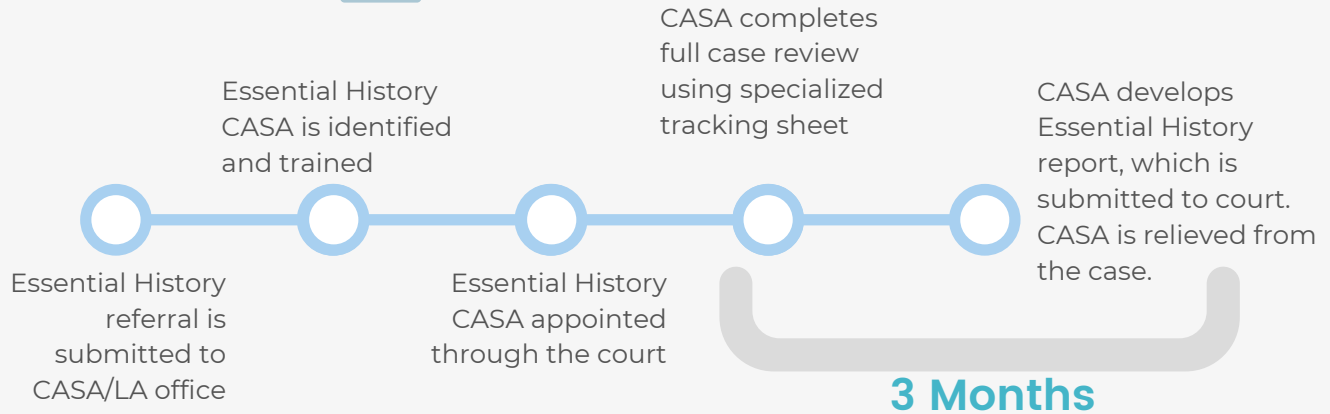
- Reduce time youth is in the child welfare system
- Improve outcomes for youth in the areas such as: permanency, mental health, education and social supports
- Ease changes/transitions for service providers
- Reduce burnout and compassion fatigue for child welfare professionals
- Consolidate information to observe data trends in the child welfare system
- Create systematic change towards healthier and equitable systems

*continued on next page*

continued from previous page



## Process & Timeline



## The Report

### Objective & Neutral Language

Information is retrieved from case documents with no additional bias/interpretation.

### Strengths-Based

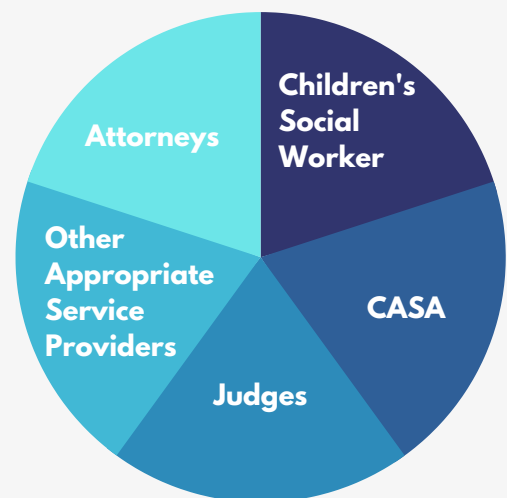
Focus is kept on not creating a negative perception of the youth

### Report Content

Report Covers Risk & Protective Factors in the areas of:

- Permanency
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Education
- Family & Social Supports

### Who Can Access the Report?



### Questions?

[essentialhistory@casala.org](mailto:essentialhistory@casala.org)  
 Visit Us! [www.casala.org](http://www.casala.org)



The Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) reflects the diverse nature of Southern California, and we strive to be as inclusive as possible. As an organization of legal professionals, we hold the ideals of equality and justice in the highest regard. The injustices experienced by the communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are a stark reminder that equality and justice are ideas that have yet to reach fruition in this country. We, as a nation, must do better. LAPA stands in solidarity with the families and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. It is our sincerest desire to see justice is done as the law requires for their tragic deaths.

Diversity and inclusion are LAPA's initiative for 2022. We hold firm in striving to be more inclusive and diverse to reflect the community that we serve and represent. Moreover, LAPA will continue to steadfastly advocate and create initiatives to prepare and support our paralegals.

Attention  
LAPA Voting Members

## FREELANCE PARALEGAL LISTING

Available Online Now  
for Voting Members Only  
\$60.00 for Six Months





**LAPA LITIGATION SECTION  
PRESENTS: MCLE - MEDICAL  
BILLING**



**05 DEC,  
2024**

**12:00 - 1:00PM**

**BARRY POSNER**  
SPEAKER



Members \$20  
Student Members  
\$15  
Non-Members \$40



THE LOS ANGELES PARALEGAL  
ASSOCIATION PRESENTS:

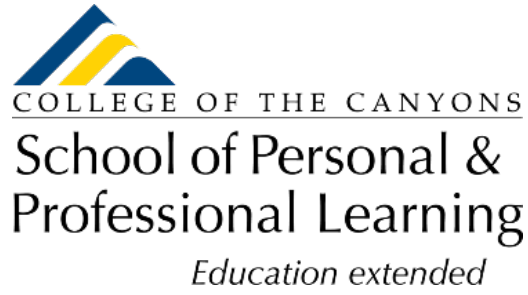
# 2024 HOLIDAY BENEFIT GALA

Pasadena Hilton  
168 S. Los Robles Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91101

Benefiting Union Station Homeless Services

**December 12th from 6 PM - 10 PM**

Buy tickets now at <https://www.lapa.org/events>



## New Year! New Goal! Become a “Certified Paralegal”

College of the Canyons is offering study courses for the NALA CP Exam.  
The courses are noncredit and **FREE** to California residents!

Spring 2025

Course	Dates	Wks	Days/Times	Modality
NC.PLGL-001-86751 – Knowledge	2/25/25 – 5/06/25	11*	T 6:00 – 8:00 pm	OnlineLIVE (Zoom)
NC.PLGL-001-86753 – Knowledge	2/24/25 – 5/10/25	11*	Online	Online
NC.PLGL-002-86755 – Skills	2/22/25 – 4/05/25	7	S 9:00 – 11:30 am	OnlineLIVE (Zoom)
NC.PLGL-002-86757 – Skills	4/19/25 – 5/31/25	7	S 9:00 – 11:30 am	OnlineLIVE (Zoom)

\*Spring break, 4/7/25 – 4/13/25

Location: Virtual/LIVE/via Zoom or Online (Guided Self-study)

Registration: Free to California residents

To Register: [www.canyons.edu/freeclasses](http://www.canyons.edu/freeclasses) and click on “Applicants”

Assistance with registration: Call (661) 362-3304 or email [freeclasses@canyons.edu](mailto:freeclasses@canyons.edu).

For more information, reach out to Terry Wright, ACP, [terry.wright@canyons.edu](mailto:terry.wright@canyons.edu) or  
Lori Young at [lori.young@canyons.edu](mailto:lori.young@canyons.edu).



These study courses are noncredit, and are not affiliated with the ABA-approved Paralegal Studies program.  
The ABA stresses that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law.

# Members Only Benefits

## Regional and Networking Sections

LAPA has many opportunities for meeting and connecting with your paralegal colleagues and other legal industry professionals. Such opportunities include seminar and networking events based on geographical locations such as Downtown (Los Angeles), South Bay, West L.A., the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, and more. LAPA also provides educational seminars in various legal specialties, including, but not limited to, Litigation, Probate Law, Intellectual Property Law, Corporate Law, Immigration Law, and Ethics. Additionally, with the support of our legal industry partners, LAPA also hosts other networking and charitable events and mixers. Your participation in LAPA is encouraged, so be sure to reach out to a LAPA Section or Committee Chair, develop your leadership and networking skills, and make LAPA an even better association.

## Vital Savings

This benefit provides LAPA members a discount program for dental and vision services, long term care, as well as many pharmaceuticals. LAPA has been able to obtain special pricing of Vital Savings discount cards through Aetna. By using the discount cards and Aetna approved providers, LAPA members can save dramatically on the services provided by these professionals. For more information, please visit LAPA's website, [www.lapa.org](http://www.lapa.org).

## Working Advantage

LAPA members may join a program that offers discounts up to 60% on tickets, travel, shopping, and more. LAPA helps you save money on items from clothing to theater tickets to flowers. This benefit is available by logging onto the LAPA website "Members Only" section.

## United Insurance Partners

LAPA has teamed with UIP - United Insurance Partners - to bring LAPA members the opportunity to purchase health, dental, and/or vision insurance. When you access UIP through the link provided on the Benefits webpage, you will find an array of insurance products available for you to purchase with companies such as Blue Cross, Aetna, and many other top insurance companies. Please visit LAPA's website, [www.lapa.org](http://www.lapa.org), for more information.

## NALA Affiliation

LAPA is an affiliated member of the National Association of Legal Assistants. NALA is the nation's leading professional association for paralegals. As a member of an affiliated association, the initiation fee for individual membership in NALA is waived for LAPA members. NALA boasts some of its own benefits. Access its NALA Campus Live for online continuing legal education, self-study courses, and preparation for the CLA/CP Exam. Its annual educational convention in July allows you to expand your network beyond your state's borders as you network with other paralegals from around the country, attend educational institutes and member related activities.

## Freelance/Contract Paralegal Listing

LAPA provides a "Freelance Paralegals" section on its website to assist LAPA members who are freelance, contract, or independent paralegals, as defined by California Business and Professions Code Section 6450. For a nominal fee of \$60, you can post your contact information on LAPA's website for six months. You can sign up online through the Members Only section of the website.

## Membership Database

Available only to LAPA members, the Membership Database is a valuable tool in locating other paralegals or legal professionals with whom you have worked or networked. The Membership Database also provides up-to-date contact information as well as members' legal specialties and geographical areas.

## Credit Union

LAPA members are eligible to join Southland Credit Union. Southland Credit Union, with over \$435 million in assets, offers an online presence, a new full-service branch in downtown Los Angeles, an upgraded ATM network and five new proprietary ATMs. Southland Credit Union has expanded its product line by introducing a new high-yielding certificate of deposit, a Rewards Plus program and a market-leading high interest yielding checking account. Southland Credit Union prides itself on outstanding service to its members and has recently earned a 95 percent Member Service satisfaction rating.

## Lorman Education

LAPA is dedicated to providing efficient and readily-available continuing education opportunities that meet the needs of our members and enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies. LAPA has partnered with Lorman Education to provide continuing education in a variety of topic areas. LAPA members receive a 20% discount on all orders.





# Bet Tzedek Needs YOUR Help!

## *Intake Services Volunteers Sought*

Bet Tzedek's Intake Services volunteers conduct pre-screening assessments in order to determine the appropriate course of action for individuals who call seeking legal assistance. Our volunteers are often the first contact our community has with our organization, and we rely on our volunteers to handle a high volume of calls from a diverse population of individuals with a broad range of needs.

### **Gain Issue Spotting and Client Interview Experience**

Under attorney supervision, volunteers develop foundational legal skills, including learning to spot legal issues; to conduct telephone interviews with potential clients dealing with challenging, stressful situations; determining what information provided by the caller is relevant; and to begin to develop judgment of potential cases in a wide array of legal areas. Volunteering with Intake Services also provides first-hand knowledge of the landscape of legal services available in Los Angeles County and exposure to and understanding of the issues faced by the communities we serve.

**Commitment:** 40+ hours. During the school year, we ask that volunteers commit to working in the Intake Center for 8-10 hours/week for 8-10 weeks. During certain periods, such as winter break, we may be able to accommodate schedules that include a higher number of hours per week for fewer weeks. Work must be completed during normal business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm).

**To Apply:** Email [volunteer@bettzedek.org](mailto:volunteer@bettzedek.org) or call (323) 549-5839 with any questions. Spanish language skills are highly preferred, but not required.

## WELCOME NEW & RENEWING LAPA MEMBERS

The following is a listing of legal professionals and paralegal students who joined or renewed their membership in Los Angeles Paralegal Association within the last 30 days. The employer and work telephone number also are included when available. If any information is incorrect, please fax corrections to 866-460-0506, call LAPA at 866-626-LAPA or e-mail updates to [info@lapa.org](mailto:info@lapa.org).

### VOTING

Johana Delgado	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	delgadoj@cshs.org
Neri Gallegos	Inner City Law Center	neri19gallegos@gmail.com
Ryan Kondyra	Law Offices of Angel J. Horacek, PC	ryan@horaceklaw.com
Darcy Garretson Laparra	Gilbert & Sackman	darcygarrtson@gmail.com
Christine Lord	Law Office of Anne Dowden Saxton	clord1450@gmail.com
Diana Lugo	Dyversis Group	legalresourceagent@gmail.com
Jose Angel Manaiza Jr	Beverly Hills Education	joseangelmanaizajr@alumni.ucla.edu
Matthew McPeck	AMC Networks, Inc.	matthew.mcpeck@amcnetworks.com
Lauren Moorehead	Wilshire law Firm	laurenadele1988@gmail.com
Teri Reeves	V. James DeSimone Law	teri.reeves@gmail.com
Alma Romero	Liebman, Quigley, Sheppard	almaromero225@gmail.com
Blake Williams	ESQsums	brwilliams3@gmail.com

### ASSOCIATE

Taleen Abrahamyan	Cohen & Cohen, LLP	taleenabrahamyan@gmail.com
Griselda Garcia	KYRC Autopsy Initiative	griselda@knowyourrightscamp.com
Phillipta Hicks		Prisecarp@aol.com
Lisa Rauhauser	Cal State Los Angeles	lisa@summonslegal.com
Shirley Szabo	Los Angeles Unified School District (Ret.)	shirleysends@gmail.com
Jeffrey Williams		jwilli7434@yahoo.com

### STUDENT

Isabella Akerson	UCLA	isabella.akerson@gmail.com
Rosezetta Fluker		rosezetta_fluker@yahoo.com
Patrick Maher	Copenbarger & Copenbarger LLP	patrick.maher2015@gmail.com
Christopher Paek	UCLA Extension	christopher.paek.official@gmail.com
Tabby Pawlitzki	UCLA Extension	tabepawlitzki@yahoo.com
Bodara Williams	West Los Angeles Community College	obribs8987@student.laccd.edu

### BENEFACTOR

Alicia Aquino	Aquino Trial Services	alicia@aquinotrial.com
Jennifer Myers	Aquipt	jennifer.myers@aquipt.com

**We're** → **Looking for**

**Directors**

We are looking for a talented and qualified person for our team

Send your resume to [admin@lapa.com](mailto:admin@lapa.com)

**Save BIG**  
on your monthly  
medical premium.

**Compare**  
your plan  
right now.  
It's fast, easy  
and free.

LAPA has teamed up with UIP – United Insurance Partners to offer you affordable quality insurance that addresses your health care needs in simple, easy to understand terms.

Visit LAPA's Benefits section and see the wide array of quality insurance providers now available to you through this exclusive arrangement with UIP and start saving today.



<http://lapa.healthinsurance.com/hi/>  
or call Armando at (800) 707-2360

**UIP** United Insurance Partners  
Specialists in Sponsored Insurance Programs

Insurance products are available to qualified LAPA members through United Agencies and its affiliates including UIP Insurance Services.  
CA Lic #0252636

# LOS ANGELES PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION - 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Name	Title	Employer	Office #	Email
Jonathan Dang	President	Freeman Mathis & Gary LLP	626.500.5631	jdang05@yahoo.com
Travis Chow	Executive Vice President	Collins + Collins LLP	626.243.1100	travis.chow@laverne.edu
Tony Sipp	VP of Membership & Policy	Ellis George	213.624.6900	haveasipp@gmail.com
Gina Rosales	Treasurer	Loeb & Loeb LLP	310.788.7154	treasurer@lapa.org
Jeffery Stewart	Secretary	Murchinson & Cumming LLP	213.550.5226	jeffery.m.stewart@att.net
Lee A. Paige, CP	Board Advisor	Department of Justice	323.356.4531	advisor@lapa.org
Terry Griffith Wright, ACP	Board Advisor	Dignity Health	626.744.2395	terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
Ivan Zogovic, ACP	Board Advisor	Office of California Attorney General		zogovic.ivan@gmail.com

## DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Name	Employer	Office #	Email
Don Adove	Brown White & Osborn LLP		
Isis Curiel	Athlon Legal, APC	909.914.0992	isis.s.curiel@gmail.com
Elizabeth Garcia, ACP	Alder Law, PC		elizabethgarcia9421@gmail.com
Aldo Guzman	SJL Law LLP		aldoguzman21@outlook.com
Jacqueline S. Loza, JD	Freelance Paralegal	818.392.4411	jacquelinesloza@gmail.com
Mariana Lui	Best Best & Krieger LLP	213.617.8100	mariana.s.lui@gmail.com

## SECTIONS, COMMITTEES & OTHER LAPA INFORMATION

Administrative Manager	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
Advertising	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
LAPA Pro Bono Counsel	Bethelwei Wilson, Esq.	bethelwei@gmail.com
Bankruptcy Section	Tracey Booth	info@lapa.org
Board Advisors	Lee A. Paige, CP Terry Wright, ACP	advisor@lapa.org terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
Budget & Finance Committee	Gina Rosales	treasurer@lapa.org
Compliance Committee	Elizabeth Garcia, ACP	elizabethgarcia9421@gmail.com
Corporate/Real Estate Section	Gina Rosales	treasurer@lapa.org
Corporate Sponsors	Tracey Booth	info@lapa.org
Diversity & Inclusion Section	Tony Sipp	haveasipp@gmail.com
Downtown Section	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
Editor of Reporter	Mariana Lui	mariana.s.lui@gmail.com
Employment Law Section	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
Family Law Section	Terry Wright, ACP	terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
General Information		www.lapa.org
Holiday Benefit Gala Committee	Jonathan Dang	jonathan.dang@laverne.edu
Immigration Law Section	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
IP & Franchise Section	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
Legislative Committee	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org
Litigation Chair	Elizabeth Garcia, ACP Aldo Guzman	elizabethgarcia9421@gmail.com aldoguzman21@outlook.com
Marketing Committee	Raja Gonzalez Mariana Lui	rajagonzalez1@gmail.com mariana.s.lui@gmail.com
MCLE Review Committee	Elizabeth Garcia, ACP	elizabethgarcia9421@gmail.com
Membership Committee	Tony Sipp	haveasipp@gmail.com
NALA Liaison	Elizabeth Garcia, ACP Tony Sipp	elizabethgarcia9421@gmail.com haveasipp@gmail.com
Newsletter Committee	Travis Chow Aldo Guzman Mariana Lui	travis.chow@laverne.edu aldoguzman21@outlook.com mariana.s.lui@gmail.com
Nominations & Elections Committee		admin@lapa.org
October Conference Committee	Raja Gonzalez Aldo Guzman Jeffery Stewart Terry Wright, ACP	rajagonzalez1@gmail.com aldoguzman21@outlook.com jeffery.m.stewart@att.net terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
Paralegal Certification Committee	Terry Wright, ACP	terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
Parliamentarian	Terry Wright, ACP	terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
Probate & Estate Planning Section	Gina Rosales	treasurer@lapa.org
Pro Bono & Community Services Committee	Don Adove	
San Fernando Valley Section	Mariana Lui	mariana.s.lui@gmail.com

Santa Clarita Section	Terry Wright, ACP	terry.wright@dignityhealth.org
School Liaison	Mariana Lui	mariana.s.lui@gmail.com
Spring Career Conference Committee	Travis Chow	travis.chow@laverne.edu
Technology Chair	Mariana Lui	mariana.s.lui@gmail.com
Volunteer Coordinator	Gina Rosales	treasurer@lapa.org
Westside Section	Tracey Booth	admin@lapa.org

## Save on dental care, and more

The Vital Savings by Aetna® dental discount program gives you a way to get the dental care you need *without* insurance.

Save 15 – 50 percent\* on many dental services — from cleanings to root canals, crowns and braces.

Also get discounts on:

- LASIK surgery and chiropractic care
- Contact lenses, gym memberships, over-the-counter vitamins and more

Find out more.

Visit [www.lapa.org](http://www.lapa.org) and go to the Member Benefits page.

\*Actual costs and savings may vary by provider and geographic location.

The Vital Savings by Aetna® program (the "Program") is not insurance. The Program provides members with access to discounted fees pursuant to schedules negotiated by Aetna Life Insurance Company for the Vital Savings by Aetna discount program. The Program does not make payments directly to the providers participating in the Program. Each member is obligated to pay for all services or products but will receive a discount from the providers who have contracted with the Discount Medical Plan Organization to participate in the Program. Aetna Life Insurance Company, 151 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06156, is the Discount Medical Plan Organization.

Discount program information is subject to change.

39.12.301.1 (11/09)

©2009 Aetna Inc.





Los Angeles  
 Paralegal Association  
 P.O. Box 452354  
 Los Angeles, CA 90045  
 Telephone (866)626-LAPA  
 Fax (866)460-0506

LOS ANGELES PARALEGAL  
 ASSOCIATION

Invites You To

WRITE FOR OUR  
 NEWSLETTER!

Students, paralegals, everyone!  
 We want you to write for the  
 Los Angeles Paralegal  
 Association newsletter! Email  
[admin@lapa.org](mailto:admin@lapa.org) for more info.

