

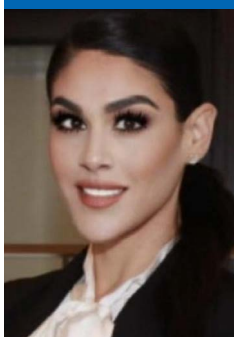
IN REVIEW...

- 1 **Women In Legal Tech:**
The Power of Innovation, Intuition, and Influence
- 1 **President's Message:**
Listen, Empathize & Work Together
- 5 **The Inside Biz I:**
Conquering Age Discrimination: Turning Experience into Power
- 5 **LAPA MCLE Series:**
Evidence Preservation & Modern Investigation Technique
- 12 **In The Time of COVID-19:**
Looking Forward Despite COVID-19
- 12 **LAPA Reading Corner:**
Shoot Like a Girl: One Woman's Dramatic Fight in Afghanistan and on the Home Front
- 13 **Paralegal Perspectives:**
A Glance Into Their Lives
Samantha Burns
- 16 **LAPA's Crossword Puzzle:** *Complete the March Crossword Puzzle & Meet Some AmazingWomen!!*
- 17 **California State Law Updates:** *California Code of Civil Procedure Update*
- 18 **The Inside Biz II:**
Paralegal Trends 2025
- 20 **Women In Legal: An Interview With The Honorable Elizabeth Allen White (Ret.)**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| Calendar of Events | 3 |
| NALA Certification Ad | 4 |
| Newsletter Submission Ad | 4/39 |
| LAPA Career Center Info | 4/23 |
| LAPA Newsletter Advertising Ad | 11 |
| LAPA Crossword Puzzle Answer Key | 23 |
| CASA Essential History Program Ad | 28-29 |
| LAPA Diversity & Equality Statement | 30 |
| Freelance Paralegal Listing Flyer | 30 |
| NALA/College of the Canyons CP Ad | 31 |
| LAPA MCLE Seminar Ad | 32 |
| LAPA Happy Hour Mixer Ad | 33 |
| Public Counsel Run For Justice Ad | 34 |
| LAPA Members Only Benefit Ad | 35 |
| Bet Tzedek Volunteers Flyer | 36 |
| LAPA's New & Renewing Members | 37 |
| LAPA Member Benefit Health Insurance | 37 |
| LAPA Board of Directors | 38 |
| Sections, Committees & Other LAPA Info. | 38 |
| LAPA Member Benefit Dental Insurance | 38 |

WOMEN IN LEGAL TECH



The Power of Innovation, Intuition, and Influence

by Fabiola Garcia

INTRODUCTION

March is Women's History Month—a time to celebrate the resilience, leadership, and contributions of women across industries. In the legal profession, women have not only played an integral role in shaping justice but are now at the forefront of an evolving technological revolution. As artificial intelligence (AI) and automation transform legal work, female paralegals are uniquely positioned to lead this shift by combining tech expertise with the irreplaceable power of human intuition.

With women making up **over 85% of the paralegal workforce**, their influence in shaping the legal field is undeniable. Whether as legal professionals, tech innovators, or mothers balancing multiple roles, women are driving efficiency and inclusivity in an industry undergoing rapid change. *continued on page 2*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Listen, Empathize & Work Together

by Travis Chow – LAPA President

As 2025 rolls on, there is a feeling that we are more divided than united. Social, political, and cultural differences seem to drive a wedge between people, making it harder to find common ground. We all need to take a deep breath, and in these moments of division, it's important to remember that our strength lies in our ability to listen, empathize, and work together despite our differences. While we may never agree on larger issues, we can still respect one another's perspectives and find shared values that bring us closer. Unity doesn't mean we must agree on everything—it means coming together to support one another, collaborate, and focus on our collective well-being. True progress and success are born when we set aside what divides us and instead work toward solutions that benefit us all.

Coming up this month we have an MCLE on Traumatic Brain Injury, a happy hour social mixer, and our Run for Justice 5k event at Dodger Stadium to

continued on page 3

AI AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PARALEGAL PROFESSION

The integration of AI in legal processes is revolutionizing tasks such as legal research, contract analysis, and case management. AI-powered tools like e-discovery software and automated document review systems are enhancing efficiency, but they also raise concerns about job displacement.

However, studies show that AI is **more likely to augment legal jobs rather than replace them**. The World Economic Forum predicts that automation will **create more jobs than it eliminates**, emphasizing the need for human oversight in legal decision-making. This means paralegals who embrace legal tech will remain indispensable.

WOMEN LEADING THE CHARGE IN LEGAL TECH

Historically, women have excelled in roles requiring analytical thinking, strong communication, and emotional intelligence—skills that remain irreplaceable despite advancements in AI. Across the legal industry, women are driving change by integrating technology into their workflows while ensuring ethical considerations remain at the forefront.

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LAPA REPORTER

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Articles and news items should be directed to LAPA at editor@lapa.org. Inquiries about making a submission should be directed to LAPA at info@lapa.org.

Inquiries about advertising placement, applications, membership materials and address changes should be directed to LAPA at admin@lapa.org.

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

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Some notable female leaders in legal tech include:

- **Miriam Rivera**, co-founder of Palo Alto-based **Ulu Ventures**, leveraging AI-driven insights for legal investments.
- **Nicole Bradick**, CEO of **Theory and Principle**, creating tech solutions for legal accessibility.
- **Patricia Wenskunas**, founder of **Crime Survivors**, using technology to advocate for victims' rights.

In Los Angeles, many members of the Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) are adopting AI-powered research tools and legal automation to increase efficiency and accessibility in legal services.

THE POWER OF WOMEN'S INTUITION IN A TECH-DRIVEN LEGAL WORLD

While AI can process vast amounts of data, it lacks human judgment, ethical reasoning, and emotional intelligence—qualities that women, especially mothers, often excel in. A **2023 McKinsey report** found that companies with higher female leadership outperform in areas of ethical decision-making and client relations, reinforcing the value of women's intuition in legal practice.

Whether reviewing contracts, analyzing case strategy, or advising clients, paralegals bring an **intuitive ability to assess risks, read between the lines, and advocate for justice** in ways technology simply cannot replicate.

HOW FEMALE PARALEGALS CAN STAY AHEAD IN THE DIGITAL AGE

To thrive in the evolving legal landscape, women should focus on:

- **Developing Tech Proficiency** – Certifications in AI-powered legal research, e-discovery, and automation tools enhance career prospects.
- **Strengthening Human Skills** – Communication, negotiation, and ethical reasoning remain key differentiators.
- **Leveraging Networks** – Organizations like **LAPA** provide mentorship, tech training, and leadership opportunities for women in law.
- **Advocating for Inclusive Legal Tech** – Women must have a voice in shaping how AI is integrated into the legal system to ensure diversity, fairness, and ethical AI use.

continued on page 3

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- 5- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Travis Chow at president@lapa.org.
- 6- **MCLE: LAPA Traumatic Brain Injury** – Online via Zoom; 12:00-1:00 PM; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-6061596> for updates, more information & to register.
- 6- **LAPA Happy Hour** – Sheraton Grand, DTLA; 6:00-8:00 PM; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-6075064> for updates, more information & to register.

- 12 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Travis Chow at president@lapa.org.
- 15- **Join Team LAPA at Public Counsel - Run For Justice** – Dodger Stadium; 8:00 AM; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-6070002> for updates, more information & to register.

APRIL

- 2- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Travis Chow at president@lapa.org.
- 9 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Travis Chow at president@lapa.org.

WOMEN IN LEGAL TECH - cont. from page 2

CONCLUSION

Women have always played a critical role in the legal profession, and today, they are leading its technological transformation. By embracing AI while reinforcing their irreplaceable human skills, female paralegals are not only securing their roles but redefining the future of legal services.


As we celebrate Women's History Month, let's recognize the resilience, intelligence, and leadership of women in legal tech—especially those right here in Los Angeles. **The future of law isn't just digital—it's female.**

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Fabiola Garcia is a Southern California-based paralegal, aspiring attorney, and legal tech advocate redefining the modern legal landscape. With a background in compliance, corporate audits, and legal support, she helps solo practitioners integrate technology for greater efficiency. As a first-generation immigrant, autism advocate, and mother, she understands the power of innovation in creating flexible and sustainable careers for women in law. Passionate about international law and legal accessibility, Fabiola is committed to empowering professionals—especially mothers—to harness legal tech for success. 

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - cont. from page 1

support Public Counsel. Also, watch out for additional educational and social events!

Women's History Month is a time to celebrate and honor the incredible contributions of women throughout history. Recognized every March, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and struggles of women who have shaped society in fields such as politics, science, art, education, and beyond. The month also highlights the ongoing journey for gender equality, acknowledging the challenges women continue to face. It is a time to educate others about the historical, cultural, and societal impacts women have made and to inspire future generations to continue their legacies.

If you're interested in contributing to the LAPA Reporter, we'd love to hear from you! Also, if there's something specific, you'd like to see from us, don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can make a meaningful impact!

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. Shatford 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. 



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

Conquering Age Discrimination: Turning Experience into Power

by Chere B. Estrin – CEO Estrin Legal Staffing

The Charley Lesson: When Experience Speaks Louder Than Age

Charley had spent his career commanding authority, making critical decisions, and leading with confidence. His experience had shaped his reputation as a leader. But after retirement, he found himself in an unexpected position: working as a greeter at Walmart. He didn't need the job, but he

enjoyed the sense of purpose and interaction. He greeted customers with warmth, embodying the same discipline and professionalism that had defined his previous career.

However, over time, Charley began arriving late. His young manager, noticing the trend, decided to address the issue. Speaking in a slow, patronizing tone, he asked, "Charley, what would your previous job say if you kept showing up late?"

Charley smirked, pausing before responding, "They'd say, 'Good morning, Admiral. Would you like a cup of coffee?'"

The manager turned red with embarrassment. He had assumed Charley was just another elderly man with little to offer, not realizing he was addressing a retired admiral, a man who had commanded fleets, managed crises, and built an impressive career on leadership and strategic thinking. *continued on page 6*

LAPA MCLE SERIES



Evidence Preservation & Modern Investigation Technique

by Don Adove – LAPA Secretary


We're a bit behind schedule with our MCLE series, but it kicked off with an outstanding discussion on preserving evidence and modern investigation techniques. Vladimir Schkolkin, a Senior Forensic Expert at YA Engineering Services, led the presentation.

The presentation emphasized how crucial advanced investigation techniques are to affecting the outcome of cases, particularly focusing on motor vehicle accidents. Since most evidence can easily be altered or destroyed, preserving it is the top priority for successfully recreating scenarios to understand how incidents occur.

With the advent of new equipment featuring modern technology, many vehicles now have security features that record data during accidents, such as airbag deployment, VCH cameras, dash cams, GPS, and more. These offer first-hand data on vehicle performance. Additionally, external sources like security cameras from nearby establishments, doorbell cameras, and body cameras worn by first responders can also provide valuable data. However, original recordings must be produced to ensure accurate results.

Beyond these, physics-based animations and digital event recreations, supported by proper evidence collection and investigation, allow experts like Vladimir to construct detailed, accurate, and easily understandable accident reconstructions. These are invaluable to lawyers, judges, and jurors.

If you're interested in learning more about topics like this, join us for our next MCLE series, coming soon.

Don Adove is a Paralegal at Kennedys CMK LLP, Los Angeles office and is the Secretary of LAPA. His previous experiences include working as a Litigation Paralegal for a boutique law firm combining with his brief backgrounds in corporate and family law. He graduated in 2021 earning his Certificate in Paralegal Studies from UCLA Extension. He is a recipient of Relativity Fest scholar in 2024, and earned his RelativityOne Review Pro certification as recent addition to his achievement. 

The lesson? Experience, leadership, and competence do not diminish with age. The legal profession, built on precedent, wisdom, and expertise, should be the last place where age discrimination thrives—yet, ironically, it does. Recognizing and overcoming these biases is key to staying relevant and advancing your career.

The Silent Challenge: Age Discrimination in the Legal Field

It is a paradox that the legal profession, a field built on precedent, wisdom, and institutional knowledge, would also be one where age discrimination is quietly taking root. Unlike other industries where seniority commands respect, the legal profession often prioritizes fresh talent, fast-paced adaptability, and cultural fit. Many seasoned attorneys, paralegals, and legal professionals find themselves sidelined as firms seek younger, tech-savvy hires who, in their eyes, better match the industry's evolving demands.

Discrimination isn't always blatant. It can be subtle, like being overlooked for high-profile cases or finding that networking opportunities start to dry up. Sometimes, it appears in hiring decisions, where experienced candidates are told they are "overqualified." Other times, it manifests in casual conversations where partners joke about keeping up with the times or suggest that a more senior attorney should consider retirement. Often, seasoned professionals find themselves passed over for promotions, dismissed as "too expensive," or subtly encouraged to step aside for younger, supposedly more "dynamic" colleagues. While the bias may not always be overt, the impact is real. Understanding the warning signs is the first step in countering them.

Here are the key signs of age discrimination:

1. **Job rejections without explanation** — You have the credentials, the experience, and the track record, yet you keep getting passed over for younger candidates.
2. **Overemphasis on 'cultural fit'** — Hiring managers stress the importance of a "young thinking and dynamic culture," which may be code for preferring younger employees.
3. **Lack of promotion opportunities** — Junior colleagues receive promotions, while you remain in the same role despite your experience and contributions.

4. **Pressure to retire** — You notice subtle (or not-so-subtle) hints about your retirement plans, as if your experience and contribution mean nothing and you are expected to step aside.

Conversely, you may also be showing signs that you are out-of-date because you:

- Use AOL, MSN, Earthlink, Hotmail, Yahoo
- Are seen using a typewriter instead of a computer or writing in a 3-ring binder (really)
- Are only marginally aware of social media
- Don't pay attention to much of the news, let alone what is happening in your specialty
- No social media skills.

5. **You draw attention to being out-of-date using these expressions:**

- It's so gay
- Back in the day
- When I was younger
- Man up
- Bless your heart
- Having a senior moment
- You people (which can be discriminatory)
- Real men/women don't
- That's what the internet is for
- Work smarter, not harder
- Boys will be boys
- You can't handle the truth
- You're just young. You'll learn
- Don't worry, be happy
- Life isn't fair
- You're too sensitive
- Those were the good old days
- That's just the way things are
- Get over it
- Everything happens for a reason
- Snap out of it!
- Stewardess
- Lousy
- Slacks

continued on page 7

- Pocketbook
- World Wide Web
- Stoked
- Pad
- Bust a gut
- Bummer
- Hang loose
- Heavy
- Spilt
- Out to lunch
- Veg out
- Talk to the hand
- Not!
- Yada yada yada
- You go, girl!
- Da bomb
- My bad

Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward addressing and overcoming them.

How to Avoid Becoming a Target of Age Discrimination

While you can't always control bias, you can control how you present yourself. By staying proactive and positioning yourself as an indispensable asset, you ensure that your experience is recognized as a strength rather than a liability. Here's how:

1. Stay current on technology

Legal employers expect attorneys and legal professionals to be proficient with modern legal research tools, AI-based contract review platforms, and case management software, billing and other tools.

Signs you are technologically out-of-date:

1. Don't be computer pathetic! Anything technologically related and your answer is, "I am much better on substantive issues." No! Those substantive issues most likely involve some kind of technology.
2. Get with the latest trend such as AI. Don't be one of those saying "Those young people will

never know how to use a book, and do it the hard way. They have an easy way out." Have you considered that maybe it's no longer necessary to "do it the hard way"? They may be able to write the codes. Can you?

Instead:

- Take online courses focused on legal technology. Plenty are free. You can get on websites such as Relativity (a popular litigation support software) and take free tutorials. Missing the most popular platform is certain to hinder a positive perception about you.
- Attend conferences to stay ahead of emerging trends. Legal Tech, ILTA and other conferences are specifically aimed at legal technology.
- Obtain certifications in relevant legal tech, such as eDiscovery and AI-powered case analysis.
- Ask a colleague to train you or attend onboarding classes.
- Have the firm dip into its professional development budget and spend a little money on you. It's the least they can do.

2. Refresh your resume and LinkedIn Profile

Your resume and LinkedIn profile should reflect impact, not just years of experience. Showcase your ability to adapt and lead in today's legal landscape.

- Eliminate outdated skills and highlight relevant expertise. I can't imagine why listing faxing or WordPerfect as skills on your resume would be relevant in today's job environment. It's as bad as saying you know DOS. (Remember DOS?)
- Focus on measurable results rather than decades of service. Instead of saying, "What do you mean? I have 20 years doing this!" You might say, "By using the Acme platform, I was able to get three million pages of old insurance policies produced in two weeks rather than relying on old software that would have taken six weeks."
- Avoid listing jobs older than 15-20 years unless highly relevant. Going past 20 years, you might list those jobs under "Relevant Positions" without the dates.

continued on page 8

3. Modernize your communication style

Language matters. Your ability to communicate effectively in today's legal world will impact on how you are perceived.

- Use current legal terminology and industry jargon fluently.
- Speak with confidence about new legal trends and practices.
- Don't like working with a younger generation because you feel you know more than they do? Maybe not. Learn to be collaborative. Say things like, "I didn't know that. Tell me about it."

4. Don't interview like a "person of a certain age".

Stop:

- Fumbling with technology like Zoom or Teams. Specifically not taking off yourself off mute when you sign on. Employers hate to see you try to get the sound on when the meeting starts.
- Assuming experience makes you a shoo-in
- Mentioning your age or personal life
- Treating younger interviewers as immature
- Bragging about understanding modern technology

Understand the fears of hiring a "mature worker":

1. Fear of hiring somebody with 30-40 years of experience: they're *not going to be coachable*.
2. Conquer those misunderstandings by using in your examples a time when you learned something from a colleague, especially a younger colleague.
3. Talk about what "we" would be doing.

The best places for "certain age" workers to find employment or move up the ladder are *smaller or mid-size firms or small in-house legal departments*. Look for someone who wants you. These employment opportunities are better because there is less competition, they hire quicker. The chances of winning the fight against big firms are not as successful.

5. Network across generations

Building relationships with professionals of all ages demonstrates adaptability and relevance.

- Engage with younger attorneys, legal professionals and paralegals to bridge generational gaps.
- Join mentorship programs to share your expertise while also learning from younger colleagues.
- Attend networking events that attract professionals from diverse career stages.

6. Know how to answer discriminatory questions such as:

- "How do you feel about everyone here being younger than you?" (This is an actual question asked by a Managing Partner to a 56-year-old candidate, a known expert in her field.)
 - o Answer: "If what you are asking is, "Do I have the energy for the job, the answer is yes." A red flag just went up.
 - o If you are working with younger colleagues:
 - Don't say you can teach them.
 - Don't tell them how you did it "before".
 - Mention you have worked with someone younger and give an example.
 - Put them at ease and don't be condescending.
- How long before you retire?
 - o Answer: "If what you are asking is, "Am I here for the long haul, the answer is "yes".

Always understand what is behind the question. They don't care how you feel about being older and working with younger people. They care whether you can keep up.

7. Recognize bias before you get trapped. People sometimes think that "people of a certain age":

- Have no energy: You are all about low billable hours, too many doctors' appointments and are a 9 to 5er.
- Are just at work until Medicare kicks in and the 401k vests.
- Have gone as far as possible with no further ambition or motivation.
- Are just coasting – here for the benefits.
- Refuse all overtime. Bedtime is 7pm.

continued on page 9

8. Talk the talk. Project an image of energy.

- People start to discuss their ailments at around the age of 50, thinking everyone else will relate. Do not discuss disabilities. It's so easy to complain about your back, that your knees hurt, that body parts that are sagging.....
- Be able to quote sources.
- Talk about:
 - A continuing legal education webinar you took
 - What you did over the weekend: swam, ran, hiked, golfed, played tennis or pickleball, coached Little League, went bowling
 - A non-fiction or popular book you just read
 - Your workout
 - An activity showing how alive you are in the community

9. Invest in Continuous Learning

- Adaptability is key. The most successful legal professionals stay informed and continually update their skill sets.
- Participate in Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses in emerging practice areas. If your firm will not advance the funds, give up your Starbucks. It's the right investment.
- Stay involved in industry organizations and legal forums.
- Be open to feedback and demonstrate a willingness to adapt to evolving trends.
- Teach or write. It's the old: if you teach it, you must know it.

You are told you are "overqualified" which may be code for "you're too old". Smile and say:

- "Actually, here's the good thing. You get an employee who doesn't have to be trained, who can step right in and do the job."
- "I get a job I have always wanted. It's no longer about the title. It's about having a job that fulfills you."
- "I want to work and continue. Money is secondary."

- "This is a tight candidate market. I can help."
- "I have always wanted to work for "Giggle, Wiggle and Sniggle because..."
- "I will get more involvement. More/less travel. Access to the latest technology."
- "Yes! I do have experience! Hiring/promoting me is great for you because I understand what it takes to be successful."
- You learn easily. "Quick Learner" is your middle name.
- Ask older employees for advice based on their experience.
- Understand the ideal older employee. Don't disqualify them because you think their intelligence has been drained as they age. While some do remain computer pathetic, most do not. Afterall, it was their generation that invented or improved upon computers.
- Do realize that appearances matter. Get rid of those glasses from the '80's.
- Get yourself out there. Volunteer for roles that convey seniority and leadership.

Facing Harsh Realities: The Legal Job Market Is Competitive

Statistics don't lie:

- 74% of job candidates over 40 report experiencing age-related challenges.
- It can take 75-100 resumes to land a single interview, even in a tight candidate market.
- On average, candidates must go through 5-10 interviews before receiving an offer.
- Don't blame age discrimination if you are tracking the norm.

Are you discouraged and want to sue? That's not always the best strategy. It's hard to prove. Talk with a lawyer if you feel you have a case. Instead, consider using strong strategies. Anger and depression equals a waste of time. You do not have the power to change the market.

continued on page 10

Why Your Job Search or Promotion Efforts May Be Failing

If you're struggling to land a new role or move up the ranks, take an honest look at these common missteps:

1. **Your cover letter is outdated or generic** – Using an uninspired, formulaic template will not get you noticed.
2. **Your resume is a history lesson instead of selling points.** Cut excessive details and focus on your most impactful contributions. I frequently see resumes going back to 1986. Understand that's 40 years ago and its relevancy is long gone.
3. **You're over-reliant on online applications.** Networking remains the most effective way to land new opportunities. Look at it this way: your colleagues know before HR that someone in the firm may be leaving, and that role is going to need to be filled. It may as well be you.

If you're not advancing in your current role, consider these reasons:

1. **You haven't evolved.** Doing the same job year after year without visible upward movement signals stagnation.
2. **Your appearance feels outdated.** While unfair, first impressions matter. Stop looking like your grandmother but at the same time, don't try to be overly hip. Pay attention to details as seemingly innocuous as what style glasses you are wearing.
3. **You haven't invested in professional development.** Staying relevant is non-negotiable. Sure, you know all about personal injury. But are you aware of the new legislation passed two years ago? Are you operating on outdated premises?

People with high profiles rarely get turned away. You are too valuable and all law firms like employees with "stars on their doors". On the other hand, you may hear that you are "overqualified". Maybe you are, however, "overqualified" may be a code word for "old". Employers may feel that you are going to demand a larger salary and have one foot out the door. They also may mistakenly believe something must be wrong if you are taking less money or lower title.

Here's the flip side of the age-discrimination challenge: if you know what business pain you solve and can talk to hiring managers or partners about that pain, they can't afford to care how old you are. Stop whining and spitting out "please-like-me" attributes that no manager can evaluate. You can talk about something far more important.

Pain Probing. That important something is the business pain, the excruciating and expensive business problem that justifies the new person or position in the first place. If there's no pain, there's no new hire, no move up the ladder.

Get your manager talking about what's really going on behind the scenes. You'll find that the quality of the conversation shifts dramatically. Here's the perfect opportunity to allow your experience and recent continuing legal education work for you.

Suddenly, you're a trusted advisor, a consultant digging to learn more about what's not working. Ask questions about the processes, the obstacles in a manager's way and the thorny problems they've seen before in similar situations. This will vault you to a higher level of conversation, one that is much more valuable and memorable. Pain conversations aren't a cure for age discrimination, but it'll give you a focus and an edge that will make discrimination a non-factor in your quest to improve your career.

The legal profession values intelligence, adaptability, and leadership, traits that only grow stronger with experience. By staying relevant, engaged, and proactive, you can make age discrimination a non-factor in your career. Remember: it's not about how many years you've worked; it's about how much value you continue to bring to the table.

Chere Estrin is CEO of Estrin Legal Staffing, and President of the Organization of Legal Professionals. Chere was recently interviewed by CBS News, The Wall Street Journal, ALM, Fortune Magazine, Forbes.com, and others. She has been named One of the Top 50 Women Leaders in Los Angeles and written 10 books on legal careers, hundreds of articles, and interviewed for media outlets as the Los Angeles Times, Chicago Trib, Newsweek, Entrepreneur, and more. Chere is a Co-Founding Member of the International Practice Management Association (IPMA) and a Los Angeles Paralegal Association Lifetime Achievement Recipient and Los Angeles/Century City Women of Achievement Award. She is a finalist for the Inc. Magazine Entrepreneur of the Year award. Chere is a former administrator in an AmLaw 100 firm and Sr. Vice President in a \$5 billion company. Her latest book: Power Plays for Legal Professionals: Strategies to Propel Your Career Forward is out soon. She can be reached at Chere@EstrinLegalStaffing.com Blog: @EstrinReport.com

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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. March brings Women’s History Month and resources for finding and offering help for the Pacific Palisades and Eaton wildfire survivors.



EXPRESS YOUR CREATIVITY AT A ZINE WORKSHOP

The California African American Museum will host a zine-making workshop celebrating Women’s History Month with AbleARTS Work. The workshop occurs on Saturday, March 22, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm at the museum at the corner of Figueroa Street and Exposition Boulevard, just west of the 110 Freeway. The event is free, but reservations are required - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/zine-workshop-womens-history-month-tickets-1256894939599>.



HIKE WITH STRONG WOMEN ON THE TRAIL

The Women of Wellness will hold a Women’s History Month hike on the Mount Hollywood Trail to celebrate strength, resilience, and community. The free hike happens on Saturday, March 15, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, starting at 2840 W Observatory Road in Los Angeles. To reserve a spot, sign up at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/womens-history-month-group-hike-celebrating-strong-women-on-the-trail-tickets-1258525998139>.


FEATURES



CONTINUING RESOURCES FOR WILDFIRE AIDE

Though the wildfires have been extinguished, aid and opportunities to help fellow Angelenos are still available. Local public radio station KCRW (89.9 on the FM dial) has a webpage updated regularly with new resources as the station gathers more information. See that webpage here: <https://www.kcrw.com/news/shows/kcrw-features/wildfire-aid-shelter-insurance-mental-health>.

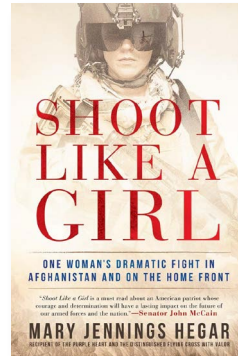
For wildfire donations and volunteering, see this webpage, which has also been updated: <https://www.kcrw.com/news/shows/kcrw-features/wildfire-help-donate-volunteer>.

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


LAPA READING CORNER

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

by Deena Bowman



Shoot Like a Girl: One Woman's Dramatic Fight in Afghanistan and on the Home Front by Mary Jennings Hegar

In Mary Jennings Hegar’s memoir *Shoot Like a Girl: One Woman’s Dramatic Fight in Afghanistan and on the Home Front*, the reader is swept up in her determined journey to earn her wings as a pilot. After surviving a harrowing medevac mission in Afghanistan as part of an Air National Guard rescue, Hegar’s next challenge would be as a plaintiff in an ACLU lawsuit arguing that the Combat Exclusion Policy (barring women from direct combat) was unconstitutional. 

2017, 292 Pages, New American Library, \$20.00, softcover. Also available for checkout from the Los Angeles Public Library in book, eBook & eAudiobook.



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.

Samantha Burns

**Litigation Paralegal at
Marjiya Law PC - a plaintiff side
personal injury law firm in Altadena**

A DAY IN THE LIFE

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

My typical day is to be prepared for potential IT issues, managing the tasks in the pre-litigation side of things. However, we recently were impacted by the Eaton Canyon Fire where we lost our law firm and it was burnt down to the ground. So my typical day now has been working on tasks that are geared towards rebuilding the law firm from the ground up, such as administrative tasks, paralegal tasks, and case management tasks.

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?

I usually get my cup of coffee first because I can not start my day without a cup. Once I have my cup of coffee, I tend to go over my to-do lists and the overall to-do list I try to figure out which is the priority and pick the top five main priorities that absolutely must be done by the end of the day. This sets an easier and more manageable flow for me, especially now.

CAREER INSIGHTS

What inspired you to become a paralegal? Was there a defining moment or person that influenced your career choice?

I actually originally did not want to be working in the field of law because my dad is an attorney and he seemed very well known in the legal community. I did not want to be in his shadow. However, when I was volunteering with NSLA in Pomona Superior Courthouse's self help center, it turned out that I was very good with documents and helping people with their legal issues. That is where I started my paralegal career and I still strive to show that a deaf paralegal is just as great as another paralegal who isn't deaf.

What's the most rewarding part of being a paralegal? Can you share a specific example?

My time off, after working so hard to make sure everything is in order. I've been rewarded from time to time when I've decided to give up my free time and ensured that everything is covered and done. So when I get extra days off, it feels rewarding to me. Another rewarding part of being a paralegal is that I'm at least helping people in matters that would have otherwise overwhelmed them.

COMPENSATION

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

I am on the low end of the salary range for our field and always have been. I work in a very small law firm. My experience is that in larger firms, where you have more personalities, the salary tends to be on the higher end of the spectrum. So it's a preference thing in terms of what size and type of office you want to work in.

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?

I suggest getting certifications, higher degrees, actual experience, even by volunteering in self help centers, and investing time into improving your skill sets. Those are what I believe benefit people.

CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS

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

The most challenging case I've worked on was a fraud case where the evidence was so muddy. I was representing the Defendants. We managed to get the Plaintiff to dismiss Defendants one by one. It narrowed down to the main Defendant and we were in court, fighting over financials. I pointed out a minor detail that most people overlooked, which was that the Plaintiff had taken lavish European trips. I simply asked, "Why?" The amount of money was equal to how much the trips cost.

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

I had noticed that an opposing counsel kept trying to hide the contact information of the people who

continued on page 14

created and designed the ball pit of a gymnastic place that our client had injured themselves in. I kept pressing on that information and finally in a hearing totally not related to discovery disputes, the opposing counsel told the judge in front of my attorney that she HAD the information. Judge ordered her to share it with us. We end up settling that case far more than what we expected to settle it for.

SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Resourcefulness, adaptability, and emotional control. I will admit that I lacked emotional control from 2019 to 2024. I had experienced a lot of frustrations of being a baby paralegal with no mentor and no teacher. So I had to learn how to do my job on the fly and by looking up resources and applying what I studied in the program into real life applications. It was a huge challenge. I ended up losing my hearing entirely when my cochlear implant failed during my time as President of LAPA. That was a whole other can of worms. But my resourcefulness and adaptability was already developed over the years of having to learn how to do my job properly and as efficiently as possible. Emotional control is something I'm currently still working on and I'm in a much better place than I was before. I'm usually a lot calmer and more level headed than before.

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

I have done the Legal Technology Society courses and that has helped me in dealing with eDiscovery and legal technology issues, especially in a small law firm.

TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

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

I am the firm's go-to person for any technological issues. I will say that any program that you can master is indispensable. But my main go-to is the customized coded case management software we have right now that has been converted to cloud format. That customized system handles almost everything a lot of paid case management systems do. There are drawbacks to having our own customized one, such as the IT support is just me.

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

I highly recommend making full use of the Microsoft bundle, including To Do, Outlook, Calendar, and Word. You can download legal apps that help generate court dates and templates. It's good when you're getting familiar with management skills and technology, and makes it easier for you to adapt to any technology provided.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

How do you balance the demands of your job with your personal life? Do you have any tips for maintaining a healthy work-life balance?

I try to keep my weekends non negotiable as my time off, unless it's an absolute emergency. I try to take a vacation once or twice a year and give myself more time to decompress. Sometimes it doesn't happen like that, and I try to just finish the work demands and go back to my time off. You have to create boundaries when you first start. If you set boundaries, you will be in a better shape to have a healthy work-life balance.

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

I would suggest finding a chance to do volunteer work with a non-profit organization that provides legal services to obtain some hands-on experience from the get go, as you start your paralegal education. I would also suggest that you find a mentor as soon as possible. Do not try to do everything on your own. I wish I had found someone to be my mentor from day one because then all this would have been a lot easier on me.

ADVICE FOR NEW PARALEGALS

What advice would you give to someone just starting out as a paralegal? Is there something you wish you had known when you began your career?

I would suggest finding a chance to do volunteer work with a non-profit organization that provides legal services to obtain some hands-on experience from the get go, as you start your paralegal education. I would also suggest that you find a mentor as soon as possible. Do not try to do everything on your own. I wish I had found someone to be my mentor from day one because then all this would have been a lot easier on me.

continued on page 15

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

I see cockiness, or rather the better term would be over-confidence, to be a common mistake some new paralegals make. Humble down a bit more and be open minded to more experienced paralegals when they're trying to teach you.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

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

I had noticed that there was an inconsistency in the story of how a car accident happened so I started to act it out to try to figure out the locations of the injuries. The client just happened to walk in on me with my attorney and I just went "Oh hi, could you remind me where in the back it hurts and what's the scale of the pain?" The client was so embarrassed at being caught by me in the misunderstanding of where his back injury was.

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

I actually picked up a phone call before I lost my hearing entirely (I have my hearing back with a new implant processor). On that phone call, the client was angry at my co-worker for a misunderstanding and told me "NO. YOU LISTEN HERE." and proceed to go on this long rant about the situation. Towards the end of the whole phone call, he repeated his phone number once and asked me, "Is there anything else?" I calmly replied, "Sir, I'm deaf." My phone at the time was on max volume so EVERYONE in the office heard it. There had been awkward silence before the guy went "OKAY THEN - HERE'S MY NUMBER-" And as soon as he said the last digit, he just hung up. I remarked loudly, "Suuuuure, let's not make sure the deaf paralegal got the number riiiiight." It made my entire firm laugh that day.

FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

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

I see the role of paralegals shifting into a more supportive role for the entire firm in the sense of AIs, technology, and management over a case in place of an attorney, while still under the supervision of an attorney.

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

I would like to see better treatment of paralegals from everyone else. Kudos to those who have amazing attorneys. But I wish to see more paralegals knowing their value and worth and leaving the toxic places when it's really affecting their mental health and emotional health.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

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

I would have set up more boundaries with my current firm to ensure that I did not enter a period of uncertainty, leaving me questioning if I was cut out to be a paralegal. I also wished that I had sought out therapy earlier, because that is what helped me figure out where I was mentally and what I was able to do.

What motivates you to keep going on tough days? Do you have a personal mantra or source of inspiration?

I'm a HUGE King Arthur nerd. I have a King Arthur from Fate: Grand Order series figure on my desk. I have his brother, Sir Kay (my favorite knight by the way) on my desk as well. I remember some of the morals of King Arthur and his Round Table Knights. But I relate more to Sir Kay because Sir Kay in his legends was what a paralegal is to an attorney, but as the person who helped manage and run the country to his brother, King Arthur.

Samantha Burns is a Paralegal Manager at Marjiya Law PC, located currently in West Covina, CA. Samantha is a deaf professional who has been a paralegal since 2019 and completed the Paralegal Program at MTSAC in 2019. Samantha has done mostly Personal Injury law but has ventured into other fields of law, such as Lemon Law, Real Estate, and many more. 🏠

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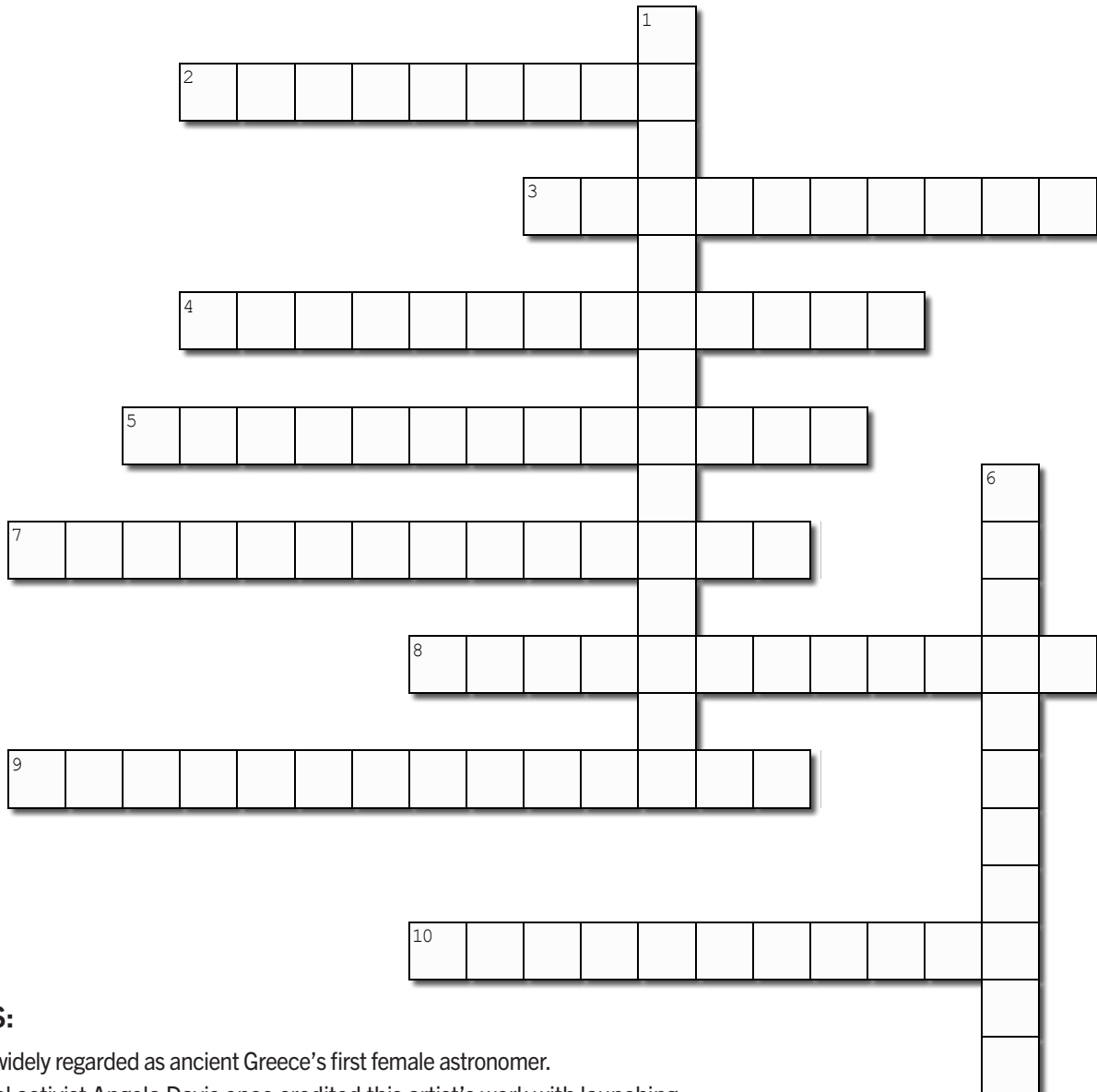
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Women's Herstory Month Crossword Puzzle

Complete the March crossword puzzle below and meet some amazing women!!



ACROSS:

2. She is widely regarded as ancient Greece's first female astronomer.
3. Political activist Angela Davis once credited this artist's work with launching the Black Women's Movement.
4. A French researcher who made improvements to car tires.
5. She developed an external metal staircase in 1887, which was considered the first-ever fire escape in the world.
7. She invented probably one of the most essential garments in any woman's life, none other than the bra.
8. The inventor of the compiler that could translate written language into computer code.
9. A Depression-era photojournalist who is best known for her piercing and emotional photographs of migrant workers and families.
10. Famous American chef who demystified French cooking.

DOWN:

1. The hostess of a salon in Paris where Matisse, Picasso, Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and many more would meet.
6. An American civil rights activist, journalist, and educator dedicated to the cause of racial equality.

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 23



California Code of Civil Procedure Update

by Kevin Cazares, CP – LAPA Newsletter Committee

As of January 1, 2025, Assembly Bill No. 2049 has amended Section 437c of the California Code of Civil Procedure, introducing new deadlines and procedural rules that impact how summary judgment motions are handled in court. These changes affect motion deadlines, successive motion filings, and briefing limitations.

In 2024, the State Senate Judiciary Committee noted that the bill would extend the timeline for filing motions for summary judgment and oppositions, providing courts with more time to review and consider them. The law also limits parties to a single motion for summary judgment unless they can demonstrate good cause and prohibits introducing new evidence or facts for the first time in a reply brief.

According to legislative history, the Senate Rules Committee sought to expand the timeframes for

filing oppositions to summary judgment motions and replies to those oppositions, recognizing that judges often had insufficient time to properly evaluate these critical motions.

The key changes under AB 2049 include:

1. An extended deadline for filing a motion for summary judgment or summary adjudication.
2. Increased the deadlines for filing an opposition and a reply before the hearing.
3. Prohibits a party from filing more than one motion for summary judgment against an adverse party without leave of court.
4. Prohibits the introduction of new facts in a reply brief to an opposition to a motion for summary judgment.

AB 2049 was supported by the California Judges Association, the California Defense Counsel, and the Conference of California Bar Associations.

Kevin Cazares graduated with a Certificate in Paralegal Studies from the UCLA Extensions Paralegal Training Program, class of 2024. Kevin is a member of LAPA, the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) and became a Certified Paralegal through NALA in 2024. He is a Court Appointment Special Advocate (CASA) in Los Angeles County, and holds a certificate in E-Discovery from the National Society for Legal Technology (NST). He is nail-bitingly close to landing his first paralegal position. 📚

| Category | Old Rules | New Rules (Effective Jan. 1, 2025) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Extended Deadlines for Summary Judgment and Adjudication Motions | • Motion for summary judgment or summary adjudication: 75 days before the hearing. | • Motion for summary judgment or summary adjudication: 81 days before the hearing (CCP § 437c(a)). |
| | • Opposition to the motion: 14 days before the hearing. | • Opposition to the motion: 20 days before the hearing. |
| | • Reply to the opposition: 5 days before the hearing. | • Reply to the opposition: 11 days before the hearing. |
| Limitations on Filing Multiple Summary Judgment Motions | No explicit statutory limitation on filing multiple summary judgment motions. | A party may not file more than one motion for summary judgment against an adverse party without obtaining leave of court (CCP § 437c(a)(4)). |
| Prohibition on Introducing New Facts in Reply Briefs | Courts previously had discretion to accept new facts introduced in reply briefs | Parties are prohibited from introducing new facts in a reply to an opposition to a motion for summary judgment (CCP § 437c(b)(4)). |



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

Paralegal Trends 2025

by Ann Pearson — Founder and CEO of Paralegal Boot Camp

TOP THREE GENERAL PARALEGAL TRENDS FOR 2025

1 - Work from home is almost non-existent.

Well, we had a good run for a while, but it's pretty much over now.

While a few firms still use a hybrid model that allows paralegals to work from home one or two days per week, those are becoming more the exception than the norm.

This is a shame because if we learned anything during the pandemic, it's that paralegals can be just as productive (sometimes more so) from home as they are in the office. That is — the paralegals who didn't need to be supervised in the office.

Smaller firms that still allow a hybrid model are able to use that as part of their recruitment efforts, and they are getting candidates who might otherwise go for the higher salary at a bigger firm—but the bigger firm wants them in the office every day.

2 - The benefits package is more important than ever.

I'm not even talking about the benefit of being able to work remotely one or two days a week. I'm talking about all of the other benefits that an employer has to offer.

The paralegals I speak to are looking beyond just the salary because they understand that those benefits can add up to real dollars in their pocket. Things like:

- 401K match
- Profit sharing bonus into their 401K
- Paid maternity/paternity leave
- Bonuses based on performance instead of tenure
- Quality health insurance options at affordable prices
- HSAs/FSAs

- A formal process for annual performance reviews and annual salary increases
- Paid time off that doesn't expire
- Paid continued learning opportunities
- Paid gym memberships or apps that encourage things like better sleep, meditation for stress, etc.

I was talking to a friend of mine who has been a paralegal for 20 years. She was considering a job offer from a smaller firm for \$135k. The firm didn't have the same benefit package as her current firm where she was making \$120k.

After accounting for the benefits she would lose at the new job—benefits she actually used—her salary increase wasn't \$20,000. It was only \$3,000.

It wasn't a \$15k bump in salary when she was losing \$12k in benefits. Benefits that she actually used and would otherwise have to take money out of her pocket to buy. Sure, that's a little increase in salary, but is it worth it to leave for an additional \$3,000 when you don't know what you're walking into?

If it's not something you're thinking about — it should be. Pay more attention to the benefit package.

3 - The people you spend the most time with.

The third most popular thing I'm hearing from paralegals is that people matter more than ever before. This makes sense because you spend a lot of time with the people you work with, and they contribute to your mental state.

No one wants to work with a jerk. And you might be thinking, well, of course, no one does.

The thing is, it used to be tolerated. My generation (GenX) and the one before me (Boomers) tolerated workplace behavior that would have GenZ gasping for air and walking out immediately.

It's not just about avoiding bullies and difficult people. Now, people actively seek out attorneys who will be good bosses.

I think social media has something to do with it, because people now join online communities, and they hear stories of what it's like to work with certain attorneys.

continued on page 19

People hear stories about paralegals working with attorneys who:

- show them respect
- compliment them on a job well done
- praise them in front of clients
- willingly support the paralegal's continued learning
- are patient with new paralegals during the learning process

Before social media, one might just assume that ALL attorneys behaved the way theirs did. They didn't know there was a whole other world of attorneys who were enjoyable to work for.

I had someone tell me just last month: my goal for 2025 is to find an attorney to work for who is like this person (and they showed me a social media post from a paralegal describing how great it is to work for their attorney).

She literally said, "I don't care if I have to take a huge pay cut, this is the type of person I want to work for in 2025, so I'm on a mission to find them."

SPECIALTY PRACTICE AREAS TRENDING IN 2025

Now, let's talk about trending specialty areas. These are the fields where paralegals will see increasing demand:

1. Cybersecurity

With the rise of data breaches and cybercrime, firms need paralegals who understand cybersecurity laws and regulations. If you are technology-inclined, this could be a very interesting specialty area for you.

2. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

This is not just about using AI tools in your own work. Instead, it involves working on cases disputing some aspect of AI—from intellectual property disputes to liability issues.

3. Intellectual Property (IP)

The growing digital economy means more companies need help protecting their innovations and creations. This specialty area could also overlap with AI specialization, as many early AI cases involved intellectual property disputes stemming from AI tools using creators' data for training

4. Cannabis Law

As legalization expands, the need for paralegals with expertise in cannabis regulations is skyrocketing.

5. Regulatory and Compliance

From healthcare to financial services, industries are under increasing scrutiny, and paralegals play a critical role in ensuring compliance. You may recall an earlier episode where I interviewed a paralegal who became a compliance officer for a healthcare provider. I'll put a link to my interview for you to listen to it. Not really, right?

6. Litigation

Litigation has been the top practice area for the last four decades. You're always safe being in litigation because there will always be lawsuits. That being said, if you are in litigation, you're going to want to keep up with all of the emerging technologies in litigation if you want to enjoy a successful career as a litigation paralegal.

7. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

As the legal industry continues to seek cost-effective and efficient solutions, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods like mediation and arbitration are gaining popularity. Paralegals with expertise in ADR can assist in preparing for and facilitating these processes, making them valuable assets to their firms. Understanding the nuances of ADR can also help paralegals provide better support to attorneys and clients seeking amicable resolutions outside of traditional courtroom settings.

Here's to a successful 2025—let's make it a year of growth, resilience, and impact!

Reprinted and adapted with permission from the Paralegal Boot Camp blog (<https://paralegal-bootcamp.com>).

Ann Pearson is the Founder and CEO of Paralegal Boot Camp, a training company dedicated to equipping paralegals with practical skills to advance their careers. With over 15 years leading the company and 20 years of prior experience as a litigation paralegal and paralegal manager, she created Paralegal Boot Camp to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world job demands. Her programs, trusted by hundreds of law firms, provide actionable training that enhances productivity and job performance. Ann also hosts the Paralegals on Fire! Podcast Show, shares insights through her YouTube channel and online courses, and has served as an instructor and advisory board member for paralegal education programs. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from New College of Florida and a Paralegal Certificate from the State College of Florida, Sarasota/Manatee. Passionate about empowering legal professionals, Ann continues to be a strong advocate for paralegals seeking career growth. 



An Interview With The Honorable Elizabeth Allen White (Ret.)

Judge White sat down for an interview with LAPA's Kevin Cazares, CP. Judge White served 23 years as a judge on the Los Angeles Superior Court before retiring in 2020. She also sat as a justice pro tem on the California Court of Appeal and previously worked as a trial attorney in employment and business litigation. Judge White chaired multiple judicial education committees, lectured extensively across California, and taught at USC Gould School of Law, Loyola Law School, and UCLA Extension's Paralegal Program. She authored *The Rutter Group's California Paralegal Manual: Civil Procedure Before Trial* and co-authored other legal manuals. A past president of the National Association of Women Judges, she has been a strong advocate for diversity in the judiciary. Judge White holds degrees from UCLA and Loyola Law School and is fluent in French and Spanish. I had the pleasure to interview her in February 2025. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Q - Judge White, as a mediator and lecturer on mediation and arbitration, what role do paralegals play in the legal process, specifically, in mediation and arbitration cases?

Both mediation and arbitration are confidential so a paralegal's role is somewhat constrained. Because mediation is between the lawyers, the mediator and the parties, the paralegal has no right to be present. In arbitration, their role is very similar to what it would be if they were in court, namely, helping with exhibits, making sure the witnesses are there on time and ready, and helping to prepare the witnesses. Keep in mind that any role a paralegal would have in this arena would be subject to supervision by the lawyer under the ethical rules.

Q - What do you think would be the best way for paralegals to support the judges, mediators and arbitrators effectively?

Judges typically do not use paralegals. Judges use law clerks who are either in law school or just out of law school. When I was on the bench, I allowed paralegal students of mine to observe proceedings and discuss them with me in chambers. Paralegals are often used in the courts to help pro per litigants at pro per help stations which exist in many courthouses,

Q - In your experience, how have paralegals contributed to the success of legal proceedings, and what do you think that they bring to the table as unique?

I'm going to couch that in terms of the very beginning of the paralegal profession versus the paralegal profession today. When I started back in 1977, paralegals were relegated to organizing documents and summarizing depositions and trial testimony. That was it. Today, paralegals do a lot more than that. They assist in the preparation of the exhibits, observing jury selection and offering assistance to the lawyers on their observations. They also assist the lawyer in locating portions of deposition transcripts that can be used for impeachment when a witness is on the stand. They can also serve in a technical capacity to project exhibits and deposition testimony on the screen and highlight them using the appropriate software to allow the jury to see what's being referenced.

Q - Do you have any advice for paralegals to help them expand their skill set or advance in their careers?

My recommendation for paralegals who are just starting out or still in a program awaiting certification, is to go to Bar Association functions, go to LAPA functions, try to network as much as you can and don't hesitate to ask a professor or an instructor, "May I come down and observe you in trial, go to court, and just sit in and just observe the proceedings?" Courtroom proceedings are open to the public, feel free to walk in, sit down and learn. Don't be shy. People love to help, so go to an instructor and say, "I'd love to come and intern with you" or if there's a judge teaching the class, "May I come down and observe proceedings and maybe you can give me some pointers on the proceedings?" Just don't be shy.

continued on page 21

Q - Would you share with me and our readers about your journey in the legal profession and what inspired you to pursue a career in law?

My career in the legal profession was based on what I could do with a degree in French. I was a French literature major. I didn't know what I was going to do with myself. I was a bit of a dilettante. I went to paralegal school at UCLA and became a paralegal for a big downtown law firm. And in doing that, I realized it's a very boring nowhere job. So, I went to law school, managed to graduate and pass the bar. But it wasn't until I was sent to court that I fell in love with the courtroom. There's something about the ability to stand up in front of a judge and argue a case that for those of us who maybe want to be actors or actresses, is incredibly fulfilling. You have the ability to engage with the judge, use your intellect, and everything you learned all the way along starting in kindergarten. That was my trajectory, as I did not intend to be a lawyer. My father was a lawyer, I had a cousin who was a lawyer. Becoming a lawyer was the furthest thing from my mind. But, what else do I do with a French degree??

Q - March is Women's History month. In that context, may I ask, as a woman in law, did you face any particular challenges or obstacles throughout your career and how did you overcome them?

I absolutely did face obstacles. Even today, I think women face obstacles, probably more so when I was starting out than now. One of the things I faced in a small law firm when I started out, was being sidelined by the male associates when court appearances were made. The male always got to go to court. It wasn't until the firm ran out of male associates to send to court that I got to go and argue the motion for change of venue. It was then that I fell in love with the courtroom. I was completely comfortable there.

Q - What do you think are the biggest strides that women have made in the legal field and challenges women still face today?

First of all, there are more women in law school now than ever before. Women have made tremendous strides in accessing legal education and becoming lawyers. I think the difficulty that women face is trying

to balance being a lawyer and having a family. Most law firms now, or at least the more progressive law firms, are recognizing that women need paid time off for maternity leave and time for their children. I just recently was with a dear, dear friend who had three children and she sort of fell off the partner track. Thank heaven, she's brilliant and became a mediator, but she didn't get the opportunity to become a partner or a judge. To become a judge in my era, you had to have a trial background which required a great deal of time. I fortunately was able to get trial experience and have children (in fact tried a case at 8 months pregnant!) but to do it required us to engage in home help which many lawyers are unable to afford. It's easier now with the protections afforded by the California Family Rights Act and the Fair Employment and Housing Act, but it takes a firm willing to pay for maternity leave to insure that the associates have the ability to move up the ladder. Hopefully, the progress we've made will continue. I've been very active in leadership roles with the National Association of Women Judges and previously with Women Lawyers of Los Angeles, both of which organizations exist to promote women and ethnic diversity in the profession. It's really important to increase the awareness of everyone in the profession to ensure that women remain in the profession and have the opportunities afforded to their male colleagues.

Q - Can you tell me a little bit about the work you just mentioned? Do you mentor younger women in the legal field?

I've mentored many people over the years largely because of my teaching. I taught in the UCLA Paralegal Training Program, at the LLM program at USC, and as an adjunct professor at Loyola, so I was constantly exposed to law students and paralegals. That's where a lot of my mentees came from. For example, today I'm talking to one of my mentees who was in the LLM program at UCLA and she's now back in India. I'm going to be chatting with her today because she apparently has some good news to report, so I'm looking forward to that. I'll also be attesting to the character of another mentee who will be taking the bar in July after graduating from Stanford.

continued on page 22

Q - What leadership qualities are essential for women to succeed in the legal profession and how can those leadership qualities be cultivated?

It goes back to what I was saying earlier about not being shy. Go to bar association functions, don't hesitate to talk to somebody who's interesting to you. Don't hesitate to reach out to somebody who you think might be a very intimidating presence because the worst that can happen is they'll say, "Sorry, I'm too busy." But, more often they'll want to reach out and help you and say, "Oh, please come down, you can observe me in trial or maybe I could use some help on a volunteer basis to do this, that, or the other thing." If you are brand new to the profession, don't hesitate to just get a law firm job as a receptionist, or a file clerk, just to get exposure to the environment.

Q - I was recently offered a position at a law firm in Burbank that focuses on employment law for plaintiffs. I'm excited to transition out of the medical industry and into the legal field and secure my first job as a paralegal.

Good for you! Well, congratulations. Employment law is very interesting. It's always about the story. Think of it as a play or a movie with different characters all of whom played a part in the employee's work environment.

Q - What do you think is the most rewarding aspect of working in the legal profession, especially from the perspective of someone who's gone from paralegal to lawyer to judge?

Every aspect of my career has been fulfilling. Because I was a paralegal in the era where you weren't given the opportunity to do much, it was very, very dull, and I'm glad that it was because otherwise I might have stayed there. Law school was challenging, but I made wonderful friends. My work as a lawyer was one of the most exciting things I did, particularly trial work where you get to appeal to a judge or jury, make arguments, and question witnesses. You have to be somewhat of an actor or an actress to be able to pull it off, but it's exciting. Being a judge was very fulfilling. You see the best and the worst of humanity and hopefully more of the best than the worst. My current work as

an arbitrator and mediator is just as rewarding and perhaps even more so because things get done more efficiently so the litigants can move on with their lives.

Q - You mentioned before that when you were a paralegal the work was "dull." Would you say that's changed?

Paralegal work now is not what it was in 1977. I can tell you, it's very different. That was one of the things that I saw as I started teaching in the paralegal program. Paralegal programs are much more advanced than they used to be and the opportunities for the paralegals are much greater. If you take on greater responsibility as a paralegal in your firm, you'll get increasing responsibility. You'll be drafting pleadings, discovery responses, putting together the evidence for trial, and might even go to the trial. None of that was available to me when I was a paralegal.

Q - Thank you so much for your time. Is there anything you wish to convey to our readers?

Enjoy the profession. You'll meet wonderful people. People are anxious to help you. Anyone who's been in the profession for a while, they see it as their obligation to reach down and pull somebody up that ladder, so don't hesitate to reach out and ask for help as you go along, especially if you're just starting out. 🏛️

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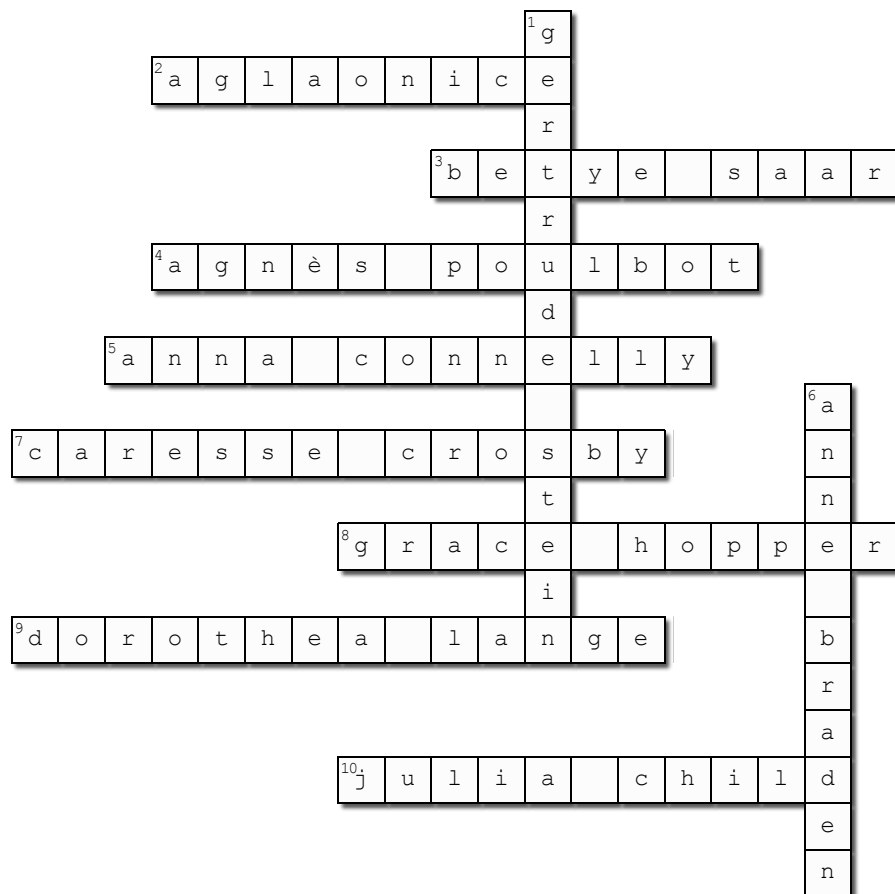


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ASSOCIATION
CAREER NETWORK

LAPA'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE - cont. from page 16



ANSWER KEY

ACROSS

2. Aglaonice
3. Betye Saar
4. Agnès Poulbot
5. Anna Connolly
7. Caresse Crosby
8. Grace Hopper
9. Dorothea Lange
10. Julia Child

DOWN

1. Gertrude Stein
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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

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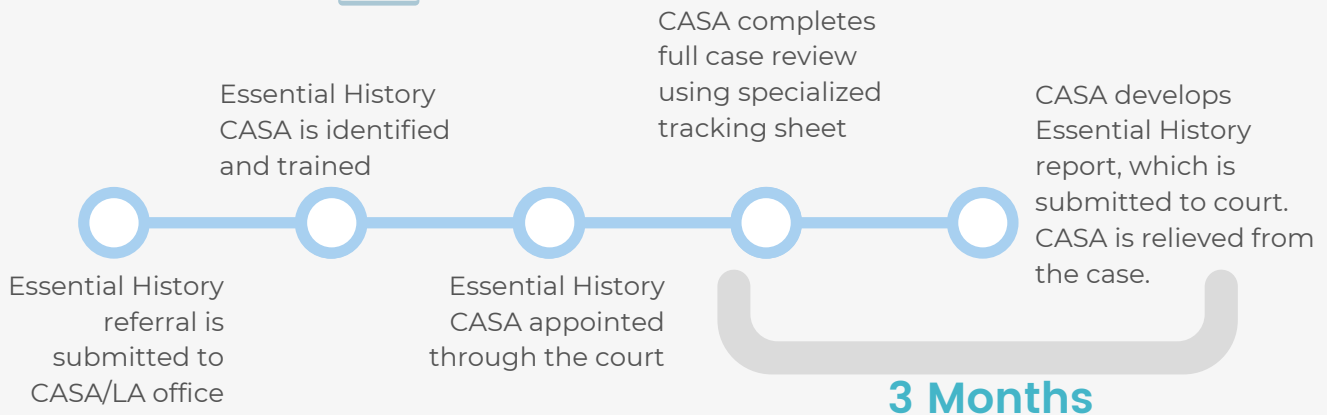
Essential History Program



continued from previous page



Process & Timeline



The Report

Objective & Neutral Language

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

Strengths-Based

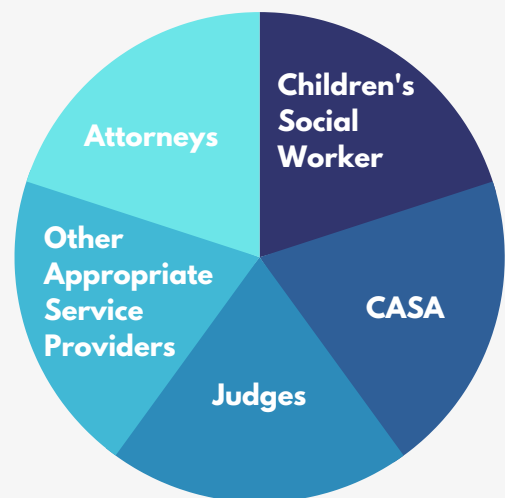
Focus is kept on not creating a negative perception of the youth

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
Visit Us! www.casala.org



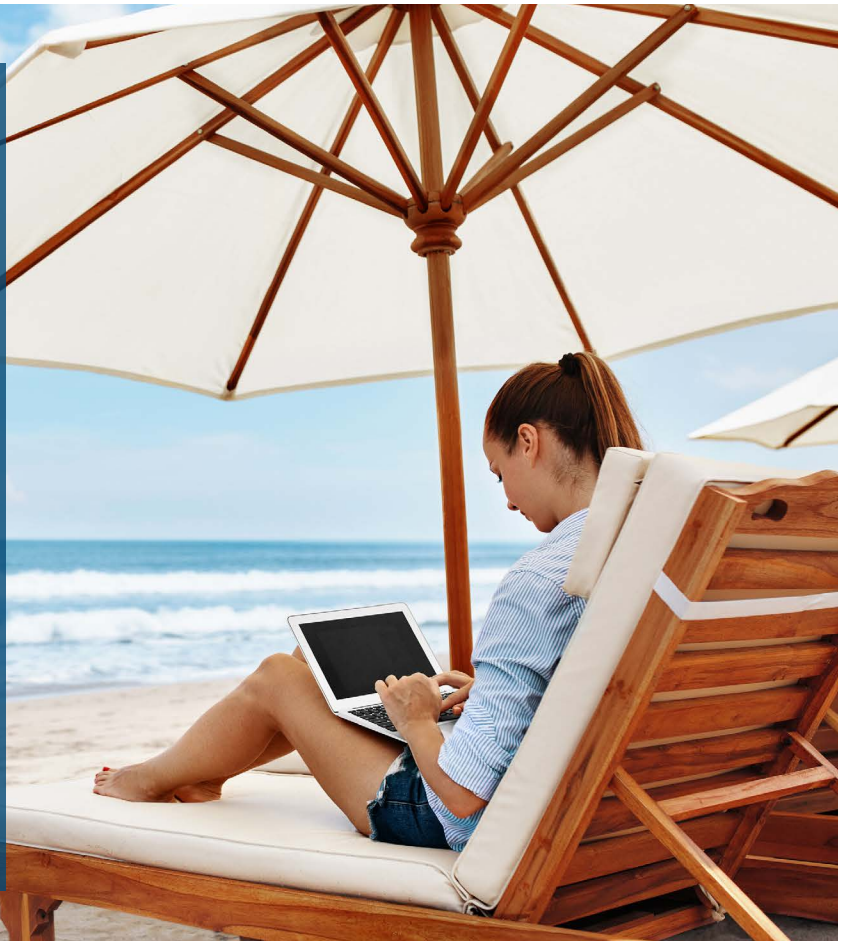
The Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) reflects the diverse nature of Southern California, and we strive to be as inclusive as possible. As an organization of legal professionals, we hold the ideals of equality and justice in the highest regard. The injustices experienced by the communities of 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.

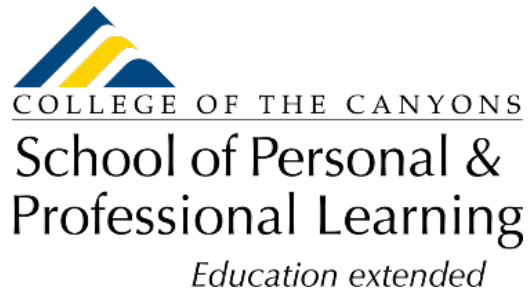
Diversity and inclusion are LAPA's initiative. We hold firm in striving to be more inclusive and diverse to reflect the community that we serve and represent. Moreover, LAPA will continue to steadfastly advocate and create initiatives to prepare and support our paralegals.

Attention
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Spring 2025

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|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------------------|-------------------|
| 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)

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

For more information, reach out to Terry Wright, ACP, terry.wright@canyons.edu or
Lori Young at 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.



Los Angeles Paralegal Association

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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.

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.

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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, 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.



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To Apply: Email 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.

VOTING

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Jenny Batdorj | The State Bar of California | jenny.batdorj@calbar.ca.gov |
| Georgia Carpenter | | carpenter.georgia@yahoo.com |
| Ellowene Grant | Pearson Warshaw, LLP | egrant@pwfirm.com |
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| Rosamond Hopkins | Abramson Labor Group | rosamond.hopkins@gmail.com |
| Joi Kawaguchi | Taylor, Scoles & Bartels | joisear@gmail.com |
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| Fatema Koudsi | | fatema.koudsi@gmail.com |
| Sandy Lopez | ACTS Law | slopez@actslaw.com |
| Jose Martinez Gomez | Eleventh Circuit of Florida | jose.mtnez92@aol.com |
| Frank McKay | Olivarez Madruga Law Organization | fmckay@omlowlaw.com |
| Michele Ordaz | Leichter Leichter-Maroko | michele@llmfamilylaw.com |
| Alex Phornprapha | Matern Law Group, PC | alex@maternlawgroup.com |
| Linnea V Praml CLA | Independent | lpraml@sbcglobal.net |
| Cecily Ruben | Guzman Law Group | cruben@guzmanlg.com |
| Diane Supple | | dmsuppl@cs.com |
| Samantha Turner | Kaplan Marino | samantha_turner8@icloud.com |
| Michele M. Vader | Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP | |
| Jacqueline Zamora | Department of Justice | jacqueline.zamora@doj.ca.gov |
| Ivan Zogovic ACP | Office of the California Attorney General | zogovic.ivan@gmail.com |

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|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Carolyn Davis | Family Leave | csdavis95127@gmail.com |
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STUDENT

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| Guadalupe Chavez | | guadalupechavez@g.ucla.edu |
| Vanessa Christian | University of La Verne | vanessahchristian@gmail.com |
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SECTIONS, COMMITTEES & OTHER LAPA INFORMATION

| | | |
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| LAPA Pro Bono Counsel | Bethelwel Wilson, Esq. | bethelwel@gmail.com |
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