Broward Chapter • Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc.

The Broward Brief

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President's Message

Lisa C. Bono, CP, FRP—President

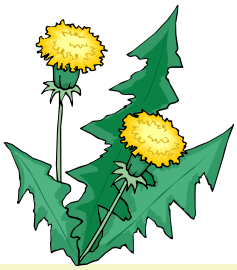
It's May, the Lovely Month of May! What happened to January, February, March, and April? Time passes so quickly by when you are as busy as most of us are on a daily basis.

Your Broward Chapter has some exciting plans for the upcoming months. I hope that you will find them to be fun and educational and that you will take advantage of them if your schedule permits.

Jody Shulman, Esq., of US Legal Support is our June 6 Dinner Meeting Speaker. Jody's topic, *Divorce Discovery on a Budget.* Jody attends many of our meetings, but unless you were at PAFs Fall Seminar in Bonita Springs in 2010, you probably have not heard her speak. She's excellent and had us "dancing in the aisles"! You won't want to miss her presentation.

PAF's Statewide Spring Educational Seminar is being held on June 1 and 2 in Tampa. I would encourage you to attend. Participating in the seminar will give you an opportunity to see your State Organization in action. You will also receive 9.5 hours of CLE Credit, 1.5 of which is ethics credit.

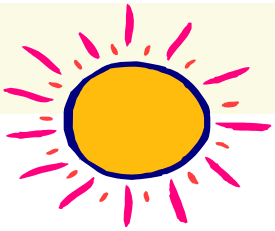
Plans are underway to hold a Saturday Seminar in mid-August which will include such topics as *Federal Rules and Deadlines, Resume Preparation/Interview Techniques,* and *Valid Discovery Objections.* More information will be forthcoming as the planning is completed.



SPRING 2012 ISSUE

Spring has Sprung! Take Some Time to Enjoy the season, as it too will "quickly pass us by".

Spring



Spring always seems like a good time for some fresh thinking and I don't know about you but the temptation to clear away the cobwebs is irresistible.

With the arrival of Spring we look forward to brighter skies, blooming flowers, and the feel of lush green grass under our feet. At least that's how I felt when I lived up North. Not so much so here in Florida where one season merely fades into the next.

Spring provides a new beginning full of hope and promise. Spring makes you feel like whistling. No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.

No winter lasts forever; Spring is here!

The article appearing below was discovered by our Chapter Treasurer, Michelle Ridge, CP, CFLA, and is reproduced here with the author's permission. When obtaining permission to reprint her article, Linda McGrath-Cruz, ACP FRP, told your editors, "I am very passionate about paralegals continuing to add to their professional profile through certification, etc. I am constantly amazed by the fact that most paralegals have no idea what their options are. Many people still think the path for success begins with being a paralegal and ends with being an attorney." See more details *About the Author* at the conclusion of this reprint.

The ABC's of Paralegal Designations

By Linda McGrath-Cruz, ACP FRP

When hiring paralegals for your practice, there are many factors to be considered. You want to have the right mix of education, experience, professionalism and personality. In Florida, there is no mandatory registration or certification of paralegals but there are a wide variety of voluntary measures that a paralegal can take to improve his or her professional standing.

Because of this lack of mandatory guidelines, there can be a lot of confusion. This confusion is not limited to attorneys; some paralegals are not even sure of their correct title and sometimes refer to themselves as being certified when they are not. Before you even get to consider certification, it is easy to get confused when simply trying to decide between a "legal assistant" and a "paralegal." These two terms are synonymous – this is not a matter of preference or opinion, it is a fact. The terms are defined as such throughout the country in Supreme Court rulings, statutes, ethical opinions, bar association guidelines and other documents. There is, however, clearly a preference and pattern of use in having "legal assistant" refer to legal secretary work and, therefore, "paralegal" is the title of choice for many.

Certified Legal Assistant ("CLA") and Certified Paralegal ("CP")

The National Association of Legal Assistants/ Paralegals ("NALA") provides one of the most recognized certifications a paralegal can obtain. Its CLA/CP program was established in 1976, to offer a nationwide designation for all paralegals. Because the terms are synonymous, paralegals who successfully complete the NALA CP exam may choose either the CLA or CP title. As of March 22, 2012, there are 16,900 Certified Paralegals, 4,299 of whom are located in Florida.

In the past, the two-day CP exam was given three times a year in a handwritten paper format. The exam has been described as grueling by many and it is not uncommon for an examinee to need to re-take at least one section. The exam consists of five sections: communications (objective and essay); judgment and legal analysis (essay required); ethics; legal research and substantive law. The substantive law section includes one section on the American legal system plus four sections in practice areas selected from a list by examinees. In September 2010, the exam was computerized and can now be taken in individual sections on different dates selected by the examinee.

To qualify to sit for the CP exam, a paralegal must meet a specific combination of education and/or work experience requirements. The CLA/CP designation is awarded for a period of 5 years and, to maintain their CP status, paralegals must submit 50 hours of CLE (which includes 5 ethics CLE).

Advanced Certified Paralegal ("ACP")

Once a paralegal has achieved the CLA/CP designation, he or she has the option to obtain an advanced NALA certification.

Because ACP courses are designed specifically for paralegals with a current CLA/CP designation, the focus is on education and learning specific subject matter as opposed to testing. Each course is about 20 hours in length and actual completion time depends on the paralegal's understanding of the material. There are currently about a dozen different subjects available, including discovery, trial practice, ADR, social security disability, trademarks and more.

Upon completion, a paralegal may use the ACP designation and is also awarded CLE credits towards his or her reporting requirements. If a paralegal fails to maintain his or her CLA/CP designation, that paralegal will also lose the advanced certification. As of May 2, 2012, there are 2,615 Advanced Certified Paralegals, 490 of whom are located in Florida.

Florida Certified Paralegal ("FCP")

In addition to the ACP, a paralegal who has achieved the CLA/CP designation can also obtain the Florida Certified Paralegal designation. The FCP was established in 1980 by the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. to compliment NALA's CLA/CP program.

The FCP exam is a three hour in-depth exam that covers Florida law. It is given once a year in central Florida and consists of multiple choice, true/false and matching questions and an essay. The test has two sections. The first covers ethics, civil procedure and Florida general law that includes Florida's court system, basic criminal law, basic property law, basic estate and probate law, basic family law and basic business law. The second section covers the test taker's choice of real estate, probate law, business law, family law or criminal law.

The FCP designation is awarded for a period of 5 years and, in order to maintain their FCP status, paralegals must submit 30 hours of CLE (which includes 5 ethics CLE). As of December 29, 2011, there are 170 Florida Certified Paralegals.

Registered Paralegal ("RP")

In 1996, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc. ("NFPA") began offering the RP designation upon successful completion of its Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam ("PACE"). PACE is a four-hour computerized exam, which consists of 200 multiple choice questions. The exam covers tasks that paralegals may frequently perform, and is not restricted to a particular practice area or geographic location. The topics covered include: administration of client legal matters; development of client legal matters; factual and legal research; factual and legal writing and office administration.

To qualify to sit for PACE, a paralegal must meet a specific combination of education and work experience requirements. The RP designation is awarded for a period of 2 years and, in order to maintain their RP status, paralegals must submit 12 hours of CLE (which includes 1 ethics CLE). As of February 2012, there are 824 Registered Paralegals nationwide.

Core Registered Paralegal ("CRP")

In 2011, NFPA launched the Paralegal CORE Competency ("PCC") Exam designed to test the core competencies of early-career and entry-level paralegals. The exam takes into account coursework in a paralegal program and also actual skills considered essential to basic competency in the paralegal profession.

There are numerous options for eligibility to sit for the PCC exam, because it is designed for individuals who may not have the education or work experience necessary to sit for other certification exams. The exam consists of 125 multiple choice questions and examinees are given 2 and ½ hours to finish. Upon successful completion, the CRP designation is awarded. The CRP designation is awarded for a period of 2 years and, in order to maintain their CRP status, paralegals must submit 8 hours of CLE (which includes 1 ethics CLE). As of July 2011, there are 146 Core Registered Paralegals nationwide.

Florida Registered Paralegal ("FRP")

In March 2008, the Florida Bar began accepting paralegal registrations. The Florida Registered Paralegal ("FRP") program is a voluntarily registration program, not a certifying program. When it first began, paralegals could qualify to become an FRP through work experience alone under a grandfathering provision. That provision expired in March 2011, and is no longer an option. Paralegals must now possess either a CP or RP designation or a combination of education and work experience.

Like attorneys, registered paralegals must renew their membership on a yearly basis and submit 30 hours of CLE (which includes 5 ethics CLE) every reporting cycle. As of May 4, 2012, there are 5,409 Florida Registered Paralegals. *[This article continues on Page 18 ... See **Paralegal Designations**]*

We held our Annual Election and Installation of Officers at our April 4 Dinner Meeting. Pictured above from Left to Right: Michelle Ridge, CP, CFLA (Treasurer); Patricia Creech, FRP (Treasurer); Janet Jenssen, FRP (Secretary); Steve May, FRP (Second Vice President); Carolanne Kelley, FRP (First Vice President); Lisa C. Bono, CP, FRP (President) and the Honorable Michele Towbin Singer.

PARALEGAL ASSOCATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

2012-2013 Executive Board ● Broward County Chapter

PRESIDENT	Lisa C. Bono, CP, FRP	954-712-8636 ● Work 954-605-7422 ● Cell	lbono@krupnicklaw.com
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PARALEGAL ASSOCATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

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Suncoast Chapter

First Vice President
Patricia C. De Ramus, ACP, FRP
Palm Beach

Second Vice President
Jodie L. Buck, CP, FCP, FRP
Treasure Coast

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Past President/Long-Range Planning
Margaret Averill, ACP, FCP, FRP
Treasure Coast

NALA Liaison
Joanne Sorrentino, ACP, FRP
Boca Raton

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Louise (Sue) Thomas, CP, FRP
Pinellas

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Patti Tassinari, CP, FCP, FRP *(Big Bend)*
Roxana Martinez, CP, FRP *(Boca Raton)*
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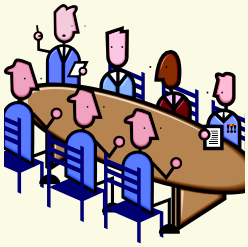
Chrystal Lunsford, ACP, FRP *(Pinellas)*
Kimberly Swanson, ACP, FRP *(Southwest)*
Tara Marie Casa, FRP *(Suncoast)*
Jodee Buck, CP, FCP, FRP *Treasure Coast)*

PARALEGAL ASSOCATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

2012-2013 Committee Chairs • Broward County Chapter



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PARALEGAL ASSOCATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

Monthly Chapter Dinner Meetings

WHEN: Monthly on the First Wednesday of Each Month

6:00 p.m.	Check-in/Network and Mingle
	Cash Bar Opens
6:30 p.m.	Buffet Dinner Service
7:15 p.m.	Guest Speaker - CLE Credit Awarded
8:00 p.m.	Vendor Presentation
8:15 p.m.	Adjourn

WHERE: Coral Ridge Yacht Club
2800 Yacht Club Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305
Telephone: 954-566-7886

PRICE: $30.00 - Members $30.00 - Students with Student ID
$35.00 - Non-Members

RESERVATIONS: Members and guests in our database are sent an e-mail approximately two (2) weeks prior to monthly dinner meeting. The notice provides a link to our on-line Reservation Form where you can register your attendance.

We Hope You Will Join Us Each Month for an Informative Educational and Networking Event

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS
(May June July)

—MAY—

Wednesday, May 2, 2012 ● 6:30 p.m.
Dinner Meeting at Coral Ridge Yacht Club
Stacey D. Mullins, Esq.— Akerman Senterfitt/Boca
Topic: ***How to Make Yourself Indispensable in These Economic Times***

Sunday, May 6, 2012 ● Nurses Day

Sunday, May 13, 2012 ● Mothers Day

Monday, May 28, 2012
Courts Closed/Legal Holiday
Memorial Day

—JUNE—

Friday, June 1 through Saturday June 2
PAF Spring Seminar - Tampa, Florida
Hosted by Hillsborough Chapter

Wednesday, June 6, 2012
Dinner Meeting at Coral Ridge Yacht Club
Jodi Shulman, Esq.— Account Executive— US Legal Support
Topic: ***Divorce Discovery on a Budget***

Sunday, June 17, 2012 ● Fathers Day

Wednesday, June 20, 2012 ● First Day of Summer

—JULY—

Wednesday, July 4, 2012
Courts Closed/Legal Holiday—No Chapter Meeting This Month
Independence Day

Wednesday, July 25 through Saturday, July 28, 2012
NALA 37th Annual Convention & Exhibition
Omaha, Nebraska

May 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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July 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

ARE YOU STUDYING TO TAKE THE NALA CERTIFIED PARALEGAL EXAM?

Certification is rapidly becoming essential for career success in the paralegal job market! Recognizing our members' desires for self study and the need to have current educational materials among our resources, we now have two (2) copies of the NALA **Certified Paralegal Mock Examination and Study Guide, Fourth Edition** , available for Chapter members' use.

Because the replacement cost of each volume is $125, we are requiring a $50 cash deposit when you check out one of these manuals. Additionally, you must be a member of the Broward Chapter of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc.

If you would like to utilize one of these manuals, contact our Treasurer and Education Committee Chair, **Patricia Creech, FRP,** at Patricia.creech@yahoo.com, or by telephone: 954-342-0250 (X-242) - Work; 954-653-1256 - Fax ; 305-776-3114 - Cell. Patty will be happy to get a manual to you or put you on the list to receive one as soon as it becomes available.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CHAPTER MEMBERS!

Please extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined or become affiliated with the Broward Chapter since March 1, 2012:

Marta Islla - Associate

J. B. Bock - Sustaining
JB Burke Investigative

Jessie Cappiello - Sustaining
PAF, INC. - Executive Director

INFORMATION FOR FLORIDA REGISTERED PARALEGALS

By Shannon Fleming
Assistant Director *FRP Program*
The Florida Bar

Florida Registered Paralegals have an obligation to keep their address up to date at all times. Your Florida Bar record address is used for all communications from the Bar. Check your address on the Bar's website, *www.floridabar.org/frp* and update it as necessary. If the Bar receives correspondence from a third party indicating that your address has changed, the Bar cannot make the change for you.

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In order to update your address, you must have a Florida Bar Password. Instructions for creating a *password* are contained on the website at *www.floridabar.org/frp.* Scroll to the middle of the page. Instructions are found under FRP Continuing Education.

PAF's 2012 Spring Seminar is only a few weeks away!

"Our Rights and Responsibilities as Individuals and as Citizens"

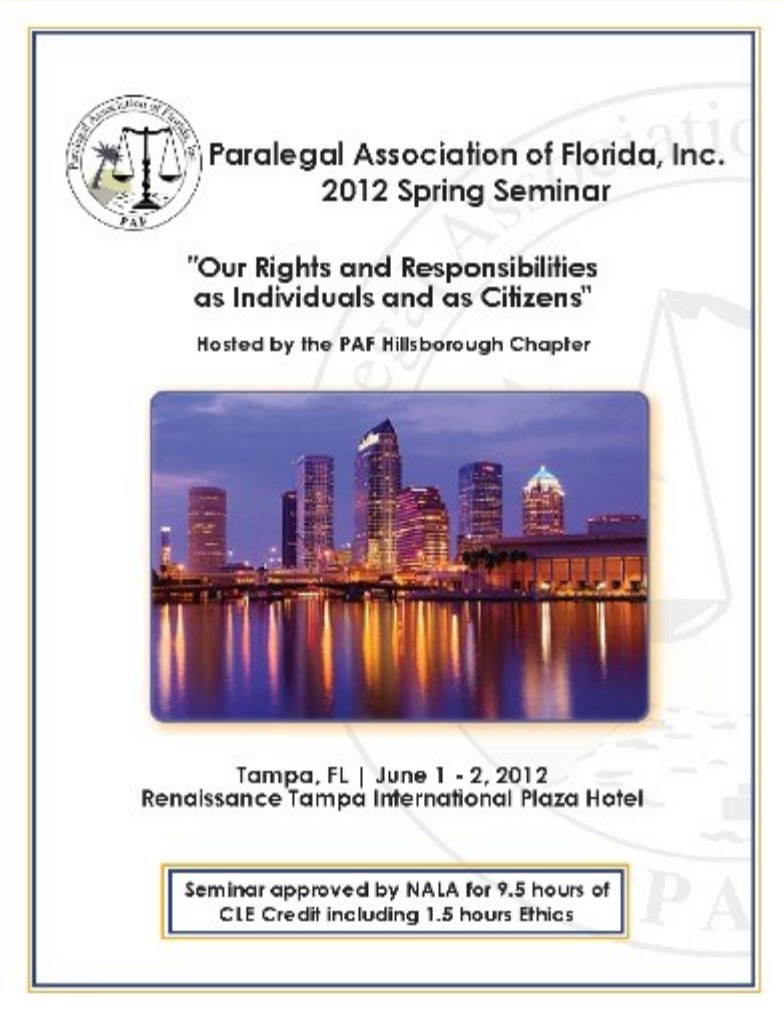
Hosted by the PAF Hillsborough Chapter

Tampa, FL | June 1 - 2, 2012
Renaissance Tampa International Plaza Hotel

Seminar approved by NALA for 9.5 hours of CLE Credit including 1.5 hours Ethics!

Obtain the Registration Materials at www.pafinc.org

Click on the "Events Tab" and then "Spring Seminar"



Contact the PAF office if you have any questions or concerns.

466 94th Ave North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 | execdirector@pafinc.org
Tel 727.258.0460 | Fax 727.578.9982

http://www,pafinc,org/

WEBSITE: THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

If you have not already explored our organization's website, take a few minutes now to become familiar with it. When you first click to open the website, you will see the page which is partially reproduced above. From this page you can navigate to any of the various sections: **About | Profession | People | Sponsors/Supporters | Events | Chapter Pages | Resources** and obtain information under each tabbed section. There is also additional information on the left side of the screen (not shown in this partial view regarding membership information and other linked pages of interest to members of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc.

You will find all of the information on the **Broward Chapter** stored under the heading **Chapter Pages.** Click on this and a tab opens with all of the Chapters displayed. When you click on **Broward**, you will be directed to our Chapter's homepage.

From the column on the left you can navigate to any of the following sections:

- *Leadership.* Information regarding your Chapter's officers and leadership.
- *Committees.* A listing of the Committees organized within the local Broward Chapter
- *Calendar of Events.* Includes an "Event Calendar" for the Chapter.
- *Chapter Bulletin.* Beginning with the Fall, 2011 issue, all of our newsletters are published and available here in Adobe PDF format.
- *Member Services.* Information on services available to and for our members.
- *Monthly Meeting.* Information on when our monthly meetings are held.
- *Location.* Information on the location of our monthly meetings — where our Chapter meets.
- *Chapter Home Page* - The Chapter Home Page is the first page that you come to when you open the Chapter Page for **Broward**.

All of the remaining Chapters are similarly organized, and there is more information available for viewing then is discussed here. However, the sections noted above are probably the sections that will be referenced most often by our members.

During 2012-13 your officers plan to more fully utilize this resource for the dissemination of information to our membership. Become proficient with this valuable resource tool for members of our organization.

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OR AD PLACEMENT PLEASE CONTACT:
ELIZABETH WIESEND, CP, FRP
954-712-8634

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Executive Director

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Fax 954.764.6758
www.chs.org

January 25, 2012

Ms. Susan Sabra
Paralegal Association of Florida
3209 S Port Royale Dr. Apt L
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308

Dear Ms. Sabra,

What a wonderful holiday season! We are so grateful for the support of holiday gifts that we received from Paralegal Association of Florida through the Christmas Drive. Thank you for generously opening your heart to the children and families we serve. Please know that your wonderful donation of new toys and $75 in gift cards was delivered in time for the holidays and that you have brought so much joy to more than 500 children who would have otherwise been without that special thrill felt on Christmas morning.

Children's Home Society of Florida, Intercoastal Division continues to grow stronger every year in our commitment to develop our programs and provide quality services to children and their families in Broward County. We are able to set our goals high because we know we have the community by our side supporting our mission.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff and most importantly, the children, I thank you again for sharing the spirit of the holidays with us. We look forward to working with you in the New Year as we continue to embracing children and inspire lives together.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Angelica Rosas
Director of Development

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF FLORIDA, REGISTRATION NUMBER, IS REGISTERED WITH THE STATE OF FLORIDA UNDER THE SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS ACT, 1991. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

United Way · Children's Services Council · ChildNet

Leave a Legacy...Remember Children's Home Society of Florida in your estate planning.

Photocopy of letter Susan Sabra, our Broward Charities Committee Chair, received thanking the Paralegal Association of Florida for our gifts donated to their 2011 Children's Christmas Gift Drive.

Did You Know.....(from *The Florida Bar News*)

You can now find a Florida Registered Paralegal by using the **NEW** "Search by Name" feature found under the Paralegal Section on the home page at http://www.floridabar.org/names.nsf/AFRP?openview

You can look for employment opportunities in the Career Center at http://l.fl.bar.associationcareernetwork.com/Common/HomePage.aspx

You can find information about the FRP program at www.floridabar.org/frp or under FRP corners in *The Florida Bar News*

The Florida Bar is dedicated to making the FRP program a success. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us at frp@flabar.org

PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA, INC.
BROWARD COUNTY CHAPTER
MENTOR PROGRAM

Our Mentor Program matches experienced paralegal mentors with paralegal students and/or new paralegals who are members in good standing of the Broward County Chapter of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. The Mentor Program is open only to current student members of PAF/Broward. Guidance and assistance in the following areas is provided:

Current Information Relating to the Paralegal Profession

Career Objectives

Educational Goals

Resumé Review and Interviewing Tips

Practice Area Related to Paralegal Duties, Tasks/Procedure

If you are a Chapter Member interested in mentoring our student members, please make your interest known to our Chapter President, Lisa C. Bono, CP, FRP, in person or by e-mail at *lbono@krupnicklaw.com*. Lisa will provide you with a form to complete so we may know of your interest in helping our student members transition from the classroom to the real world.

If you are a Student Member who would like to be paired with a Mentor, you should communicate with Lisa Bono (*lbono@krupnicklaw.com*). She will register you for the program and assist in getting you acquainted with your Mentor.

Forms for Mentor Volunteers and Student Members who desire to work with a Mentor will also be available at our Chapter Dinner Meetings.

◊◊◊

17th Circuit eFiling & Probate Smart Form Video Tutorials Now Available!

Video Tutorials for Electronic Filing and the Probate and Guardianship Smart Forms are now available for viewing from the 17th Circuit's website. Direct access is available here:

eFiling Program

Probate and Guardianship Smart Forms

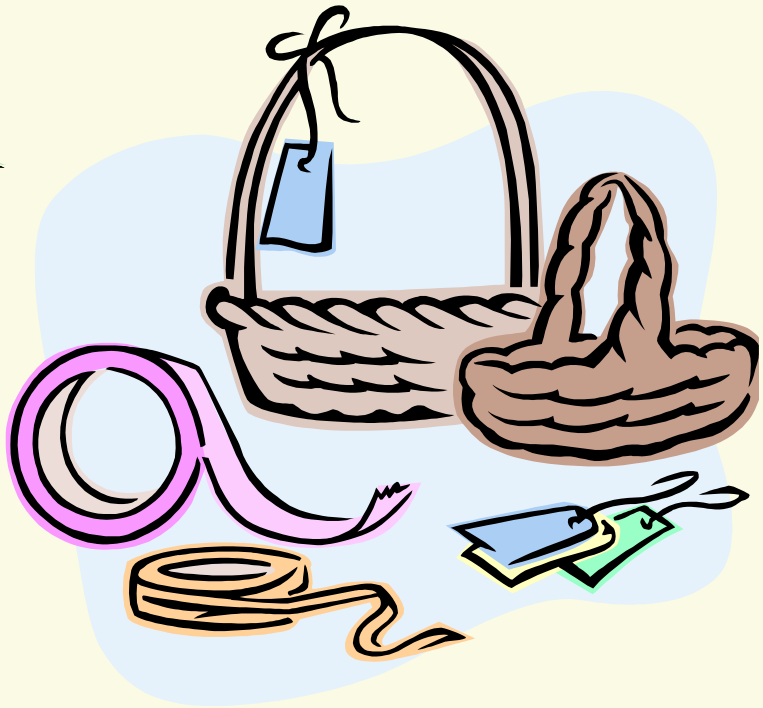
You will notice that the eFiling pages for all divisions have been consolidated into one page for ease of use. You can access the eFiling Program page from the Circuit's homepage at www.17th.flcourts.org (Click on eFiling Program via quick links at the bottom, center of the page.)

Please also download and review the FAQs provided for both Electronic Filing and the Probate Smart Forms. The manual (PowerPoint used in the tutorial and training sessions) is also available for download.

Thanks very much and Happy eFiling!

PARALEGAL ASSOCATION OF FLORIDA, INC.

Officer Installation Dinner - April 4, 2012 • Broward County Chapter



A Big "Thank You" Goes to Michelle Marshall

From the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. - Broward Chapter

Michelle Marshall, a good friend of Lisa Bono, CP, FRP, and Elizabeth Wiesend, CP, FRP, deserves a *BIG THANK YOU* for designing and creating the Chapter Basket that Lisa will take to Tampa for the Statewide Conference in June. Each Chapter President was asked to bring a basket to the Conference. The Chapter gave Michelle $100 to make **money flowers** and Michelle donated everything else, including her time and effort to make our basket beautiful and special. Michelle your talents, time, monetary contribution and efforts are very much appreciated by the Broward Chapter of the Paralegal Association of Florida!!

The Broward Chapter Executive Board would like to take this opportunity to thank **Julie Altschuler** for her hard work and dedication to the Chapter as Second Vice President and Chair of our Membership and Name Tag Committee. Julie is no longer working as a Paralegal and pursuant to PAF, Inc., guidelines can no longer serve as a Chapter Officer. Julie, you did a great job for us, and even though you are no longer a paralegal (by job title), we hope you will continue to attend our meetings and support our organization. Thank you, Julie.

"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."

~Author Unknown

PARALEGAL DESIGNATIONS

Continued from Page 3

Professional Paralegal ("PP")

In 2004 NALS … the association for legal professionals created the Professional Paralegal designation. The PP designation is awarded upon completion of a one-day four-part examination. The exam covers written communications; legal knowledge and skills; ethics and judgment skills and substantive law. As of March 2012, there were 522 Professional Paralegals nationwide.

The PP designation is awarded for a period of 5 years and, in order to maintain their PP status, paralegals must submit 75 hours of CLE (which includes 5 ethics CLE).

Graduates of Paralegal Education Programs

Paralegals have a variety of educational options. These include traditional associate degrees, bachelor degrees and even graduate level programs in paralegal studies. Paralegals that are looking for a faster option might choose a paralegal certificate program. For example, the University of Miami offers a paralegal certificate program which takes only four months to complete. Upon completion of the UM program, a paralegal receives a "paralegal certificate," but this does not make them a "Certified Paralegal". Graduates of paralegal certificate programs are usually referred to as "certificated paralegals".

Unfortunately, many paralegals rush into this kind of fast-track education without fully exploring the true investment compared to the real world value. Some paralegals mistakenly refer to themselves as a "Certified Paralegal" when in fact their "paralegal certificate" is simply proof of the completion of a paralegal training course. Also, fast-track "certificate" programs do not qualify under the educational requirements of the Florida Bar for registration as an FRP and may not meet the qualifications of other certifying groups.

Memberships

It is also important to keep in mind that individuals can be members of all of the organizations listed above – with the exception of The Florida Bar – without taking the certification/registration exam. A paralegal might be a member of NALA without ever applying to take the CP exam.

The Bottom Line

As an attorney, you are ultimately responsible for your work product. You may, however, delegate many of your tasks to paralegals. You are constantly confronted with the challenges of providing quality legal services to your clients and you need to be assured that the paralegals you hire are educated and qualified to assist you. Paralegals who have taken the steps to demonstrate their commitment to the paralegal profession and have met the high professional standards of groups such as The Florida Bar and NALA have significant value. They demonstrate that they met the standards of paralegal competency, and that they know and understand their ethical duties and limitations under the unauthorized practice of law statutes.

Although registration and certification are voluntary, they provide you with a benchmark for hiring practices. I hope that this article will give you a better understanding of the variety of options available when adding new paralegals to your staff. I also hope that you will consider encouraging existing staff and supporting them in gaining certification or registration to further enhance your firms' professional profile.

Linda McGrath-Cruz, ACP, FRP is a litigation paralegal with the Miami office of Arnstein & Lehr LLP. Linda is the Chair of the DCBA's FRP Committee and is an instructor and advisor for the Paralegal Knowledge Institute. Linda can be reached at 305-753-2443 or lmc@miamifrp.com.

About the Author—Linda embarked on her paralegal career at the age of 18 and started with no experience and no education. She worked for the firm of Pardo & Gainsburg, LLP in Miami from 1997 through October 2010 when she went to work at Arnstein & Lehr, LLP, where she is currently employed. Later she went back to school and received a Bachelors degree from Barry University in legal studies. Linda is a *CP* through NALA, holds the *ACP* designation in Trial Practice, Discovery and Social Security Disability, and is registered with The Florida Bar as an *FRP*. She was the inaugural vice-chair of the Dade County Bar's FRP Committee 2010-2011 and the chair of the same committee from 2011-2012. She is a member and instructor for the advisory council for the Paralegal Knowledge Institute and heads up a brand new scholarship committee for the Miami-Dade Legal Support Association (MDLSA). Check out Linda's website, www.miamifrp.com

A recent article by Scott Travis in the April 29, 2012 issue of the *Sun Sentinel* titled "Words of inspiration for grads (and everyone else)" provided graduates with twelve thoughts to consider as they embark on a new chapter in life. These thoughts deserve everyone's review and consideration from time to time:

Don't blame others

Don't fear the unexpected

Show compassion

Stress is a choice

Listen to your heart

Never be indifferent

There is power in one

Live with passion and action

Pull someone else up

Fight for what you believe in

Show up

Remember your grammar

PAF MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES—MAY 2012

Marie B. Losey, FRP
7 years—May 15

Della Marie Slappy
2 years—May 19

Geraldine Tavares
5 years—May 10

JoAnn Zangle, CP
13 years-May 27

BROWARD COUNTY'S NEW VETERANS COURT

By Michelle Ridge, CP, CFLA

On April 30, 2012, the Broward Courthouse hosted a reception for the commencement of the new Veterans Court. This specific division is purported to provide rehabilitative services to veterans facing criminal charges. The hope, much like Drug Court, is that the vets can avoid jail or prison through comprehensive, court-monitored programs that address the underlying issues, which are often related to PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorders).

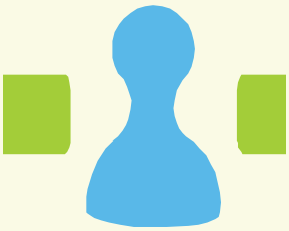
Both the *Navy Times* and *Army Time*s reported on how this local event mirrors a larger movement across the State of Florida in an effort to provide community assistance for those who have honorably served our country. Palm Beach has already established such a division and the Miami-Dade Drug Court launched a similar division in March.

Representatives from the VA (Veterans Administration) will be present in the Court to assist Vets to access the veterans' eligible substance-abuse and mental-health programs. Dade County Judge Deborah White-Labora stated in a recent article, *"They are heroes and warriors that supported one another and treat each other as family as part of the military culture, …It's very much ingrained in them that you don't leave someone behind."*

It is good to see that the Courts recognize a need in our community and are taking the necessary steps to address these needs!

Five Major Contributors to a non-productive hour:

- ***Lack of focus.*** Multi-tasking is a myth!
- ***Lack of sleep.*** A majority of our society is sleep deprived.
- ***Lack of skills.***
- ***Lack of tools.*** Half of any job is having the right tool!
- ***Lack of motivation.*** The biggest cause of non-productive hours is preoccupation



Five Suggestions for increasing the number of productive hours in your life:

- ***If you don't have one already, start a Master To Do List.*** A place you put a list of everything you think of you need to do.
- ***Increase the amount of sleep you get.***
- ***Identify a skill you can improve*** which will dramatically increase your productivity.
- ***Utilize a tool that would increase your productivity.*** You might think of a business card as a productivity tool.
- ***Whenever you think of something you need or want to do, identify what it will take to motivate you to do it.*** One of the best motivators is accountability

The statements and opinions appearing in this edition of THE BROWARD BRIEF are those of the contributors only And are not necessarily endorsed by the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc., or its affiliated Broward Chapter.

US LEGAL SUPPORT

At our June meeting, Jody Shulman, Esq., of US Legal Support will be our guest speaker, and we are very excited to have her speak to us. As always we thank Michele Calder, Brian Riley, and Jody Shulman, Esq., for attending our meetings and supporting our events when their schedules permit. As most of you know, US Legal Support generously donated the lanyards worn by our members at our Monthly Dinner Meetings. We do appreciate your ongoing support and commitment to the Paralegal Association of Florida, Broward Chapter. Put Wednesday, June 6 on your calendar now and be with us to hear Jody's presentation.