

PERSPECTIVE

Volume 37, Issue 2

Fall/Winter 2019

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Sarah M. Robinson

Fellow paralegals, lend me your ears! PANJ is excited to again participate in the **Annual New Jersey Paralegal Convention** on October 25, 2019 joining in the celebration of educating paralegals for over **26** years! Several PANJ Board members also serve on the Convention committee which is composed of volunteer paralegals who generously donate their personal time to organize the event. 175-225 paralegals attend the all day educational event which includes a vendor fair. This is the only all day Convention *organized by paralegals for paralegals* in Northern and Central New Jersey. **For those of you who may not have attended Convention in the past, know your worth and invest in your education!**

Paralegals, as members of the legal community you have undoubtedly been exposed to continuing legal education from other providers-the New Jersey State Bar Association, New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education, the American Bar Association, etc to name a few. PANJ is the only non-profit association *governed by paralegals* that provides continuing legal education *with a focus on the paralegal's role* in Northern and Central New Jersey. If you haven't recently attended a dinner meeting, why? I hear frequently, "The topic wasn't relevant to my job's area of law." To quote fellow paralegal and friend, Vincent Ascolese, ***"Having knowledge in new and different practice areas has made me more effective as a paralegal by increasing my applicability."*** [#FoodForThought](#).

Members, as you know PANJ is an affiliate of the National Association of Legal Assistants ("NALA"). Executive Board members, Kerry Mackey, CP and Joanne Haffeman, had the opportunity to attend NALA's Annual Conference and Expo in Arizona on July 11, 2019 networking with paralegals from all over the United States!



Read the highlights of their excursion and save the date for NALA's upcoming Conference and Expo which is taking place July 9-11, 2020 here in New Jersey at Harrah's Resort in Atlantic City. PANJ is raffling off one day's attendance fee to NALA's 2020 Conference at the **Annual New Jersey Paralegal Convention**. You've got to be in it to win it! For more information about NALA, see "NALA News" compiled by Christine Principe, CP, PANJ's NALA Liaison.

As always, PANJ Board members were out and about promoting the Association and networking with fellow legal professionals. On September 16, PANJ was a vendor at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce's NetworkFest held at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick which showcases Central Jersey businesses. On September 24, PANJ again attended the New Jersey Association of Legal Administrators Business Partner Exposition held at MayFair Farms in West Orange providing the opportunity to network with individuals in legal management and meet vendors in the legal marketplace. On October 9, Board Members Kerry Mackey, CP and Nyree Benitez, were included in a presentation to students entitled "Introduction to the Paralegal Profession" at Middlesex County College and spoke about PANJ and the benefits of membership. Finally, on October 12, PANJ participated in the New Jersey Legal Training Academy's Medical Malpractice seminar held at the Holiday Inn in Clark which reviewed recent developments in the medical malpractice field along with every published and case in the last 12 months.

The first general membership dinner meeting was held on September 25, 2019 at Greenbaum Rowe, Smith & Davis in Iselin. Steven Mlenak, Esq. gave an informative presentation on Emotional Support Animals, other reasonable accommodations and the Fair Housing Act. New members were able to network with longtime attendees and also special guests, Christopher Morga of ICSForward and The Seeing Eye. ICSForward provides discounted career coaching packages including resume writing and interview tips to PANJ members. Check out the ad in this edition. The Seeing Eye is the oldest guide dog school *in the world* whose mission is "to enhance the independence, dignity and self-confidence of blind people through the use of seeing eye dogs." Melissa Allman and her colleague, Alexandra Hall, were joined by Melissa's seeing eye dog, Luna to discuss the organization and provide some helpful suggestions when interacting with blind folks and their seeing eye dog companions.

PANJ is pleased to be able to offer two **FREE** events this term which are open to both members and nonmembers.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR-NOVEMBER! PANJ's second general membership dinner meeting is being held on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at the Maplewood Country Club in Maplewood. Joe Grabas of The Grabas Institute will present "Standard vs. Enhanced Title Policies." Due to the generous sponsorship of Acres Land Title Agency, this is **FREE** event open to Attorneys, Paralegals, Legal Secretaries and any other support staff in the legal industry working in commercial and residential real estate law. Register at www.NJPara.org and bring a fellow colleague!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR-JANAURY! PANJ will be hosting its first “**Paralegal Open House Meet and Greet**” on Thursday January 16, 2020 at 6:00PM at Delicious Heights in Berkeley Heights. This is also a **FREE** event with complimentary light fare and cash bar. Attendance at the educational dinner meetings allows anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour of networking. The **Paralegal Open House Meet and Greet** will enable paralegals to come together in a relaxed setting and just talk- about work; about life; about the future of our profession-whatever comes to mind. PANJ Board members will also be in attendance---Come meet the Board! Let's discuss the Association and ideas for growth. There will even be drawings for free giveaways! Amanda Sexton of FocusWorks Marketing will also discuss how to market yourself to potential employers and build your brand (YOU!). Again this is a **FREE** event and a great opportunity for new, current and prospective members to socialize with fellow paralegals. Join us for an evening of food and fellowship! And bring business cards! Registration for this event will open after November's dinner meeting.

Speaking of fellowship, PANJ's **Member Spotlight** shines on Ms. Catherine Semper! “Meet” her in this edition and have the pleasure of making her acquaintance at the next dinner meeting! If you would like to recommend a PANJ member to be featured in the next Member Spotlight, submit the member's name to Info@NJPara.org.

PANJ is always on the lookout for new dinner meeting locations! The location must offer a private room from 5:30 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. that can comfortably fit up to 30 people and is suitable for either a dinner buffet or plated three course meal including beverages. As a non-profit, PANJ makes every effort to secure professional locations that can accommodate the Association's limited budget in order to keep dinner meeting costs affordable for all attendees. If you know of a prime location, or perhaps work for a midsize or large law firm who is willing to participate and equipped to host a dinner meeting, please email PANJ's Program Planning Chair, Kerry Mackey, CP, at Info@NJPara.org with potential locations that may fit the Association's budget.

PANJ is looking for authors! “*The Unconventional Paralegal Thinking Out of the Box*”, is a column dedicated to helpful tips, tricks and skills not frequently mentioned in continuing legal education courses but still necessary and practical in every day paralegal work. Vincent Ascolese, a seasoned paralegal and board member of the **Annual New Jersey Paralegal Convention**, has submitted his thoughts for the last few newsletters. Fellow Paralegals, I invite you to frequently submit constructive content for the column that would benefit our colleagues. Content and/or questions can be directed to Info@NJPara.org.

Finally, since I began service as President of PANJ in 2017, I've tried to provide strong leadership and make decisions that were in the best interest of the Association. Over the last 2 terms, the Executive Board has been able to secure additional benefits for PANJ members from third party providers including discounted certified paralegal exam preparation programs; discounted career coaching packages including resume writing and interview tips; discounted subscriptions to the New Jersey Law Journal; and free standard shipping for notary supplies. New member referral rewards and the Season Pass have also been reintroduced.

The Association's website has been revitalized and the Forum created to allow members to automatically qualify for attendance fee discounts when registering for PANJ events. PANJ members also qualify for discounted attendance and discounted professional headshots at the **Annual New Jersey Paralegal Convention**. Even the *Perspective* was refreshed to include various articles from recruiters, law firm administrations, independent paralegals and individuals who chose the paralegal field as their second career offering different views of the paralegal profession from diverse members of the legal community.

I am hopeful the 2019-2020 Term will be no different and the Association will continue to evolve and progress. The paralegal profession transcends the walls of law firms, corporations, agencies, business entities and other paralegal employers. PANJ connects a community of professionals in the legal field who are committed to the development, promotion and recognition of paralegals. PANJ is driven by its members and is only as strong as their participation. Elections generally take place in April of each year. All members, especially newer members, should give careful thought to serving on the Board. At the end of this Term, I am enthusiastic to pass the torch to my successor and continue participating in governing the Association under new leadership.

Network with fellow paralegals at
the **FREE Paralegal Open House Meet**
and Greet on January 15, 2020!!

"I enjoy the warm and informative atmosphere at our meetings. I always look forward to hearing from the great lineup of speakers on various topics of law and/or paralegal resources that the Association provides."

Catherine Semper, Paralegal at Peckar and Abramson, P.C. featured in this month's Member Spotlight.

**ATTORNEYS AND PARALEGALS:
PLEASE JOIN US**

NOVEMBER 21ST

5:30 - 8:00 PM

2 CORE CLE

**STANDARD VS. ENHANCED
TITLE POLICIES**

HOSTED BY:

Acres Land Title Agency

**In Co-Sponsorship with:
The Paralegal Association of New Jersey**

SPEAKER:

Joe Grabas, The Grabas Institute

DINNER WILL BE SERVED

(Seminar 6:00-8:00PM)

**MAPLEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB
28 BAKER STREET, MAPLEWOOD, NJ 07040**

**Attorneys Please RSVP to Jacque Villano: JVillano@AcresTitle.com
Paralegals Please RSVP to Sarah Robinson: Info@NJPara.org**



PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION
of
NEW JERSEY, INC.

PARALEGAL OPEN HOUSE MEET AND GREET

HOSTED BY

THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020
6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**

**DELICIOUS HEIGHTS
428 Springfield Avenue
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey
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Complimentary light fare will be served.
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******THIS IS A FREE EVENT******

The **Paralegal Open House Meet and Greet** is a great opportunity for new, current and prospective members to socialize with fellow paralegals in a relaxed setting and talk about work; about life; about the future of the paralegal profession; about the Association and ideas for growth--whatever comes to mind! PANJ Board members will also be in attendance. Come meet the Board! There will even be drawings for free giveaways!

Amanda Sexton of FocusWorks Marketing will also discuss how to market yourself to potential employers and build your brand (YOU!).

Join us for an evening of food and fellowship! And bring business cards!

PLEASE REGISTER BY MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2020.

Complete registration by visiting www.NJPara.org/events or by emailing Info@NJPara.org.
(Please provide your full name and telephone number.)

By attending PANJ events, all attendees (either members or nonmembers), presenters and/or sponsors acknowledge that they may be photographed during an event and agree that PANJ has the right to use, edit, copy, publish, distribute and or/display the photograph/image for printed and/or digital promotional and/or marketing purposes without any monetary compensation. Such photographs/images become sole property of PANJ.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS AFFILIATE

www.NJPara.org

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For more
information
about the Board
go to
www.NJPara.org





STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey recognizes the many contributions of paralegals to the legal profession in the Garden State; and

WHEREAS, it is known that paralegals possess important legal skills and perform substantive legal tasks; and

WHEREAS, paralegals provide critical legal services to large and small companies, individuals and public entities throughout New Jersey;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

OCTOBER 25, 2019

AS

PARALEGAL DAY

in New Jersey and recognize paralegals as important partners in the delivery of legal services.



Richard J. DeLeon
Lt. GOVERNOR

GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this twentieth day of August in the year two-thousand nineteen, the two hundred forty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States.

Philip D. Murphy
GOVERNOR



NJ Paralegal Convention

SAVE THE DATE!!

OCTOBER 16, 2020

www.NJParalegalConvention.com

“Having knowledge in new and different practice areas has made me more effective as a paralegal by increasing my applicability.”

Vincent Ascolese, New Jersey Paralegal Convention Committee



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NALA's Mission Statement
Advancing paralegals through certification and professional development.

NALA' Vision Statement
The preeminent resource for individual and professional success.

ELECTIONS

Elections were held at the 2019 Expo and Convention. Here's NALA's Board:

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At Large Director

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CEO

Executive Committee Member
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2019 NALA CONFERENCE AND EXPO

Congratulations to Kandi Moncelsi, ACP, former PANJ President/Board Member who was awarded NALA's Affiliates Award and 2019 Affiliated Association Outstanding Contribution Award

During her close to thirty years as a member of the Paralegal Association of New Jersey, Inc. (PANJ), Kandi Moncelsi, ACP held numerous offices on the PANJ Board, including President and NALA Liaison. Her years of dedication and commitment to the paralegal profession in New Jersey have greatly contributed to the promotion and elevation of the status of paralegals throughout the state.

JoAnne Haffeman and Kerry Mackay attended NALA's 2019 Expo and Convention. They had a very rewarding experience and a great time! They were able to spread the word about PANJ during the Affiliate's Exchange.

Couldn't attend the 2019 Expo and Convention? The seminars have been recorded. Go to <https://www.nala.org/courses/2019-conference-recording-bundle?fbclid=IwAR1-e7AS8RAR4x2AAN-QR7gspVCQ3RO4W8i-qWxFloAHAMSV6dGRAh3jYNY> for more information.

Mark your calendar! NALA's 2020 Expo and Convention is in Atlantic City on July 9 – 11 (Thur - Sat), 2020 at [Harrah's Atlantic City](#), New Jersey. Hope to see you there!

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

NALA active members have exclusive access to these courses - up to 5.75 hours of credit. What are you waiting for? Log on and take the courses!

On-Demand Webinars:

[Dealing with Difficult People](#)

[Managing Stress in a Turbulent World](#)

[School Safety: From the Schoolhouse to the Courthouse](#)

[The Science of Living in Balance](#)

[Using Coaching Skills to Improve Communication](#)

Self-Study Courses:

[Leadership Basics](#)

Effective August 1, 2019, CPs are no longer required to complete a test after reading *Facts & Findings* articles in order to receive CLE credit. Submit your CLE within ONE year of the publication date. CPs may submit up to two hours of CLE per year, with a maximum of five hours of CLE per each five-year certification period.

CP EXAM

Attention Paralegal Students:

Paralegal students in their last semester or quarter of the program, with proof, will be allowed to apply for the CP exam. The following fees apply:

- \$125 for NALA members
- \$150 for non-members

Free Webinar

Want to find out what's happening with certification, log in to NALA Webinar with Melody Brewer to find out. It's free!

Miscellaneous

NALA teamed up with *Naylor Association Solutions* to distribute the NALA Member Newsletter. Make sure your newsletter isn't going to spam; add Naylor as a safe sender in your contacts.

Christine A. Principe, CP is PANJ's NALA Liaison. Questions in connection with local NALA certification exam study groups should be directed to Christine at NALALiaison@NJPara.org

PANJ ATTENDS THE

2019 NALA CONVENTION-A REVIEW

By JoAnne Haffeman and Kerry Mackey, CP

The 2019 National Association of Legal Assistants Conference was held July 10-14, 2019, at the Westin Kierland Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona. PANJ Executive Board members JoAnne Haffeman and Kerry Mackey, CP, Trustees at Large, attended the first day of the event. This is the third conference that JoAnne has attended and Kerry's first, as well as her first time visiting Arizona. We were honored to be able to attend the Conference on behalf of PANJ!

The detail NALA put into planning the Conference was quite impressive as it was very organized and well attended. The Arizona Paralegal Association added a nice touch to the weekend by having a table set up and providing swag bags for attendees. Their bags included items like suntan lotion, sunglasses and even a fan which came in handy during the hot Arizona weather. The Arizona Paralegal Association also gave away 100 tickets to attend a happy hour in the hotel lobby the night before the Conference started. It was a great way to meet new friends and network with other individuals attending the Conference.

The first day of the Conference started with a continental breakfast and perusing the vendor hall. Thereafter, we settled in for the Keynote Speech from Justice William J. O'Neil. Justice O'Neil was appointed as Arizona's first Presiding Disciplinary Judge in 2010 and the focus of his presentation was the importance of integrity in the practice of law. He included numerous anecdotes and war stories from his many years on the bench entertaining the listeners to laughter. He was engaging and as he received a prolonged standing ovation at the end of his speech, it was obvious that he had done this many times before.

After Justice O'Neil's presentation, we attended the Affiliated Associations Annual Meeting and Awards. The Affiliated Associations Director, Annette Brown, provided opening remarks and introductions. She then recognized a number of Affiliated Associations who have reached a milestone in their affiliation with NALA. Ms. Brown then made two announcements; one regarding a new Affiliate Reporting Incentive and the other Regarding Affiliate Visit Policy. With regard to the Affiliate Reporting Incentive, this is intended to provide an incentive for Affiliates to submit their mid-year and annual reports in a timely manner. Affiliates will be charged a \$50.00 late fee if their reports are up to 60 days late. After the 60 days, Affiliate benefits will be suspended until the report is submitted. Affiliates will receive notice two weeks before the late fee is imposed and two weeks before benefits are suspended. NALA also revised its policy regarding requests for Affiliate Visits and will not send speakers for specific types of presentations.

After the announcements, the Affiliate Awards were presented. Affiliates can nominate a member in recognition of that member's contributions to the goals of the Association. A number of Affiliate members are presented this award. All recipients of the Affiliate Award are also considered for the NALA Affiliated Associations Outstanding Contribution Award.

This year PANJ nominated Kandi Moncelsi, ACP, for this award for her years of dedication and commitment to promoting and elevating the paralegal profession in New Jersey. NALA accepted the nomination and selected Kandi as a recipient of the award but she was unable to attend the Conference so JoAnne accepted the award on Kandi's behalf.

Once the awards were presented, the election of officers was held. This year there was only one candidate for Affiliated Associations Director and one candidate for Affiliated Associations Secretary. Peonca S. Grier, CP, FRP, was elected Affiliated Associations Director and Bridget M. Stuhr, ACP, was elected Affiliated Associations Secretary, both for the 2019-2020 term.

The final item on the meeting Agenda was the Affiliate's Exchange Presentation by the Nebraska Paralegal Association entitled "Collaborating Together for Ultimate Success." The presentation described the Association's efforts to increase membership by reorganizing and restructuring various committees with the intent of increasing the participation of three districts within the Association that had become inactive.

During the luncheon following the Annual Meeting, President Jill I. Francisco, ACP, discussed several items from the 2018 Annual Report. Thereafter, Karen Greer McGee, ACP, from Louisiana was presented with the President's Award and gave a jovial acceptance speech. The final presentation at the luncheon was the awarding of the NALA Affiliated Associations Outstanding Contributions Award. Kandi Moncelsi was the recipient of this year's award in recognition of her over 30 years of service and dedication to PANJ and the paralegal profession in New Jersey. JoAnne was honored to accept this second award on Kandi's behalf as well.

After the luncheon, Kerry attended a CLE called "Confessions of a Stressed Out Paralegal". The seminar started off by doing a few stretches to loosen up a bit. Doing little stretches throughout the day can be a helpful way to relieve tension, clear the mind and increase motivation to conquer projects.

The speaker then discussed several ways an individual can reduce stress. Some of those ways included deep breathing exercises, meditation and even a five (5) minute journal session. Paralegals often have a pad of paper handy at their desk and taking a 5-minute break to write down things that you are grateful for can be a great way to improve your mood and calm your mind. If possible, taking periodic breaks and even taking a step outside can also help reduce stress.

Regular exercise and a good night's rest are critical to how you handle your day. It is tough to effectively complete a difficult project when you only slept a few hours the night before. Social events and planned "down time" activities with friends and family can also reduce stress after a long day at work. REMEMBER TO LAUGH! Laughing can instantly make you feel better no matter what the situation.

The speaker explained that some employers may have Employee Assistance Programs for their employees. Employee benefit programs can assist employees with personal and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance and even their health. If your employer offers this type of benefit, take advantage of it!

During this seminar, the group also discussed things that cause stress to a paralegal. The floor was open to have attendees bring up situations that have caused them stress and then there was a discussion if someone else in the room had a similar situation and how they dealt with the stress. Chances are that there are other individuals in your environment that may be going through a similar situation at work and talking about that situation with others may be a great way to find a resolution. We ended the seminar by practicing some desk yoga stretches. This seminar provided helpful instructions to deal with stress.

The final event of the day was the Affiliate Showcase. This was similar to a vendor hall as affiliates shared tables, provided information on their respective associations and provided free gifts. PANJ shared a table with the Mississippi Paralegal Association and had a great deal of traffic. The crowd was pleased with PANJ's swag! We had an enjoyable time networking with fellow paralegals from different states and making new acquaintances. We found the conference to be very informative and a great way to network. We had the opportunity to meet new legal service vendors and interact with other paralegal associations.

PANJ is very much looking forward to next year's NALA conference, which will be held here in New Jersey at the Harrah Hotel in Atlantic City. Hope to see you there!

PANJ is participating in the passport program
at the **Annual New Jersey Paralegal
Convention on October 25, 2019** by holding
a drawing for one day's attendance at NALA's
2020 Conference.

You've got to be in it to win it!

Member Spotlight



Catherine Semper
Paralegal at Peckar and Abramson, P.C.
csemper@optonline.net
[linkedin.com/in/catherine-semper-90853151](https://www.linkedin.com/in/catherine-semper-90853151)

Q. What is a typical day as a paralegal like for you?

A. I am a paralegal at Peckar and Abramson, P.C., a firm known for leadership and innovation in construction law that extends to a broad array of legal services. My core work is in the Employment and Labor sector. I am also responsible for the review of construction contracts, where I am a part of a team that markets a risk management and business development tool for the construction industry. I usually begin each day reviewing my to-do list and calendar of events which will determine how my day will be prioritized, keeping in mind that not every day is a typical day.

On any given day, I may be required to draft pleadings as well as prepare discovery requests and/or responses and subpoenas. In addition, I e-file documents and attend document reviews. There are other days I may summarize a deposition transcript or prepare for a trial or two. For the last three years I have also been responsible for the firm's New Jersey CLE Seminar Accreditation renewal and bi-annual reporting.

Q. How long have you been a member of PANJ?

A. I have been a PANJ member for a year.

Q. Why did you decide to join the Association?

A. I joined the association to network with colleagues and to keep abreast of recent changes within our industry.

Q. What do you enjoy most about the Association?

A. I enjoy the warm and informative atmosphere at our meetings. I always look forward to hearing from the great lineup of speakers on various topics of law and/or paralegal resources that the Association provides.

Q. What's a helpful tip for someone in our industry?

A. Do not take yourself too seriously and strive to create balance between work and leisure.

**THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY WELCOMES
THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS!**

Yolanda Barry

Ralph Cicchetti, Jr.

Kimberly Cromwell

Randy Davis

Doris DeLucia

Eric Flaherty

Kevin Flook

Meghan Heintz

Susan Johnson

Susan Kruckmeyer

Susan Levantino

Robin McGowan

Christina Radosti

Michelle Valdivia

Carina Yturbe

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU
AT AN UPCOMING EVENT!**



www.NJPara.org

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- *Professional Development and Recognition.*
- Discounted Event and Dinner Meeting Fees.
- Season Pass.
The ability to prepay for monthly dinner meetings in advance for a larger discount.
- New Member Referral Rewards.
- Job Bank.
Discover gainful career opportunities available at law firms, corporations, agencies, business entities, and other paralegal employers who contact PANJ looking for desirable candidates.
- Quarterly Newsletter, *Perspective*.
Upcoming PANJ meetings, events, noteworthy articles related to the legal profession, etc.
- Discounted Professional Headshots.
- Certified Paralegal Exam Sweepstakes.
- Discounted Certified Paralegal Exam Preparation Programs from *The Paralegal Education Group* www.ParalegalEducationGroup.com.
- Discounted Career Coaching packages including Resume Writing and Interview Tips from *InvisiScope Solutions* www.InvisiScope.com.
- Discounted Subscriptions to *New Jersey Law Journal* www.Law.com/NJLawJournal.
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THE UNCONVENTIONAL PARALEGAL THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

OH, THE HATS WE WEAR!

By Vincent Ascolese

Today's paralegal role and job description demands flexibility. Now, paralegals are required to wear more hats as an employee because the requirements and expectations of employers have changed.

When I tell laypeople that I am a paralegal inevitably they ask, "So, what do you do? Legal research?" I used to tell them the specific tasks I perform and follow up with a disclaimer that all paralegal tasks are different. This can be true even in the same practice area within the same firm. The hats worn are different as well.

My very first internship was at a solo practitioner's office. The internship mostly consisted of preparing Last Will and Testaments, preparing correspondence and copying. My next internship was at a law firm whose main practice area was Asbestos Litigation. There, I performed mostly data entry with a little legal research.

In 1998, I began working as a full-time paralegal. I welcomed the new challenges offered by this career. From time to time, the firm also asked me to courier documents to courthouses, including Newark, Trenton and locally. I was an asset to my employer. One morning at 3 am, I was called to bring demonstrative exhibits to a Federal Court for a trial occurring in the morning. Saying "no" was not in my vocabulary at that time. Being an entrusted courier was not a skill taught in my formal education, but it is a hat that paralegals sometimes wear as an integral part of a team. Also, this was an invaluable experience as I learned how the courts and attorneys work from a practical viewpoint.

At my current firm, I was assigned a Foreclosure and Bankruptcy matter, which were new practice areas to me. I learned to research deadlines, court rules, local rules of the Sheriff's Office, and Proof of Claims. These were not projects I had never performed before.

This is why CLE seminars, such as those offered by the Paralegal Association of New Jersey and the Annual NJ Paralegal Convention are so important for paralegals. I am always impressed with the content on the seminars, the additional skills learned and the application of these new skills to various practice areas. Having knowledge in new and different practice areas has made me more effective as a paralegal by increasing my applicability.

I was most shocked when a shareholder at my current firm asked me to type his dictation. Yes, I was shocked. I objected by saying that transcribing dictation was administrative and might have a gateway effect for other shareholders to make similar administrative requests of me. Among other things, I was told by this Shareholder the location of the firm's exit door. I learned the following that day:

- Doing an administrative task is still an important task;
- The dictation was only a few minutes;
- I was not willing to lose my job over a few minutes of typing;
- Humility is important;
- I may be asked to perform tasks which cannot be billed to a client; and
- Find ways to say "no" sparingly. A paralegal's job is to assist.

(See article, *The Power of "No"* from Spring/Summer 2019 *Perspective*)

As a paralegal I wear many hats including some of which I am not always happy about. I am, however, learning to be a more flexible employee and practical paralegal.

Vincent Ascolese graduated from St. John's University with a Bachelor's degree in Paralegal Studies in 1998. He has over 15 years working as a paralegal in various practice areas including: employment, commercial litigation, and business litigation. Most recently he works in practice areas including personal injury, workers' compensation and business litigation. Vincent has served on the Special Paralegal Committee to the New Jersey State Bar Association. He is an active member and is a former Trustee-at-Large for the Paralegal Association of New Jersey.

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From Paralegal to Investigator

By Carina Yturbe,

On The Lookout Investigations LLC Investigator



Growing up with a father who is a retired Federal Correction's Officer and a mother who is a paralegal, I naturally developed a curiosity and passion for law. I would always listen to them talk about their experiences at work and watched endless amounts of criminal shows. I knew that I wanted to follow their footsteps and make my own career path in the legal field, especially in criminal law so I received an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice. Going to school for criminal justice really helped me understand the Constitution that we all live by and to understand everyone's rights. There are many facets to this area of law such as law enforcement, the actual practice of law, court procedures and civil litigation to name a few. I became even more fascinated with the legal field and wanted to further my education. I thereafter received my Paralegal Certificate from an ABA approved program. The paralegal studies program made me realize how much I love to challenge myself and conduct research.

At the time of my graduation, I was working in the Litigation Department for DGR-The Source for Legal Support. I was responsible for reviewing documents provided by our clients and processing them in our system to be served upon the defendants in their case. I always found myself researching the court rules for service of process, constantly asking questions to ensure that each file was served properly. I wanted to be more involved in each individual case and working with individuals in the legal field appealed to me. I wanted to do more for our clients and I was ready for more responsibility. DGR's sister company, On the Lookout Investigations, needed an investigator so I expressed my interest and was approved for the transition!

This is where I began my journey in the exciting world of investigations! I was thrilled to learn new skills that would enhance my career and complement my paralegal experience. Of course, like any other investigator, I had to complete several trainings and learn the necessary techniques that an investigator would utilize to research and obtain information. One of the most important things that I learned in conducting investigations is ETHICS! Regardless of what you may know of a defendant and/or entity, the way you obtain any information can really make or break your case in court. Using all the education and skilled training I've received, I put my best foot forward and entered the position as a Private Investigator.

After working on hundreds of cases, I must say that I have found my real purpose. On the Lookout provides multiple services that aid in many different types of cases which allows me to put my paralegal know-how to work. I assist attorneys and paralegals every day helping them to obtain information related to their cases in connection with collection of judgments, performing asset searches, locating a new address to serve a defendant, or preparation of witness statements which in the end will help their clients!

When people look at me, they do not anticipate that I am a Private Investigator ("PI") which is beneficial when I am out in the field interviewing possible witnesses and/or conducting surveillance. My litigation experience helps me interact with clients to truly understand what records and/or documents they will need in court. My paralegal skills of organization, analyzing documents, document preparation and summarizing information have all helped me remain objective in case management. I have the honor to help change people's lives for the better and am very thankful to DGR-The Source for Legal Support and On the Lookout Investigations for giving me the opportunity to develop into a PI.

Never in a million years did I think I would ever utilize my paralegal training to become an actual Private Investigator, but I am a true living testament that if you chase your dreams and challenge yourself, you can make anything possible!

Serving Internationally: What to Expect

By: Amanda Sexton

Maintaining up to date knowledge of the process serving rules across the country is a task in itself, especially with each state having different laws. International process service is even more complicated. So what are the main things you need to know?

Timing

Service within our country can be expected to generally be completed between 2-7 days on average. Over the border is another story, with service taking anywhere from 3 months to two years depending on the country and the method selected for service.

Types of International Service & Costs

There are generally three ways to serve documents internationally while maintaining proper jurisdiction and while conforming to the laws of our country and the entity abroad being served: through The Hague Service Convention Treaty, by Letters Rogatory or via agent. The Hague Convention was established in 1965 in order to create an avenue for service of process without the need to bring consular or diplomatic channels into the equation. This reduces the amount of time it takes for process to be effectuated (generally 3-6 months) – a plus in any case.

For the countries that have not joined the Hague Service Convention, the only option to serve is through Letters Rogatory. These requests from courts in one country to the judiciary of a foreign country usually goes through diplomatic channels and can take more than a year. In addition to taking longer than going through the Hague Service Convention, costs associated with this type of service are generally significantly higher.

There is a third method of service which could be accomplished but may not be enforceable in judgments, which would be service by Agent. In some cases, such as matrimonial cases when a judgment overseas will not be enforced but the attorney is only interested in notification to the defendant, this method not only works well but is accomplished in much faster times. Most services abroad when utilizing an Agent for service, such as a local Process Server within that country, can be done in weeks as compared to months or more than 1 year. However, while this may be an option, our courts generally will not allow a judgment to be enforced overseas and the opposing country may also not allow this method of service in some instances.

Translation

Any documents that are to be served in another country are required to be translated into the native tongue of that particular country in order to be considered valid. However, there are some countries such as Hong Kong where translation is not required. Be sure to check each individual country prior to translating and also be sure to utilize the correct language. Some countries require different translations depending on the region where service is being performed. Switzerland also declared that documents to be served must be translated into German, French or Italian, depending on the part of Switzerland in which the document is to be served. Also be sure that the translation is certified.

Choosing a Server

When choosing an international process server, make sure you chose someone who is experienced in these matters. The cost and time associated with this type of service are not something that should be invested without ensuring that the task will be completed properly and efficiently.

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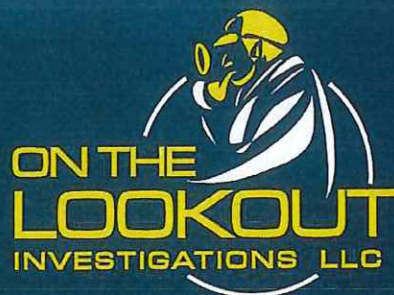
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Trends That Are Fueling the Influence and Impact of Paralegals and Paralegal Managers

By Ari Kaplan and Daniel Bonner

While law firms have been reconfiguring their staffing infrastructures for years, paralegals and those who manage them have maintained or elevated their roles as foundational elements in the internal hierarchy. Despite creating multi-tiered partnership tracks, specialty attorneys and contract lawyers, in addition to traditional associates, and hiring an array of business professionals, paralegals continue to be the central liaisons to this interdisciplinary team that helps to execute each firm's vision.

To better understand the dynamics associated with this constituency and highlight key changes in workplace expectations, digitization, and vendor relations, Level 2 Legal Solutions, a boutique provider of legal solutions, including managed review services and advanced eDiscovery consulting, engaged Ari Kaplan Advisors, a leading legal industry consultancy tracking market developments, to develop a study to help offer benchmarking and insights for the entire community. It highlights the delicate balance between autonomy and collaboration, the alignment of internal capabilities with outside support, the factors fueling job satisfaction among paralegals and their managers, market shifts prompted by technology, and an array of other details that are driving the legal profession forward.

"Level 2 Legal works side-by-side with many paralegals and values their crucial role in the success of our clients," said Joey Seeber, CEO of Level 2 Legal Solutions. "Our team is pleased to support this independent research to offer clarity and spark conversation about the remarkable impact of paralegals on the changing legal profession."

Participants

Ari Kaplan personally interviewed 13 paralegals and 22 paralegal managers during July and August of 2018 about: trends in the profession; the value of collaboration; levels of job satisfaction; the impact of technology on practice management; the utilization of outside resources; the increasing levels of autonomy; changes in e-discovery and litigation support; and other topics.

86% of the respondents were with AmLaw 200 law firms (with one at a Canadian law firm of a similar size). The remaining participants were with law firms of between 90 to 200 lawyers. 43% percent had more than 25 years of experience and 83% had more than 10 years of experience. None of the participants had fewer than five years of experience and 69% supervised other paralegals or practice management professionals.

The most frequently cited trends were collaboration, outsourcing, technological expansion, and the evolution of paraprofessional responsibilities. Other key findings include:

- 71% advised that collaboration is *extremely important* to their day-to-day work.
- 63% receive periodic training.
- 49% described their level of autonomy as *significant*.
- 37% could perform their work without technology.

With 94% of respondents working for firms that leverage outside providers and 49% serving as the primary contact for some of them, the development of a team-oriented culture was a common theme. In addition, 63% of the survey participants provide litigation support and 60% have some responsibility for e-discovery, which reflects the growing impact of those fields on law firm activity.

Collaboration is Key

With respect to that law firm activity, 89% of respondents said that collaboration is *very important* or *extremely important* to their performance. The most prominent reasons for the emphasis on collaboration were to avoid duplication of work, maximize the overall value of the team, and prevent errors. Given that paralegals are often at the center of most matters researching, coordinating, and updating, their ability to collaborate is a fundamental component of their work.

Autonomy is Not About Isolation

Despite the need to work together, almost half (49%) of those interviewed described their level of autonomy as *significant*, and 89% described it as *significant* or *above average*. 23% of the respondents reported to a lawyer, while 43% reported to a senior administrator. While paralegals reported enjoying a degree of autonomy in their work, they were not fully autonomous because they are working in a law firm setting. Most enjoyed some level of freedom, but also welcome the opportunity to share ideas with peers. It is this need to balance deep thinking, solitary work with an organized team effort that typically defines the modern role of the paralegal and those who manage their time.

Paralegals are Prospering

It is no surprise that paralegals and their managers are finding success in an era where their work is appreciated and an essential part of how legal teams operate. 94% of respondents reported being satisfied in their current role. Many identified the challenge of simplifying complexity in both paralegal work and its management appealing, valued their overall impact, and were attracted to the ability to bring order to the chaos of litigation. A number of the participants specifically identified the diversity of their work as an appealing factor, which is critical in a dynamically changing legal industry.

Technology is Transformative

The most significant element affecting the transformation of law firm operations is the influence of technology on how professionals work and a majority of the paralegals and paralegal managers who participated agreed. In fact, 63% of respondents reported that technology has replaced the work they used to do manually and the same number noted that they could not perform their work without it. The remainder acknowledged that while they could do so, it would result in a lower level of efficiency and responsiveness. Still, 94% described their reliance on technology as *essential*, which was the highest rating available in the survey. The key areas of change include the paperless office, document management, and general automation.

E-Discovery is Expansive

60% of respondents provided litigation support and 63% had responsibility for e-discovery. The most common challenges cited by paralegals and practice management leaders were the lack of familiarity with discovery by the attorneys with whom they work, navigating between the various professionals who manage e-discovery, the level of experience by new hires, and the need to embrace technology to maximize its value.

Since 94% of those interviewed reported that their firms leverage outside providers in addition to internal support and 54% influence the process, their perspective on factors that enhance their relationships with outside vendors was valuable. They recommended: (1) disclosing and addressing mistakes quickly; (2) billing accurately and on a timely basis; (3) responding to inquiries quickly and comprehensively; (4) proactively making suggestions and offering supplemental guidance.

Conclusion

As law firm workflow dynamics continue to evolve and clients increasingly influence case management through direct outside vendor relationships, it is often the paralegals and professionals who manage their talent that serve as the nexus between all of the practitioners involved in any given matter. By cultivating seamless collaboration and empowerment through technology, paralegals and practice management leaders are fueling a positive transformation within their organizations.

Ari Kaplan is a legal industry analyst and Daniel Bonner is the Director of Client Solutions for Level 2 Legal Solutions. Learn more about the authors at <http://www.AriKaplanAdvisors.com> and <http://www.Level2Legal.com>. Download a copy of the report at <https://level2legal.com/who-we-serve/paralegals>.



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MONETIZING ME AND MY TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

By Nichole Chobin

As a Paralegal, how often do you have this conversation with yourself? Does it go something like this?

"I'd love to apply for that job in the finance/contract department of that fancy car dealership. But they won't hire me because I'm just a Paralegal right...? Well...what about that position in that tech company as a Manager of Sales Operations. They would never hire me, again, I'm a Paralegal. But I'd LOVE, LOVE, LOVE to apply for that position as Director of Operations in that digital agency but hey...I'm a Paralegal I can't imagine why they would even consider me in that field. Well I guess I could always start my own business if no one will hire me, but wait, I mean...what do I really know about running a business? I'm a Paralegal not an entrepreneur. What CAN I do?"

If you've ever had this type of conversation with yourself or even thought about it, you know what...this is the better question to ask yourself. The one with the most honest answer. What CAN'T I do?

You went to school for Paralegal studies. You have extensive research skills, been trained and tested in multiple fields of law (contract, corporate, criminal, real estate) and so much more. These are viable and most importantly transferrable skills. Ones that will last THE—REST—OF—YOUR--LIFE. And when you monetize your other assets along with them it can make you unstoppable in your career trajectory.

All companies need Paralegals. Perhaps not in the terms of its most basic definition (Paralegal) but in the transferrable skills that Paralegals have. (You'll note that term A LOT throughout this article - "transferrable skills"). If nothing else, after reading this you will have that term ingrained in your brain. TRANSFERABLE SKILLS. Because it's 100% true and something you can cultivate allowing you to find that purpose, passion, inner peace and happiness in your work that will support you and/or your family affording you options you never thought you'd have. Your training has given you the ability to become a chameleon, blending into many different professional arenas. I'm a Paralegal. It's become one of my greatest assets. Two other assets: Mindset and Skills. And when combined together, you're truly unstoppable.

The first few sentences in this article were about four different positions: How many of them have I ACTUALLY had? 3 out of the 4. I was offered the position in the car dealership. I've actually been a Manager of Sales Operations for a tech firm that went public (crazy and fun!), a business owner a few times over, and Director of Operations for a digital agency. Never, ever doubt your capabilities or yourself!

And here's a kicker to this. During the course of my 27-year career I've survived two fiancés dying, a plane crash, and a debilitating disease that almost partially paralyzed me. It was like the hits just kept coming. And to this day I sometimes still think to myself, "Seriously! You've got to be kidding me!"

We all face adversity in our lives. But learning to take that adversity and turn it into empowerment is added fuel to the learned and transferrable skills we also possess. It's key to living the best lives we can. We are all stronger than we could possibly imagine; it's in our DNA. Never doubt that you can be POWERHOUSES in your own right and never let your adversities define who you are. But one definition you can use to help define you and your career is MONETIZE. The definition: "Convert into the form of currency, Earn revenue from (an asset)." You are the asset. And you need to monetize yourself!

I learned early on how to monetize ME! How to alter my mindset and hone my skills in a way that allowed me to transition smoothly from: working for an attorney, moving into the position of a closing department supervisor for a mortgage broker, to additionally working as a liaison for large lenders in the real estate world, to becoming the executive assistant to the President of a global company, morphing into the Manager of Sales Operations for a tech company, to owning my own businesses, and finally to accepting a position as Director of Operations for a digital agency. I'm not saying all of this was easy. It absolutely wasn't. It took time, a lot of exhaustion, and sweat equity in myself.

When I graduated as a Paralegal finding a job was HARD. Starting smaller than what I had hoped for got me a job as a Paralegal working for a sole practitioner. For me, it was a stepping stone that built up my resume (THAT WAS KEY). But I knew if I wanted to accelerate my career I had to find a challenging position to continuously move forward in my career trajectory.

After a year I started to research jobs, talk to former classmates and professors, hangout in places where attorneys and paralegals tended to haunt. It may sound simple but let me tell you it worked. Within a year's time I had met the owner of a mortgage broker company at an event (network, network, network) and when he told me about a Closing Supervisor position in the Legal Department I knew I had to apply. After a few rounds of interviews, I got the job. I can honestly say this wholeheartedly-talk to people who have honed interview skills. It's invaluable in helping you secure a position. Even if you think you have it nailed in your head, there is always room for improvement. Talk to friends, family, co-workers, mentors, coaches, use whatever tools you have in your toolbox that can propel you forward in your career path.

And you know what else? Being a Paralegal gave me a hands up because as such I already possessed the inherent skills of being a closer- I knew what it entailed. It takes a very detail-oriented person, with in-depth knowledge of the real estate genre, contract/research/review skills, and a strong mindset that can juggle multiple balls. That's how I presented myself in my impromptu meeting with the company's owner and that's how I crafted my resume. The eye is in the detail.

After some years building that position up from the ground level to managing multiple locations, I found myself working not only within that company but becoming a liaison for some lending giants that I regularly worked with continuously expanding on my "transferrable skills".

During the course of my career, I predominantly chose to work for start-up and smaller companies looking to build out. I knew I'd be able to help in the transition and be a part of building the structure and foundation of a platform. I knew all of this would eventually help me glean additional "transferrable skills" aiding me in becoming a business owner down the road. That was MY personal, ultimate goal.

After some years I decided it was time to challenge myself and switched gears. I applied and interviewed for a position as an executive assistant to the President of a global company. I had researched the company and yes, I knew that this position entailed many different facets. It wasn't a small or start-up company but I knew working for the owner would give me extensive business ownership knowledge.

I highlighted my past endeavors that would tip the scale for me in nailing the interview and getting the job. I was a Paralegal. I had extensive training and experience in paying attention to detail, in researching/managing things, working well within a team, creating a team, and understood the discretion needed to be an executive assistant at this level. I had the "transferrable skills" to accommodate what the President needed in a right-hand person. I got the job. I was able to observe the President firsthand running the company. It was a tremendous experience. Until the company relocated to Florida. Job hunt time.

After many interviews, one position came to light-Manager of Sales Operation for a tech startup that was gearing up to going public. This really interested me. The company was heavily involved in the creation of VOIP-voice over IP- something we now all know and use every day. I would be interacting daily with Lucent and Cisco and have vested shares in the IPO when it went public. This was a dream job. I interviewed with the C-Suite of executives and if hired would be working directly for the VP of Sales in managing the team, cost efficiency, and working hand in hand with the legal department with client contracts.

All the previous skills from the closing department and executive assistant positions fell right into place. I poised myself with a strong resume and 'can-do' attitude from the get go. After multiple rounds of interviews, I got the job. Again, it was my constant up-talk and scaling of my paralegal background that pushed me to the front of the pack. I used my "transferrable skills" to monetize myself.

After the company went public, I cashed in my stocks knowing this was the perfect opportunity to start my first business. Positioning myself with my own backing, I went for it. It was a dream come true. Many things helped to create this incredible opportunity: all my previous jobs, the learned skills from past positions including early on retail in high school and accounting firms in college, and most importantly, all my paralegal training. My real estate law experience helped me find the perfect location and review the lease with the landlord. My financial law experience helped me in making the best deals possible and my contract review skills and extreme attention to detail helped with dealing with vendors. All together...the ability to run a successful business with employees.

I did this for a number of years until a family tragedy struck and I had to alter my plans. But once again my paralegal background came to the forefront in dismantling my business, selling it off in pieces so I could yield the best possible financial gain, and moving on with my life. I also knew I had to find another job. This time I interviewed with small companies again and took a position as a Director of Operations for a digital agency. The job entailed many things I'd done in my business and in the tech start-up. It also included legal review and working with clients. A perfect blend of my paralegal training and then some.

I did also start up another business-a professional speaking company. I now travel the country speaking to and for Fortune 500 companies, Big Pharma, governmental and legislative agencies, non-profits, and community outreach. This is my passion, my purpose and has now become part of my profession.

During the course of my career I've reinvented myself more times than Madonna. No matter where you are in your career, there's one thing you always need to remember, always need to do. Take all the things, past and present, your "additional assets" and fold them into what you are creating for your future.

If you've worked in retail, use it. Worked in the food service industry (hostess, server, cook...)? Use it. If you were a receptionist for a certain profession (law/marketing/accounting), use it. All of these "additional assets" can become "transferrable skills" when combined with the learned knowledge from school.

You don't have to have all the answers right away. Career paths can change many times over. The key is to keep learning, challenging yourself, and putting into practice all your "transferrable skills". Continue to move forward or work for a company for life. But never, ever sell yourself short on MONETIZING YOUR TRAINING as a Paralegal. You're a valuable asset. Always stay sharp, maintain your training, and continue your education. Become a certified paralegal. Enhance your value. You're worth it.

Being a Paralegal can help you find a place of happiness in loving what you do, doing what you love, and finding a place of financial comfort. We all deserve a career that truly motivates and inspires us.

Nichole is a "Powerhouse Woman" who engages and educates others because she has lived it; taking life altering experiences and turned them into positive knowledge and the mastery of passion, purpose, and profession. After years of success as an entrepreneur, business owner, operations director, and professional speaker, she also takes great pride in the legislative work she does in Washington, D.C. and her home state of New Jersey working directly with Congress and the Senate to help enact legislature that will ensure future generations the best healthcare.

Delivering tailored programs with humor and her personal experiences, she makes certain she creates a lively environment that captivates, engages, and inspires. Her high energy and dynamic personality ensure that messages resonate with attendees and accomplish the goals that are set when speaking to and for Fortune 500 clients nationwide, businesses large and small, governmental, and non-profits.



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