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### **Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and may not reflect the official view of the Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on the subjects covered. However, the objective of this issue is not to provide legal advice. If legal advice or other assistance is required, you should retain the services of a competent professional

## **Message From the 2009 President**

*Gwen Burgess, CLA*

It's all wrapped up – 2009. We had high hopes and lofty dreams for MPA for this year, many of which have been realized. One important goal was to provide CLE opportunities for our membership across the state.

In the Jackson-Metro area, monthly luncheons have provided excellent opportunities for obtaining CLE credits and for expanding our knowledge of a variety of practice areas. In addition, the Spring and Fall seminars were outstanding for their speakers and the topics presented. Sarah O'Neal, Vice President/Education, and the Education Committee have done an outstanding job in organizing these events and in recruiting speakers who were enlightening and interesting.

Statewide, such opportunities have been available to our members through Lorman Educational Services which has offered discounts to MPA members who participate in their webinars. Please be sure to visit <http://www.msparalegals.org/courses.htm> for information concerning the courses offered and how to utilize the discount available to MPA members.

MPA also offered a half-day seminar at the Gulf Coast campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in November. Many thanks to Subrina Cooper, Director of Paralegal Studies at USM, for her help in obtaining speakers and a location. Without the hard work of Region Directors Deborah Player (Region II) and Bridget Breithaupt (Region V) this seminar would never have gotten off the ground. Sarah O'Neal is phenomenal at organizing seminars and her ability to pull things together - pretty much at the last minute in this instance - was truly amazing to see. While this isn't the first time MPA has sponsored a seminar on the Gulf Coast, this was the first one in several years. We hope this will become an annual event.

## Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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In addition to these events and opportunities, some of the highlights of MPA's year include

- Administering the Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal exam on behalf of NALA
- Publication of our quarterly newsletter
- Serving at Stewpot Community Service several times during the year
- Spring Seminar in April
- Fall Seminar and Vendor Fair in September
- Gulf Coast Seminar in November
- Student Essay Contest
- Procuring Proclamation by Governor celebrating Paralegal Day
- CLA/CP Review Seminar
- Donations to charities

We really have done a lot this year! But none of it would have been possible without the work of the Executive Board (a/k/a "the Board"). I cannot imagine a more hard-working group of leaders in any organization. Each person has gone above and beyond the call of duty – and everything they have done has been to help make MPA a stellar organization for your benefit. I hope you will give a word of thanks to the officers who served you so well during 2009:

- Janie Boyd, CP – Secretary
- Sarah O'Neal, ACP – Vice President/Education
- Kimberly Pierce, CP – Treasurer
- Mary Lynne Underwood – Vice President/New Membership
- Cathy Myers, CLA – Vice President/Established Membership
- LaTricia Nelson-Easley, ACP – NALA Liaison
- Darleen Dozier, CLA – Student Liaison
- Paula Joyner, CP – Region I Director
- Deborah Player, CLA – Region II Director
- Ammi Gates, CLA – Region III Director
- Sharon Gowan – Region IV Director
- Bridget Breithaupt – Region V Director and Newsletter Editor
- Suzanne Faison, ACP - Parliamentarian

2009 and all we have done during the year is behind us now. All of the possibilities of the New Year now lie ahead. Commit now to make just a little of YOUR time to devote to making MPA the association you want to see it become. It can only be as good as YOU as a member make it – and your involvement is key!

On a personal note, many of you know that my husband was killed in a motorcycle accident recently. I have been amazed and uplifted by the expressions of sympathy received from so many of you. Words cannot convey how much your support has meant to me. I also know that it has been a year of difficulty and loss for others in our membership. Some have faced loss through divorce, job loss, or loss of a loved one. To these, I

would like to offer sincere sympathy for your loss. May you find hope through your faith and through the love of your friends and family to sustain you. For those who have not experienced such loss, please know that there is no “statute of limitations” on reaching out to your fellow MPA members and friends who have suffered such loss. It’s never too late to let someone know that you care.

I am inexpressibly grateful to so many of you for your support during my tenure as MPA’s president. Although there have been a few difficult times and times when it was impossible to please everyone (Let’s face it, if it were easy, EVERYONE would want the job!), serving in this office has given me opportunities to get to know many of you better and to meet others of you where I might not have done otherwise. The relationships built during my tenure have proven priceless. My sincere hope is that you as an MPA member know that my sole desire has been to serve all of the members of MPA and to do everything I could to help make MPA a better organization.

Looking forward to 2010 – I know that as president, Sarah O’Neal will provide superb leadership for MPA. Based on our combined meeting in December of the outgoing 2009 Board members and the incoming 2010 Board members, the 2010 Board is excited and will hit the ground running. Expect great things - and help make them happen!

*Sarah O’Neal, ACP*  
*Vice President of Education*

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Time flies! Another year has come and gone already. MPA has had tremendous opportunities for Continuing Legal Education this year. We had two all day seminars, a half-day seminar on the Gulf Coast, and great monthly luncheon speakers. You suggested, we heard, and responded to the numerous requests for Ethics CLE with four opportunities for you to get ethics credits this year.

As paralegals, I feel we should be well rounded and exposed to all areas of law; and I tried to incorporate that belief into the programs presented to you this year. We learned a little bit about a lot of topics, such as construction liens, adoptions, entertainment law, ethics, real estate law, military law, child support services, social security disability, procedures of the court of appeals, and air and space law just to name a few. I hope that each of you enjoyed the CLE sessions as much as I did.

I have enjoyed serving on the Board as Vice President of Education and look forward to serving as your President. I want to thank the Education Committee for all their hard work; I would not have made it this year without you. I know great things are in store for the upcoming year and I look forward to learning about many more subjects.

Let your voice be heard; participate by suggesting ways to improve our monthly luncheons and seminars. We want to hear from you. If you have an idea for a topic or speaker you would like to see presented, please contact us at [vpeducation@mpa.org](mailto:vpeducation@mpa.org). Onward to 2010, let’s make it the best year yet.

# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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*Deborah Player, CLA  
Region II Director*

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Happy Holidays to all Region II members and friends in George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone Counties! Another eventful year has flown by, and I am sad to say my tenure as Region II Director is coming to a close. I appreciate the opportunity I was given to serve as your MPA representative.

As you may already know, MPA sponsored a CLE seminar at the University of Southern Mississippi campus in Long Beach, Mississippi, on November 13. With the invaluable assistance of Subrina Cooper, Director of Paralegal Studies at USM, the perfect venue was provided for us--conveniently located on Highway 90 midway between Gulfport and Bay St. Louis. (Many thanks, Subrina!) Sarah O'Neal, MPA's Vice President of Education, performed a miracle and found three wonderful speakers whose presentations included the workings of social security disability, the basics of real estate, and ethics. Bridget Breithaupt, newly elected Region II Director, worked tirelessly to plan and organize the seminar and will be utilizing that experience in planning and organizing a Gulf Coast seminar in 2010.

The MPA Board felt that holding a seminar on the Gulf Coast was an excellent way to reconnect with the legal community in Region II since Hurricane Katrina decimated the area. Although it was only a half-day seminar, we were able to provide 3.0 hours of continuing education credits and training to Region II paralegals and legal assistants, but specifically to those Certified Legal Assistants, Certified Paralegals, and Advanced Certified Paralegals who need CLE credits to maintain their certification. We are optimistic at this new beginning, and hope to provide Region II legal professionals more opportunities for continuing education, training and support.



**Sarah O'Neal, ACP**



**November 13, 2009  
Gulf Coast Seminar Attendees**

# MPA GULF COAST SEMINAR PRESENTERS



**Mr. James Gardner, Sr., Esq.**  
Gardner Law Firm

Topic: Social Security Disability



**Mr. Brett McCall, Esq.**  
Baker, Donelson, Bearman,  
Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Topic: Real Estate



**Mr. Robert Harenski, J.D.**  
Instruction, The University  
of Southern Mississippi

Topic: Ethics



Due to circumstances beyond our control, the monthly meetings will be held at the **University Club in the Regions Plaza building beginning with the March meeting.** The price of lunch will remain \$14.50 and parking will be \$2.00 per hour.



# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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<b>MISSISSIPPI PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC</b>		
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Jackson, MS 39205		
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Vice-President of Education	Sarah O'Neal, ACP	<a href="mailto:sarah.oneal@youngwilliams.com">sarah.oneal@youngwilliams.com</a>
Vice-President of New Membership	Mary Lynne A. Underwood	<a href="mailto:munderwood@watkinseager.com">munderwood@watkinseager.com</a>
Vice-President of Established Membership	Cathy M. Myers, CLA	<a href="mailto:cathy.myers63@comcast.net">cathy.myers63@comcast.net</a>
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Parliamentarian	Suzanne W. Faison, ACP	<a href="mailto:sfaison@watkinsludlam.com">sfaison@watkinsludlam.com</a>

**MISSISSIPPI PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.  
2009 COMMITTEES**

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>
<b>AUDIT</b>	Kimberly Pierce, CP
<b>BAR RELATIONS</b>	Linda Dale
<b>BYLAWS</b>	Suzanne Faison, ACP
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Sarah O'Neal, ACP
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	Mary Lynne Underwood (VP/New) Cathy Myers, CLA (VP/Established)
<b>NEWSLETTER</b>	Bridget Breithaupt, CP
<b>PRO BONO</b>	Melissa McCarty
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Suellen Johnson
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Paula Joyner, CP
<b>STUDENT LIAISON</b>	Darleen Dozier, CLA
<b>CLA COORDINATOR</b>	Donna Alderman, ACP
<b>JOB BANK COORDINATOR</b>	Amy Baldwin
<b>PARLIAMENTARIAN</b>	Suzanne Faison, ACP
<b>HISTORIAN</b>	<i>Per Bylaws, same as Chairperson of Public Relations Committee</i>

# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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*Ammi Gates, CLA  
Region III Director*

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Hello Region III members!

If you are a paralegal in the counties of Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Coahoma, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Monroe, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union and Yalobusha, and are interested in becoming a member, renewing your membership, and/or have ideas or suggestions for meetings or seminars in the Region III area, please contact me at [ammigates@yahoo.com](mailto:ammigates@yahoo.com). Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Region III Director this year!



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**NEW ORLEANS, LA**  
504-524-6789

**SHREVEPORT, LA**  
318-221-1111

*Mary Lynn Underwood*  
*Vice President of New Membership*

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Fellow MPA Members, it's hard to believe that this year is over. I have enjoyed serving you for the past two years as your Vice President for New Membership.

We have numerous applications for new membership for January. Please continue to spread the word, and encourage others to join MPA.

This year has been filled with many wonderful speakers; many thanks to Sarah O'Neal for all of her great work.

We have a great slate of officers for the coming year, so be sure to support them. Most importantly, my main suggestion to each of you is to actively participate in the association. You will get so much more out of it with active participation.

*Janie Boyd, CP*  
*Secretary*

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WOW! What a year and who can believe that it's already December 2009 and Christmas is right around the corner! I do hope that this year has been a good year for you all. I want to tell you again how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve as Secretary of MPA, Inc. this year.

Our membership meetings this year were so well-attended and I do hope that you all enjoyed each of the speakers we had. For those of you who were able to attend the Spring and Fall Seminars, I hope you enjoyed those as well. Again, a great big "Thank You!" to Sarah O'Neal for all of her hard work in securing such outstanding speakers.

As you know, we have another good group of Board members for 2010 and I believe MPA, Inc. will have another outstanding year!

I would like to give a special welcome to my friend and co-worker, Kathy Mangum as she will be our Secretary for 2010. I know that Kathy will do a fine job in helping to move our association forward. If you do not know Kathy already, please introduce yourself.

It was so much fun getting to meet you all at our monthly membership meetings and I have enjoyed putting names together with faces! Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to serve as our Secretary this past year. I look forward to seeing each of you throughout 2010!

# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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*Sharon Gowan*  
*Region IV Director*

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I always heard my aunts and grandmother say the older you get, the faster the days and years go by. I must be getting old because this year has flown!

I guess it is true that time flies when you are having fun! The association has had a great year this year, thanks to the hard work of Gwen and the board and the participation of all of our members. If you were not able to be involved this year, I hope you will be able to participate more next year. I always hear the saying “the more you put into something, the more you’ll get out of it “ and I have found that saying to be true.

Thank you to the MPA Board for the opportunity to have served as your Region IV Director this year and I look forward to serving another year next year. Have a great Christmas and a wonderful 2010!

**Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc. is an affiliate of  
The National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.**



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**Your bright ideas are needed! We are looking for ways to improve our newsletter and we need your help.**

**We would appreciate your contribution by submitting articles of interest to you to be published. Please note the deadlines for each issue and feel free to provide any information you would like published prior to the deadline.**

**The Editor reserves the right to edit material and accept or reject materials submitted.**



## Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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*Kim Pearce, CP*  
*Treasurer*

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THANK YOU MEMBERSHIP for your confidence in me to serve you as MPA Treasurer. I have enjoyed making new friends while learning how this great Association works from the inside. I am proud of the hard work that the Board has put forth to meet the needs of our membership. Such efforts include the recent half-day seminar held at the USM Gulf Coast campus to help certified paralegals in that area obtain required CLE credits, as well as the partnership with Ole Miss and Lorman to offer the MPA membership educational opportunities.

Congratulations to the New MPA Board!! You will find that you have access to a great and supportive membership which makes it all worth while. Best of luck in 2010!

*Darleen Dozier*  
*Student Liaison*

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Another semester has quickly come to an end in the college world. As final exams approach, students work hard at pulling themselves together for one last push. For MPA, it means that we have come to the end of the MPA Student Essay Contest. This year, the committee changed the topic of the contest so that students wrote about a particular area of law in which they are interested (Real Property, Civil Litigation or Family Law), whether they wanted to work on the plaintiff or defendant side, and the job responsibilities associated with a paralegal job in this area. A record-number of fifty-five essays were submitted this year. Judges selected were Debra Hammack (Brunini Law Firm), Rebecca Meadors (Butler Snow), and Debbie Phillips (Copeland Cook). MPA greatly appreciates the time and effort it took our judges in reading through each essay and grading them according to pre-determined standards. Now... for the big news....the winners. MPA is pleased to announce the following winners of the 2009 MPA Student Essay Contest: 1st place: Karen Farhart – Holmes Community College (\$300 prize); 2nd place: Kristie Droge – Holmes Community College (\$200 place); and 3rd place: Rebecca Spencer – USM (\$100). In addition to the cash prize, each winner will receive a one-year free membership to MPA and a one-year free subscription to Facts and Findings, the quarterly journal published by the National Association of Legal Assistants. Congratulations to our winners.

On another note, I've enjoyed serving MPA as Student Liaison this year and look forward to another year. Thanks to my committee for all their hard work.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

# 2009 Essay Contest Winners

**1st Place Winner**

**Karen Farhart**

**2nd Place Winner**

**Kristie Droge**

**3rd Place Winner**

**Rebecca Spencer**





1st Place  
Essay Winner

KAREN FARHART

To be assigned to write a paper for the Mississippi Paralegal Association after only a few weeks in the paralegal program seemed overwhelming to me. I did not know how to proceed. I was not even sure I could adequately choose the area of law I wanted to work in let alone know what to expect as a paralegal in that area. Of course, my only option was to investigate and I quickly set out to learn what I could about the areas of law I was asked to choose from. Ironically, with all the information I could glean from the internet, I think I learned the most from my friend Stacey who is a paralegal for a civil litigator.

Admittedly, I would not turn down a job with a business law or real estate law firm. As a paralegal, there are many hats to wear and I am sure there would be some very interesting parts I could play in any firm as well as many interesting cases to be a part of. The more I read about that area of law, though, the less interested I became. As I stared amazed at the table of contents for a paralegal business law book I saw the word contract used over 20 times. That was when I chose to investigate family law.

I have no experience with family law. Based on what I know now, I am rare and very blessed. That may be the best reason for me to choose to stay away from the family law arena. The expectations of a paralegal in such an emotionally charged area of law may be more than I could handle. Having been married for 26 years with four children may make it difficult for me to maintain my composure. I understand the opportunities that a paralegal in a family law firm has to interact, interview, and build relationships with clients. I thought it best to pursue some knowledge of civil litigation.

It did not take long to decided that of the three choices given to me, civil litigation was my best option. I learned that depending on the law firm, the types of cases a paralegal could work on are innumerable. There are opportunities to specialize in areas representing individuals in lawsuits stemming from car accidents to large corporations defending themselves from disgruntled employees.

It seemed to me that I would have opportunities in civil litigation that would be more interesting and less emotional than the other two options. I became more enthusiastic when I realized my friend Stacey was a paralegal in that area of law. I knew that if I interviewed her I would learn a lot from her experience.

Understanding the difference between the defense and plaintiff side of civil litigation made me realize that I was not sure I had a preference. The more I listened to Stacey's very generic descriptions of some types of cases I might work on, I thought I might lean more toward the defense side, especially since they dealt more with larger companies and not so much with individuals. I might find frustration in some of the attempts individuals would make to solve their financial problems through lawsuits. Of course there are positive and negative cases throughout and I am sure there are frustrations on both sides.

I initially laughed as Stacey revealed the number of hours a paralegal can spend on any given day or week at the copier and binder table. When a case is being prepared for the Mississippi Supreme Court the number of copies of everything that need to be sent to the right people at the right time is vital. She explained to me the value of particular computer programs and the need to be always up to date on emails. The paralegal must not make a mistake, miss a date, or forget a deadline. If she did, the outcome of the case could be drastically changed.

It was in my interview with Stacey that I realized that not all attorneys work in the same manner. Her boss likes to do his own research so she rarely sees that area of paralegal work. He relies heavily on her, though, for her expertise in binder preparation. She regularly makes the phone calls to witnesses and makes sure he does not miss a deadline or court appearance. Some paralegals have the opportunity to participate in client interviews, document organizing, writing their discovery requests and reading the same from the plaintiffs.

## Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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I began this paper feeling very inadequate to even attempt an introductory paragraph . Weeks have passed since I began and my understanding of the job that I am pursuing has increased immeasurably. Added to the information I gathered from reading bits and pieces provided on the internet was my interview with Stacey. Writing this paper has been more than a chance to compile some information and add a few of my own thoughts. It has become a time of introspection. I always believed I would be a good paralegal but I have now realized that being a paralegal might just be good for me.



**2nd Place  
Essay Winner**

**KRISTIE DROGE**

We have all heard it: “What do you call fifty lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?” If you do not know the answer, then you must not work in the legal field.

Seriously, what if there were no lawyers? What if each person was responsible for his or her own legal affairs? What if each person had to represent himself or herself in a court of law?

I have worked in many areas of law along side only a handful of attorneys during the last ten years of my career. While I do believe all areas of law are important, to me, civil litigation stands above all others. If there were no lawyers, civil litigation would be anything but civil.

Civil litigation is the cornerstone of keeping peace and being fair in a world that thrives on laying blame as far away from oneself as possible. Working on the side of the defendant or plaintiff is a personal choice. I prefer to work the defense side. Just as anyone has a right to file suit against another, I believe everyone and every entity has the right to an adequate defense. Some people view defense work as helping someone get away with something illegal. I do not condone illegal actions, but I do believe a defendant should be protected by the governing laws and should receive punishment, if guilty, accordingly. For example, if a defendant decides to settle a case with a plaintiff, then that defendant should not settle for more than what the maximum legal penalty would be if found guilty at trial. This is why the world needs lawyers and why people should not represent themselves in legal matters.

My job as a paralegal is a very important part of the defense team. From the beginning of a case, I am directly involved, sometimes even being the first to meet with a client. It is of utmost importance to make a good impression and to appear knowledgeable without giving legal advice. I have often times felt like a shoulder to cry on for clients, and although I had no legal training for that, it does at times become part of my job. It is important to me to make our clients feel welcome and needed as a client.

As a case develops, my job responsibilities increase. After the initial meeting with a client, I create a file and begin a calendar for the case. I must make certain deadlines are scheduled, as well as follow up dates. I count out days to respond to the complaint and to discovery, as well as pick certain dates to follow up with the client for status reports. I create a checklist for each case and work on different matters as time allows, always meeting the deadline. I feel it is not my place, but the lawyer's place to decide when to ask for an extension of time to respond.

More involvement in the case includes drafting documents, such as interrogatories, requests for production of documents and requests for admissions, to opposing parties. I will also draft our client's responses to discovery. I draft letters to the court clerk, letters to the client, and letters requesting information such as medical records or employment records. I set up depositions by securing agreed-upon dates, contacting a court reporter, and drafting a notice of deposition.

While the above is a general description of what most paralegals do no matter what type of law he or she works in, there are some other duties I take very seriously and believe whole heartedly that every paralegal should take pride in. I believe it is essential to maintain adequate, correct and thorough time records. On all matters that I bill time, I write down a description of the work I have performed and the amount of time I have spent on that file. I also make notes of what the lawyer does on the file so there will be no questions when it is time to enter billables into the system. A second passion of mine is to make certain I stay up-to-date on the newest technology whether it is computer software or electronic court filings. I also keep a close watch on statutes that are revised and note the date they become effective. These are just a couple of things that keep me on my toes and help my work to flow smoothly.

Civil litigation is a very exciting field of law. While the steps of all cases are generally the same, no two cases are really alike. There are different facts, circumstances, parties, venues, courts, lawyers, witnesses, experts, and other matters to consider. What I like most about litigation is the gust-o! While there is always

## Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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stress in a law office, there is never a dull moment and that alone keeps me coming back for more! I know many people in the legal field, and I do not think one of them has found the passion for law that I have. They tell me all the time how burnt out they are, and I tell them they must throw themselves into the case and give it all they have. Civil litigation is not repetitious. There is always something new and exciting – a new verdict from the U.S. Supreme Court can make you laugh or cry.

There are many types of law and each type has different characteristics. My hope is that no matter what law a person practices that they will have the fulfillment and excitement in their career that I have. A good start...that is what cynics call fifty lawyers at the bottom of the ocean.

**3rd Place  
Essay Winner**

**REBECCA SPENCER**



The area of family law can be one of the most emotional and stressful areas of law, but it can also be one of the most rewarding. Attorneys who work mostly in family law work in several areas some of which are divorce, child support, adoption and protection from domestic violence. The clients who walk through the door of an attorney that works in family law are usually experiencing the most stressful, trying time of their life. Attorneys and their paralegals have to not only provide legal services; they also provide emotional support. No two days are the same and no two clients arrive with the same set of circumstances. One client may feel trapped in a loveless, abusive marriage that for all intents and purposes has ended in every way but legal. The next client may be a loving couple who is looking to adopt a baby or child and finally they feel their family will be complete. Family law is the area of law that I feel would be most compatible with my personality and skills.

As a paralegal working in family law I would want to work on the side of the plaintiff. The plaintiff is the client who initiates the lawsuit and is most commonly the one who is seeking some sort of relief from their life circumstances. The defendant would be the one from whom the plaintiff is seeking relief from. Working on the side of the plaintiff would be much more rewarding than working to defend a spouse who was abusive or not paying child support. When working on a file that deals with a divorce often times these marriages are dissolving with children in tow. The children are the ones who have most to lose, and are the ones who will be most affected by the divorce. I think that in family law when we must work hard to protect the interest of our

client, plaintiff or defendant, the children can sometimes get lost in the shuffle or tossed back and forth as a bargaining tool. As a paralegal working on the side of the plaintiff I would hope to never forget not only the interest of the client, but also the interest of the children.

The duties of a paralegal working in family law are not all that different from a paralegal working in any other area of law. The usual duties of a paralegal are assisting attorneys with their work load by drafting legal documents, sitting-in on initial consultations with new clients to take notes, filing pleadings at the court house, and any other duty the attorney may deem necessary for a successful outcome to the clients' case. Those duties that would be unique to a family law paralegal would be the specific documents drafted; petitions for adoption, prenuptial agreements, and divorce papers dealing with division of property and child custody matters just to name a few. Paralegals will also field calls coming from clients who want to know what is going on with their case. They provide regular updates to clients and are simply there to listen, without giving advice, when clients just need someone to talk to. Paralegals working in family law act as a liaison between client and attorney. While the client is going through the perhaps the most traumatic period of their life they will want their attorney to act as something more than what truly falls under the responsibilities of an attorney. The paralegal will be there to comfort the client reasonably without acting as a counselor and then maybe refer the client to a counselor if their emotional distress is beyond just needing to talk.

I look forward to being a paralegal, because I feel that it is a field that will provide me with the opportunity to utilize many of my skills. I am very organized and can navigate efficiently on a computer. I would choose family law because I love working with people. I never see problems only opportunities to make situations better. I think my eagerness to improve our client's life will make me great at my job and will only work to serve the client more successfully.





December 15, 2009

## **NALA Programs Heat Up**

The impressive array of educational and professional development programs that NALA has cultivated in the past 35 years are entering the new year with renewed vigor and an intense focus on the needs of paralegals.

### **NALA Campus LIVE!**

The scope of NALA's educational programs can be seen in the Spring Session of NALA Campus LIVE! for 2010. With 44 courses scheduled from February 4 through May 25, this is the largest session ever offered in this popular interactive format that allows registrants to participate via personal computer and toll-free telephone conference call.

The first course to be presented on February 4 will be on the timely subject of "New gTLDs," a hot topic for paralegals involved in Internet IP matters. The course will be taught by Debra J. Monke, ACP, who is well known for her previous presentations and magazine articles on intellectual property topics.

A dozen of the Spring Session courses are recommended as preparation for the Certified Paralegal Examination. The LIVE! presentations include the established courses on the "American Legal System," "Basic Business Organizations," "Civil Litigation," "Blue Book Review of Citations," Judgment and Legal Analysis," "Legal Research," and "Written Communications."

The presenters of these courses are attorneys Virginia Koerselman Newman JD, Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD, and Mary Kubichek, MA, JD. They have diligently updated and freshened the material over the years for the most reliable information offered anywhere.

All of the Ethics courses by Vicki Voisin, ACP, qualify for ethics credit. These range from basic through advanced presentations, and include a course on "Ethics and Technology."

There are a number of general career skill courses ranging from "Public Speaking" by Vicki Kunz, ACP, to "Time Management" by Vicki Voisin, ACP. Courses in general practice areas and specific specialties range from "Elder Law" and "US Citizenship and Naturalization," to "Advanced Discovery Techniques" and "Trial Preparation for Federal Courts." The final course of the Spring Session will be "Concordance 2007" on May 25 by Victoria Craig.

Registration for LIVE! presentations is \$80 per course for NALA members, and \$105 for non-members. Special fees are offered for multiple participants at single sites. Members are advised by e-mail of upcoming courses and provided with hyperlinks to the appropriate registration screen. Registration is required for CLE credits.


**NALA Campus LIVE!** Real Time CLE Online with Live Presentation Via Your Computer and a TOLL-FREE Phone Calls

**Spring Session • February 4–May 28, 2010**

There are 38 presentations scheduled for the Spring 2010 session of NALA Campus LIVE! ...the most ever offered in this popular interactive format. A dozen of these courses (noted below) are helpful as preparation for the Certified Paralegal examination. Registration is required in order to receive certificates of attendance and CLE credit.

**Schedule of Presentations**

<b>Business/Corporations</b> Basic Business Organizations* Mergers & Acquisitions	<b>Real Estate</b> Commercial Legal Descriptions Title Closings Title Searches	<b>Litigation-Trial Preparation</b> Advanced Discovery Techniques Civil Litigation (1,2&3)* Electronic Discovery Evidence (Basic-Advanced) Fact Analysis & Investigation Freedom of Information Act Legislative & Regulatory Law Paralegals as Jury Consultants Trial Preparation for Federal Courts	<b>Immigration</b> Employment Eligibility: Form I-9 H-1b Visas US Citizenship & Naturalization
<b>Career Skills***</b> Concordance 2007 Jump Start Your Hard Drive Public Speaking Time Management When I Grow Up, I Want to Be...	<b>Ethics**</b> Basic Ethics (1&2)* Ethics & Technology	<b>Estate Planning</b> Applicable Exclusion Amount to Offset Gift & Federal Estate Taxes	<b>Intellectual Property</b> What Every Paralegal Should Know About IP New gTLDs Trademark Policing Trademark Prosecution
<b>Legal Research</b> Blue Book Review of Citing* Legal Research	<b>Specialty Areas &amp; Skills</b> American Legal System (1&2) Elder Law (Intermediate) Judgment & Legal Analysis* Written Communications*		* Suitable for CP exam preparation ** Courses qualify for Ethics credit ***Courses for non-substantive credit

 **THE ASSOCIATION OF  
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## Advanced Paralegal Certification

More than 1,881 paralegals have earned the Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP) credential since the Web-based certification program was inaugurated in mid-July 2006. Florida continues to lead the way with 348 of the ACP certificates awarded as of last October, followed by Texas with 338 and California with 105.

By area of specialty, *Civil Litigation* led in the number of ACP credentials with 501, followed by *Discovery* with 228, *Real Estate* with 213, and *Contracts Administration/Contracts Management* with 193.

NALA is conscientious about keeping the APC courses current and has recently updated the information for the *Trial Practice* and *Discovery* modules to reflect changes in the Fed. R. Civ. P regulations. Curricula in *Land Use*, and *Criminal Law* are in development, and the *Personal Injury* program is nearing a “launch” date early in 2010.

# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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## **Other Educational Programs**

NALA has been in the forefront of internet-based continuing education for the past decade, and the venerable NALA Campus.com site, with material prepared by Virginia Koerselman Newman, remains popular with paralegals wanting to freshen up their knowledge on their own schedule. This online CLE features pre-tests and a user-friendly interface allowing paralegals to study at their own pace and be assured that they are getting the most for their investment.

Those who prefer the personal dynamic of classroom education have not been overlooked by NALA. The annual Certified Paralegal Short Course remains a popular offering, and the wide variety of courses offered at NALA's annual convention are a cost-efficient way to compress several days of intensive classroom CLE into a single-destination investment.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Exhibition this year will be July 14–17 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront in Jacksonville, FL. The nation's largest gathering of paralegals will feature three institutes in "Bankruptcy Law," "Elder Law," and "Veterans Law," as well as tracks in "Essential Skills," "Corporate Law," "Litigation," and "Hot Topics."

NALA affiliated associations get to show their stuff at the Affiliates Exchange presentations and in the affiliates exhibits hall. There will also be the annual Member Exchange Presentations for NALA members selectively chosen for this prestigious event. The annual awards presentations will acknowledge affiliates and members who have made outstanding contributions to the paralegal profession in the past year.

## ***Facts & Findings***

The flagship publication of NALA is widely respected throughout the legal community, and is an educational resource in libraries and a number of paralegal schools. Formerly a quarterly two-color publication, *Facts & Findings* has gone to a full-color format published bimonthly beginning this year. It is produced under environmentally friendly best practices as certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council.

The magazine features articles on substantive legal topics by acknowledged authorities, and also includes helpful information and tips on sound paralegal practices and career advancement. The magazine is included in NALA membership dues, but non-members may subscribe for \$35/year. Special lower rates are offered for students.

NALA programs are conceived, planned, and implemented around the needs of paralegals. The process is continuous and 2010 will mark the 36<sup>th</sup> year that NALA has been developing programs aimed at helping all paralegals as well as members and affiliated associations. Visit the NALA website at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org) for current information on all of NALA's programs.

# IN THE NEWS

## Holmes Community College Association of Legal Students

The Holmes Association of Legal Students has had a busy and productive semester.

- We joined with MPA in September in serving at Stewpot.
- We took a tour of the Old Capitol Museum and War Memorial and celebrated Paralegal Day, also in September.
- In October, our meeting speaker was Stacy Jackson (paralegal with Wise Carter), who shared with students her job responsibilities and encouraged them in their chosen careers.
- In November, we adopted a family of an incarcerated mother and provided Christmas presents for her four children.
- At the beginning of the semester, HALS applied for affiliate membership to NALA and was recently notified that our membership was issued provisional approval, which will be ratified by the NALA Board of Directors during its March meeting. We are very proud to now be affiliated with NALA.
- Two of our paralegal majors placed in the MPA Student Essay Contest. We are very proud of Karen Farhart (1<sup>st</sup> place) and Kristie Droge (2<sup>nd</sup> place) – you've represented Holmes Community College and yourselves well!

It's been a busy semester for club members but we have enjoyed working through the semester and are looking forward to continuing in January.



## Candid shots from the

# January 2010 Monthly Meeting



Current Board members Rachel Nesbit, Kathy Mangum and former Board member Kim Pearce (L to R)



Guest Speaker: Tammra Cascio, Esq.  
Topic: A Paralegal's Role When Working with In-House Counsel



Meeting Attendees



## **New Online Reporting of CLE Credit Submissions**

As announced, the NALA Certifying Board has approved online reporting of CLE credit submissions for all CLA/CPs. Information detailing the new online reporting procedure and the CLE reporting form are available from NALA's website at <http://www.nala.org/certification.aspx>.

To allow for online reporting of credit, the NALA Certifying Board has also revised the Requirements to Maintain Certified Paralegal Status. The revised requirements are available from NALA's website at <http://www.nala.org/certification.aspx>.

The online reporting form may be used to submit credit requests for seminars, workshops and other types of events. When using the online form, do not send supporting documentation. Be sure to keep your supporting documentation as online submissions are subject to audit by the Certifying Board. Your supporting documentation may also be required to maintain other certifications or for other agencies such as the IRS.

Please note that special requests for CLE credit under Categories D or E must still be submitted in writing to NALA Headquarters with backup documentation.

Complete details regarding the revised requirements and online reporting and audit procedure are available on NALA's website at <http://www.nala.org/certification.aspx>.

# 2010 MPA Board

BOARD POSITION	OFFICER'S NAME
President	Sarah L. O'Neal, ACP
Vice President of Education	Donna Alderman, ACP
Vice President of Established Membership	Zenda Heafner, CLA
Vice President of New Membership	Tricia Nelson-Easley, ACP
Secretary	Kathy Mangum
Treasurer	Rachel Nesbit
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Region II Director	Bridget Breithaupt, CP
Region III Director	Ammi N. Gates, CLA
Region IV Director	Sharon Gowan
Region V Director	Cathy Shiflett
NALA Liaison	Gwen Burgess, CLA
Student Liaison	Darleen T. Dozier, CLA
Parliamentarian	Mary Lynne Underwood

**Join the Alabama  
Association of Paralegals,  
Inc. at their Winter Seminar**



**On February 19-21, 2010 the Alabama Association of Paralegals is hosting its Winter Seminar at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa in Montgomery, Alabama.**

**The Seminar begins at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, February 19 and ends at 11:30 on Sunday, February 21. Some of the many exciting topics include Ethics, Essential Skills Review, the Freedom of Information Act, and Prosecuting the Internet Predator and Human Trafficking in Alabama.**

**Registration for student non-members is \$85 and for other non-members is \$140. You may register online at [www.alabamaparalegals.ning.com](http://www.alabamaparalegals.ning.com) or mail the registration form and check to:**

**Sharon Franks, C.P.  
Second Vice President-Seminars  
3400 Wachovia Tower  
420 North 20th Street  
Birmingham, AL 35203**

## Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

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### MPA REGIONS

**REGION I:** Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Hinds, Issaquena, Jefferson, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Lincoln, Madison, Neshoba, Newton, Pike, Rankin, Scott, Sharkey, Simpson, Smith, Warren, Wilkinson and Yazoo counties.

**REGION II:** George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River and Stone counties.

**REGION III:** Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Coahoma, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Monroe, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union and Yalobusha counties.

**REGION IV:** Attala, Bolivar, Carroll, Choctaw, Clay, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Lowndes, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Sunflower, Washington, Webster and Winston counties.

**REGION V:** Clarke, Covington, Forrest, Jones, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Lawrence, Lamar, Marion, Perry, Walthall and Wayne counties.

**Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc. is an affiliate of  
The National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.**



# JAX'10

## 35TH ANNUAL NALA CONVENTION & EXHIBITION

Come to Jacksonville and see why the city prides itself in having the essence of a lifestyle and landscape reflecting "the real Florida." Our convention hotel is located in the heart of the "Jax" downtown business, entertainment and sports district. It is adjacent to Jacksonville Landing on the St. Johns River, and the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts. Shopping opportunities and pristine beaches are just minutes away.

### THE 2010 CONVENTION PROGRAM

Join the nation's largest annual gathering of paralegals for a diverse continuing education program. The educational program will feature:

#### Institutes

- Bankruptcy Law
- Elder Law
- Veterans Law

#### Tracks

- Essential Skills
- Corporate Law
- Litigation
- Hot Topics

#### Saturday

- Member Exchange Presentations
- Closing Ethics Session

#### Affiliates Exchange Presentation

- Select Topics of Interest to Affiliated Associations

#### Member Exchange Presentation

- Prestigious Presentations by Selected Members

#### Annual Awards Presentation

- Acknowledgment for Outstanding Paralegals

### HYATT REGENCY JACKSONVILLE RIVERFRONT

Call (800) 233-1234 directly for reservations.  
Mark your calendar now and watch the NALA Web site and your mailbox for more information in coming months.  
[www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

**JULY 14-17, 2010**



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### **1/2 Page-Silver Level Sponsorship**

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Check us out on the web!  
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