

MCPA TODAY

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association

Election Edition

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Message from the President

Beth Ann Breckenridge

You will find, as you look back on your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others.

Henry Drummond

It's hard to believe November is here – for the Montgomery County Paralegal Association it means that elections for the Board of Directors are right around the corner. Would you please consider joining your fellow members, colleagues and friends on Thursday, November 9, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at the Brookview Restaurant at the Mainland Golf Course for our annual General Membership Election dinner meeting? You will find additional details inside this edition of *MCPA TODAY*.

We have four positions to fill for the 2007-2008 Board of Directors. Their biographies appear in this newsletter. All voting members are asked to support their Board and cast their vote. If you cannot attend the dinner meeting, we encourage you to vote by proxy ballot. The proxy ballot appears on page 3.

As a result of your generosity, time and caring MCPA has been able to make a difference in this community, your community, by continuing our efforts to help those in need. A huge **THANK YOU** to all of you who have given your time to the many causes MCPA supports - the MS Walk, donations of supplies for our adopted paralegal in Iraq, food for Manna on Main Street, monetary donations, cell phones to benefit the Special Olympics, hats and mittens for our little friends at ACLAMO, and the MCPA cheerleaders who travel to Villanova in November for the Special Olympics, to mention just a few. Whatever it is we ask – you always come through!

On behalf of the Board of Directors of MCPA, I wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving. Again, our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you - many lives have been made better because you cared.



Calendar of events

MCPA Board Meeting,
November 1, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.

MCPA Election Meeting
November 9, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.
at Brookview Restaurant,
Mainland, PA

MCPA Board Meeting
December 6, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.

MCPA Holiday Social
December 7, 2006
6:00 p.m @Labela Cucina
Skippack, PA

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION



Election Time

Board of Director Bios



Lisa M. LaPenna - Miss LaPenna is a paralegal with Kaplin Stewart's Commercial Litigation Department, and joined Lesser & Kaplin, P.C., predecessor firm to Kaplin Stewart, in May, 1996. Miss LaPenna specializes in supporting creditors' rights litigation, mortgage foreclosures, creditor representation in bankruptcy, judgment executions.

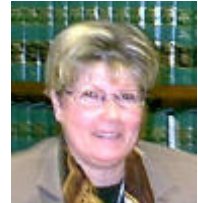
Prior to joining the firm, Miss LaPenna was a paralegal and settlement clerk. She specialized in Estate Administration, Wills, corporate, and conducted real estate closings, over an eight-year period.

Miss LaPenna received her Associate in Business Administration in Management from Ursinus College in 1995 and Associate in Specialized Business Degree in Legal Assistant from Central Pennsylvania College in 1988.

Miss LaPenna is on the Board of Directors and Second Vice President of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association (2004-2006), and belongs to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Pennsylvania Association of Notaries, and U.S. Tennis Association.

Beth Ann Breckenridge is an elder law and estate paralegal with the firm of High, Swartz, Roberts & Seidel, LLP where she has worked for eight years. Beth received her Paralegal Certificate from Penn State University in 1989.

Prior to High, Swartz, Roberts & Seidel, she worked for 10 years as a legal assistant in the areas of commercial litigation, asbestos litigation and estates. When she joined High, Swartz she began a new career working in elder law and was promoted to her paralegal position in 2000. She earned her accreditation as a Certified Senior Advisor in 2004. Beth previously served on the Montgomery County Paralegal Association's Board of Directors as Treasurer and currently serves as President.



Mary Hoskinson - I have been with the firm of O'Brien & Ryan, LLP, for 17 years. In 1995 I became the Paralegal Supervisor. In that role, my duties are to oversee all Paralegal responsibilities, including, but not limited to: Hiring; Training; Conducting Paralegal Meetings; Conducting 90 day/Annual Reviews; Maintenance/Updating of Paralegal Manual; Updating Time Keeping Booklet; Administration of Assignments for Paralegals; Reviewing New Client Guidelines & updating paralegals with guidelines; Overseeing and assigning paralegals w/administrative duties as necessary; Working in conjunction with account executive of record copy to provide quality service; Keeping paralegals apprised of changes in court procedures; Work in conjunction with Administration with regard to computer upgrades, etc.

Currently, in addition to my Administrative responsibilities, I am assigned to approximately 40 cases with managing Partner, Daniel F. Ryan, III. I assist Mr. Ryan in the defense of complex medical malpractice claims ranging from inception through settlement and/or trial.

Stephanie Dise - Stephanie Dise received her paralegal certificate from Lansdale School of Business in 2004. For the past two years she has worked for Narducci, Moore, Fleisher & Roeberg in Blue Bell. Stephanie does a variety of legal work from criminal to family, some business, litigation and wills and estates. She has been a member of MCPA since 2004 and in that time she has served on the planning committee and in the spring of 2006 she filled Kate Peter's position as a Board member and assumed her role as the job committee chair.

Stephanie lives in Green Lane with her husband, Dan and their two kids, Zachary and Madison. She is a second year Girl Scout leader for her daughter's Brownie troop and she is a co-chair for her Relay for Life team, "Autumn's Miracle."

Proxy Ballot

If you are unable to attend the election meeting, as per MCPA's Bylaws at Article VIII, Section 3, "...a voting member may vote by proxy executed in writing by said member or his agent. The proxy must be filed with the Secretary of the Association before the meeting. The proxy must be signed and dated." Kindly cast your vote via the proxy ballot, and forward it to the Association Secretary as per the directions on the ballot.

I, _____, hereby state that I am a current voting member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association (hereinafter MCPA) and that I freely cast my vote of my own will for the following individuals to the position of Board of Director of the MCPA.

PLEASE MARK FOUR BOXES

- MARY HOSKINSON
- STEPHANIE DISE
- BETH ANN BRECKENRIDGE
- LISA LAPENNA

Date: _____

Signature

Print Name

Mail Ballots to: Mary Hoskinson, Secretary of the MCPA
2250 Hickory Road, Suite 300
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462-1047

Or fax to: 610-834-1749

MCPA News

We welcome new members,
Susan M. Knott and **Nancy
McConnell**.

The **MCPA** is registered to participate in the Fall Festival for Special Olympics. This will be our third year as a team supporting Special Olympics. Here are the details: **Saturday, November 4**, from **12:00-4:00**, at the campus of **Villanova University**.

If anyone is interested, you can check out the website at <http://www.specialolympics.villanova.edu>.

For those interested, you may register on-line. Please feel free to contact any member of the Community Outreach Committee to learn more about the Special Olympics Fall Festival.

Our Guest Speaker at the MCPA Election Meeting on **November 9, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.** at the Brookview Restaurant, Mainland, PA will be **Margarita Contreras** from **ACLAMO**.

Last year the MCPA donated hats and mittens to the students of **ACLAMO** during the holiday season and we will be repeating the same donation to the school this year (donations will be received by the MCPA at the Holiday Social on December 7th. Mark your calendars for that event!

Estate /Asset Planning

by **Lisa M. LaPenna**

On September 21, 2006, the members of the MCPA met at the law firm of Kaplin Stewart to hear from Maury B. Reiter, Esquire on the topic of estate and asset planning. Mr. Reiter is a managing partner in the firm and is chairman of the tax and estate department.

Mr. Reiter began the presentation by distinguishing between the two types of estates: (1) probate estate – property in your name and with no beneficiary designation; and (2) taxable estate – anything owned/controlled. Mr. Reiter also discussed different trust agreements that can be used in an estate plan, i.e., Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts and Credit Shelter Trusts, and how these documents would affect death taxes. Maury also noted that the gift tax annual exclusion for 2006 is \$12,000 per person.

There was a discussion regarding Federal Estate Tax and Inheritance Tax. Generally if you leave your estate to your spouse there will not be any death tax due. Bequests left to other beneficiaries besides spouse will cause death tax imposition. Maury emphasized that if a husband and wife create an estate plan, upon the death of the surviving spouse, more assets can be distributed to the beneficiaries as opposed to being donated to Uncle Sam in the form of death taxes.

Thank you Mr. Reiter for providing the members with the basic concepts of estate / asset planning. It's important to plan now for the future.

Mr. Reiter is a frequent lecturer to various state societies of Certified Public Accountants, and is a regular guest on WPEN-AM's talk radio show "All About Real Estate with Jay Lamont."



Maury B. Reiter,
Esquire

The Paralegal Profession From The Male's Perspective: *Men, you too have a place in the paralegal profession!*

By Fiona Harewood

Although the paralegal career is available to both men and women, there is a disproportionate number of women in the industry. As a part of our final project for Introduction to Paralegal Studies at Peirce College, students were required to conduct an informational interview with practicing professionals in the industry. I was privileged to interview two women from Hangley Aronchick Segal & Pudlin, a mid-sized Center City law firm. Christine Hewlett is a Bankruptcy Paralegal while Barbara McBride is a Litigation Paralegal. Ms. Hewlett and Ms. McBride are members of The Philadelphia Association of Paralegals and serve on its Board of Directors.

Among the many issues discussed, the subject of men and their participation in the industry was most intriguing. I asked the interviewees whether they personally knew many male paralegals. In addition, I inquired about their perception of male paralegals in a female dominated occupation. This issue caused both interviewees, with a combined total of thirty-three years of experience, to pause and think. After careful deliberation, reality dawned on them slowly. "I only know about two men who are paralegals," Barbara finally said, while Christine replied, "I may know about three."

Why is the paralegal profession a female dominated industry?

Barbara, Christine and I were overwhelmed with curiosity. We then proposed to find out from the men themselves. We decided that a survey would be a great tool for accomplishing this task; hence, I interviewed a focus group of six men which included four students and two practicing paralegals. One of the practicing paralegals works with the Department of Justice and has twelve years of experience. The second paralegal boasts several years in the field and is employed by a large Center City law firm. Three of the participating students have recently joined the industry and work with small law firms, while the fourth is employed with a medium sized suburban law firm. His job description includes hiring of paralegals.

As I read the completed surveys, I realized that their answers were quite similar. I attributed the similarities to their abilities to look beyond the female dominance and other negative aspects of the profession. Listed below are some of the questions from the survey and summarized responses:

Question 1: Why did you decide to attend paralegal school?

Response: Four men of the six, from the inception of their careers, knew they wanted to be in the legal field. They realized that paralegal studies would help them to acquire a solid foundation of the law and the legal system. On the other hand, two of the group had different careers for as many as fifteen (15) years. One became interested in the legal profession due to his natural argumentative and defensive skills. As a result, he enrolled in paralegal school. The sixth participant's journalism career prompted him to learn more of the legal system.

Question 2: Why do you believe that more men are not seen in the paralegal field?

Response: Resounding responses came from the participants. One cited dissatisfaction with the salary as the reason why there are few male paralegals. The majority believed that there is a lack of men in this field because of the perception that the paralegal industry is a profession for women. They said that in the past, paralegals were perceived as secretaries. In addition, presently, many firms are allowing secretaries to title themselves "legal assistant." The practice of legal secretaries titling themselves legal assistants/ paralegals has caused confusion in the profession and thus this perception. The remainder of the group felt that men are basically uninformed and/or misinformed.

Question 3: Do you believe that this field a stepping stone to pursue further legal studies? If so, what other areas of studies?

Response: The entire group agreed that the paralegal profession is also used as a stepping stone to further legal education. They also said that many male paralegals eventually move on to law school.

Question 4: How have you adjusted to what appears to be a female dominated career?"

Response: One student said "I have high respect for women. I was raised by my mother. Women, to me, are not second-class citizens. If they dominate a field, then men should give it a second look. Women live longer than most men. I'd rather do what they do." The practicing paralegals agreed that they have adjusted to what appears to be a female dominated career and are not intimidated to work in

Paralegal Profession: *The Male's Perspective*

the industry. They also said that they are comfortable and enjoy their careers. Some students said that they would not allow their gender to overshadow their work ethics and willingness to learn.

Question 5: What plans do you have for your career?

Response: One student said that he intended to get his four year degree in paralegal studies. "My aim is to bring a greater degree of professionalism to the job title for both men and women," he said. Another participant said that he wanted to make an impact and planned to work in the non-profit sector because he liked making a difference in people's lives. "With my background working in the local and federal government, I bring a wealth of information to any non-profit organization in their dealings with the government," he said.

Overall, the interviewees held similar opinions regarding their careers as well as their perceptions of the paralegal profession.

The American Bar Association defines a paralegal as "a person qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible." The time has come for paralegals to assist the profession in overcoming the perception that they are mainly secretaries and that the industry is intended for women. In order to give employers, clients and the general public a better understanding of who paralegals are, what they do and how they do it, paralegals must get involved in their local associations and assist them in enforcing the definition of a paralegal. If changes aren't made, and paralegals do not unite, the perception that paralegals are glorified secretaries in a female dominated field will continue.

In conclusion, congratulations to the men who are practicing paralegals and to those who use the industry as a stepping stone to law school. However, prospective male paralegals should not be concerned about the female dominance of the paralegal profession. Instead, it is important that they choose a field of interest and tailor their career to those interests. As in every profession, everyone should perform the job to the best of their ability.

Fiona is a paralegal student at Peirce College.

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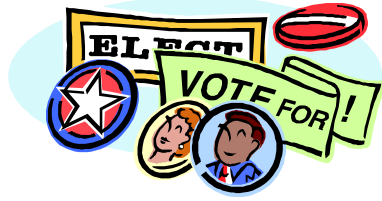
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THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

Don't miss out--please join us for the General Election Meeting. Choose who you wish to continue to move the MCPA into the future!!

<i>When:</i>	November 9, 2006 6:00 P.M.
<i>Where:</i>	Brookview at Mainland 2250 Rittenhouse Road Mainland, Pennsylvania
<i>Special Guest:</i>	Margarita Contreras from ACLAMO
<i>Cost:</i>	\$22 for Members Bring canned fruits, canned juices or bottles of juice to be donated to Manna on Main Street
<i>Menu:</i>	Choice of Chicken Marsala, roast top sirloin with Madeira sauce, or Penne Campana (tossed with mushrooms, olives, tomatoes, artichokes in a white wine sauce) Fresh fruit cocktail, Caesar salad, Italian green beans, baked potato, apple pie, coffee, tea, iced tea and soda are included.
<i>RSVP with Entrée choice:</i>	By Friday, November 3, 2006 To Tracey L. Barnes, RP at Traceyb@dbyd.com

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW AND LET US KNOW THAT
WE WILL SEE YOU ON THE 9TH!!**

Thanks for giving back.

We believe in giving back to the communities we serve, and in being there for our customers and neighbors. That's why we proudly support great causes like yours, which make this community a great place.

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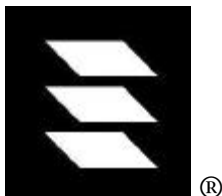
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