



The Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Paralegal Association

July 2017

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Roberta Fedorka, Pa.C.P.

Best Things About Being A Paralegal

With our official Paralegal Day approaching, it's a great time to stand proudly and celebrate our profession. Although there are many wonderful reasons to be a paralegal, below are some highlights.

Prestige. Years ago much of the general public didn't know or understand what paralegals' responsibilities were. As we perform more challenging and complex work, we transcend the image of a paralegal and become more respected members of the legal team.

Accessible career entry. Often times and in certain practice areas, support staff (without formal paralegal education) are offered on-the-job training for paralegal positions. Similarly, students still attending school may be hired as paralegals as they are closely directed and supervised by attorneys. Degrees or certificates can be obtained in relatively short periods of time.

Rising pay. Paralegal compensation has risen steadily in the past decade. US Bureau of Labor statistics indicate the average paralegal salary hovers around \$50,000, and the top 10% earn approximately \$78,000. This varies greatly depending on several factors, including physical location, size of firm, and practice area. Those with certificates or degrees usually command a higher salary.

Assisting others. Paralegals are typically helping clients when they are going through difficult experiences. It could be anything from debt issues, divorce and/or custody matters, estate administration after the loss of a loved one or a catastrophic personal injury. Dedicated paralegals perform substantive work and the clients realize the benefit of their services. This can be very fulfilling.

Location, location, location. Paralegals are needed everywhere! Big cities or outlying rural areas, lawyers are there and need dependable paralegal support. Doing research, writing, preparing contracts, obtaining crucial financial information, summarizing records, etc. Whether you prefer a large law firm or small firm, corporate structure setting or other work environment – there's a place for you.

Explosive employment outlook. US Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics has predicted paralegal employment growth of 28% between 2008 and 2018. This is more than average for all occupations. It is more cost effective and efficient to utilize paralegals at a lower pay rate than attorneys to perform legal tasks requiring a certain degree of knowledge. The number of paralegals has doubled in the last decade to approximately 250,000 in the U.S.

Growth. Not only has the paralegal profession grown nationally, but there are growth opportunities for individuals. Paralegals may advance within a law firm to supervisor or department manager positions. They also have opportunities in corporate in-house legal departments, hospitals, insurance companies, banks, government agencies and paralegal schools.

Areas of practice. There are many different areas of practice for paralegals at law firms. Possibilities are endless – real estate, medical malpractice, bankruptcy, criminal defense, environmental law, and intellectual property – to name a few. Based on your own personality, strengths and interests you can evaluate which areas would be a good fit and in which you can become specialized.

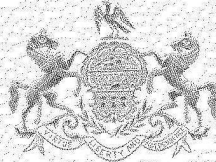
Longevity. The legal system has been around for quite some time and will continue to there. Ever changing laws and procedures ensure there will always be a place for paralegals, especially those who continue to monitor these changes and keep up with current technology.

How did you get started? What drew you to this profession? What do you think are the best things about being a paralegal? How did you choose your area of practice? If you would like to share your story, please email Michelle Calkins - mcalkins@millerturetsky.com.

HAPPY PARALEGAL DAY!!

Outrageous, always. Out rage us – NEVER! (Credit: one of my favorite cocktail napkins.)

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Governor's Office

PROCLAMATION

PARALEGAL WEEK
July 24-28, 2017

PARALEGAL DAY
July 28, 2017

WHEREAS, the practice of law is a challenging and complex endeavor that has protected and preserved the rights, liberties, and safety of our citizens for centuries; and

WHEREAS, members of the bar require knowledgeable and reliable assistance to fulfill the duties of their profession; and

WHEREAS, paralegals have become an invaluable source of support in law offices, providing lawyers with a variety of skilled professional services throughout their practice; and

WHEREAS, paralegals are highly educated, trained, and experienced professionals with expertise in legal and case research, interviewing clients and witnesses, legal and correspondence writing, and other critical aspects of successful and efficient law practices; and

WHEREAS, the value of talented paralegals is often overlooked by the general public, but their worth is never underestimated by the lawyers and firms for whom they work.

THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim July 24-28, 2017, as PARALEGAL WEEK and July 28, 2017, as PARALEGAL DAY. I encourage all citizens to recognize the important tasks that paralegals accomplish and to reflect upon their role in ensuring our legal system remains strong and just.



GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, on this seventeenth day of April two thousand seventeen, the year of the commonwealth the two hundred forty-first.

Tom Wolf
TOM WOLF
Governor

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COMMUNICATION CAUSES CONFLICT (Sometimes) PART II

Submitted by TASA

After reading part one: Ineffective communication, some readers may ask, "Do I have to watch every word that I say?" In the workplace, the answer is, yes. Remember the Emily Dickinson quote? "Some say a word once said is dead. I believe it just begins to live that day."

Ohio State University Business Professor Roy Lewicki has accomplished excellent research outlining the characteristics of effective communicators or negotiators. Among the characteristics are,

Ask more questions. Effective communicators ask twice as many questions as average communicators. Moreover, they pay attention to the types of questions. They ask fewer "direct" questions: "Did you arrive on time?" They ask more open questions: "What time did you arrive?"

Summarize more. Effective communicators summarize twice as much as average communicators. Research indicates that most people are only listening effectively 25% of the time. So, summarizing may capture what they have missed. In addition, research also shows that many terms have from 10-25 meanings. Summarizing assists one in zeroing in on the exact definitions.

Use behavior labeling. Effective communicators' behavior label six times as much as average communicators. Behavior labeling is saying what one is going to say before it is said.

- Let me ask you a question;
- Let me summarize.

Search for common ground. Effective communicators look for common ground or commonalities three times as much as average communicators.

- So, we are both from Ohio;
- So, we are both interested in the new iPhone app.

So how does one overcome the Illusory Superiority effect? One finds several trusted friends and checks with them for honest and open feedback. Then one knows what to correct or improve.

Once effective communication has been effectuated, the situation may set the stage for more effective communication.

The author is a self-employed attorney in DC practicing mediation, arbitration and executive coaching. He graduated from Capital University School of Law and Muskingum University. For the American Management Association, he teaches employment law, HR, Communication and Conflict. For 28 years, he has served as a senior adjunct at The George Washington University School of Law. The author is also a featured writer for DC based The Intownner.

Sources: "The Behavior of Successful Negotiators," Neil Rackham, Huthwaite Research Group Limited, Negotiation, by Roy Lewicki, The Ohio State University School of Business.

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September 19, 2017 *Using Social Media for Winning Outcomes*

October 26, 2017 *Don't Give Up Five Minutes Before the Miracle*

November 13, 2017 *Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds-Ins & Outs*



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Where: Fairmount Park—Northwestern Avenue & Forbidden Drive, Chestnut Hill

When: July 29th at 8:30 a.m.

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CASH PRIZES will be awarded to the Top overall male and female and masters male and female. Medals will be awarded to top males and females in age categories.

Bring your family and friends as it will be a blast for everyone. There is also a 1 mile FUN RUN for kids and a 1 mile walk. Organize a TEAM for loads of fun. As an added benefit, all proceeds go to helping MCPA and abused and neglected kids overcome the pain and horrors of physical and emotional abuse.

Contact Montgomery Child Advocacy Project, MCPA, to learn more about the Run and ways to help abused children at www.mcapkids.org or 610-279-1219.

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TIPS & TRICKS

To be a More Efficient and Productive Paralegal

Batch Tasks. You know the feeling of frustration that you get when you have to jump back and forth between a bunch of little tasks? Or when you are interrupted several times a day by one person with several questions? It takes our brains a few minutes to process the task and you lose time in transition. To combat this, determine a time in your day that will work for batching tasks. For instance, let it be known that you make and return phone calls twice a day, once at 8:30 a.m., and again at 3:30 p.m. Also batch or “bundle” your work and questions once a day, if possible. That way, you are not the one interrupting an attorney trying to bill!

Limit Email. We all know how much time email sucks out of each day. There is nothing you can do about opposing counsel and clients emailing you. But you can limit interruptions by not checking your email more than once every few hours.

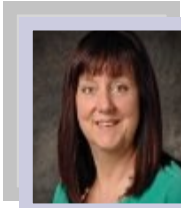
Deal with Paper Once. When you are going through your mail and email, be ready to deal with things as you are reviewing them. File it, delete it, or take action. You are not managing your time effectively if you are reading your mail over and over again. Touch it only once!

Keep a Task Checklist in Every File. This is something that no one thinks they have time to do, but if you fail to do this one simple little thing you are creating unnecessary headaches for everyone down the road. After you complete a task, update your checklist of action items in the file so that anyone on your team can simply look at the file and easily ascertain what has already been done on the case, and what open items remain. You never want to waste an hour reviewing a file to figure out if someone has ordered records, or whether or not your client sent in updated documents. You need one master list that will reflect action items.

Limit Your Availability. Everyone wants to be friendly and accessible to their co-workers. After all, building relationships at work is critical to success. You can still be friendly and accessible, but let it be known that your designated times are the first fifteen minutes in the morning, and the last thirty minutes in the evening. The easiest way to be brilliant at work is to have the quiet time to think and be productive without interruption.

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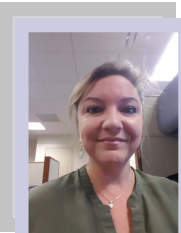
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Ro is a Paralegal at the law firm of Villari, Brandes & Giannone, PC in Conshohocken. She has been a member of MCPA since 2005 and has served as chair of the Planning & Community Outreach Committees. She has also previously served as Treasurer for four years and Secretary for two years and was recently elected to serve as President. She resides in West Norriton with her husband, Larry.

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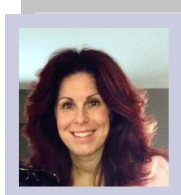
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Suzanne works for Gramercy Property Trust as a Registered Paralegal in the Horsham office. She currently serves as a Board of Director of the Association as well as Contributing Editor to its newsletter and has recently been elected as the Vice President. She resides in Upper Gwynedd with her husband Brian and their two labs, Frack and Powerstroke.

Jen Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa.C.P.—Secretary

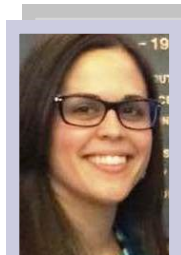
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Jen is the Vice President of Finance at The Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation located in Hatboro. She has served on the Association's Board of Directors and was recently elected to serve as its Secretary. She lives in Hatboro with her husband and two children.

Kelly Smith, Pa.C.P. —Treasurer

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Kelly is a Paralegal at the law firm of Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer in its Norristown office. She currently serves as the Association Treasurer, a position she has held since 2013. She is also the Job Bank Coordinator for the MCPA. She lives in Phoenixville with her cat, Emmett J.

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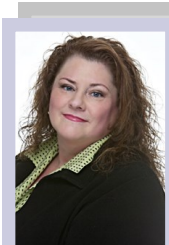
Christopher Gregg
(2017—2019)

Chris works for the law firm, Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer as a Paralegal. He has been an active board member for the past 3 years and serves as its Social Media Committee Chair. Chris was born and raised in Willow Grove and still resides there with his family and their dachshund Queenie.



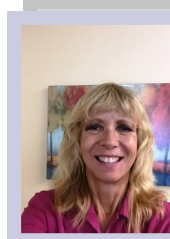
Noreen Messmer, Pa. C.P.
(2017—2019)

Noreen is a Paralegal with the law firm of Ford & Buckman, P.C. in Blue Bell and has worked with Sarah Ford, Esquire for over 40 years. She has been a Board member since 2010 and also serves on the Hospitality/Planning Committee. Noreen lives in Blue Bell and is the mother of three and Nana to three granddaughters.



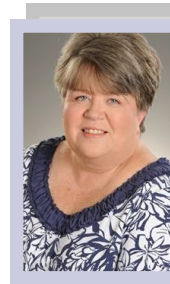
Michelle Calkins, Pa. C.P.
(2017—2019)

Michelle is a Paralegal with Miller, Turetsky, Rule & McLennan located in Collegeville. She is an active member of the Association and currently serves as the Layout Editor of the MCPA newsletter. She lives live in Collegeville with her husband, Wes.



Shari Weber Bradley, Pa. C.P.
(2016—2018)

Shari works for Peter E. Bort, Esquire at Bort Law which is a general practice firm. A long time member of MCPA, she was recently elected to the Board of Directors. Shari lives in Eagleville and is the mother of two twenty something boys and stepmother of three teen boys.



Nancy Piechota, Pa. C.P.
(2016—2018)

Nancy is a Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy was recently elected to the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She lives in Berks County with her husband, Joe and rescue dogs.

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