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Montgomery County Paralegal Association

December 2018

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Nancy Piechota, Pa. C.P.*



Well, as 2018 winds down let me take this opportunity to thank each and every member, speaker and sponsor. Each and every one of you were an intricate part of our moving forward as an Association.

While I am closing out my first year as President, I want to tell you how much I have enjoyed the experience. I certainly hope that I led the Association down a successful path. I have really enjoyed talking with the members at meetings and events and getting to know more of you. I certainly feel that 2019 is going to be a great year for us. I urge you to check out the sponsors and what they have to offer. I tried to bring in sponsors that are beneficial to the members as well as to the sponsors themselves. What a great group of sponsors we have. Believe me they have made my job easier this past year.

If you ever have any ideas, comments or even complaints, please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you.

Please let me wish all of you and your families a very **Happy Holiday Season** and **Happy New Year!**

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



MCPA is looking for a committee chair for:

HOSPITALITY & EVENTS PLANNING

If interested in either of these positions, please contact President, Nancy Piechota at npiechota@mansionprior.com.



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OCTOBER 23, 2018 CLE RECAP ROLE OF PARALEGAL IN CRIMINAL CASES, ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION ON JUVENILE LAW AND MENTAL HEALTH LAW PRESENTED BY J. DAVID FARRELL, ESQUIRE

by Shari Weber Bradley, Pa C.P., CDFA®

Mr. Farrell first noticed paralegals becoming a key member of litigation teams in the early 1980's. His paralegals are an integral part of his practice; they look at the details of the reports, the clients' stories and discovery. Mr. Farrell concentrates in criminal law so his examples are focused in those type matter.

One homicide case involved a young man who had stabbed his victim 30+ times. In order to plead "not guilty by reason of insanity" Mr. Farrell would have to show that the young man didn't know what he was doing. The young man clearly knew what he did was wrong because he dismembered the body to hide it and brought cleaning agents to the scene. So this defense would not work.

So the next defense option would be "not guilty by reason of insanity" which translates to guilty but mentally ill.

CONTINUED



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PRESENTED BY J. DAVID FARRELL, ESQUIRE**

by Shari Weber Bradley, Pa C.P., C DFA®

CONTINUED

The young man had signed an eight page confession but insisted "they have nothing on me." So the matter went to trial.

Mr. Farrell's paralegal attended the trial from voir dire through the jury's determination. She took copious notes on each potential juror so that Mr. Farrell could focus on their demeanor and presence. This allowed him to make the best use of his strikes for cause and pre-emptory strikes.

Mr. Farrell tried to convince the young man to plead to murder 3 for a lesser sentence but as he insisted that he was innocent the jury found in guilty of murder 1. He stated he would use his paralegal this way every time.

Mr. Farrell relies on his paralegal for document control both in the office and at trial. She knows where everything is in the office and during trial can make sure the exhibits and trial binders are in order and updated throughout the trial.

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CONTINUED

Mr. Farrell also relies on his paralegal for client interactions. Back in the day before cell phones it was crucial to get messages from phone calls. Then we moved to answering services so paralegals needed to interpret these messages. Then to pagers for call backs.

Discovery and depositions are key areas in which paralegals excel. Requests for Admissions are just nuclear bombs sitting in the office and they need to be addressed or everything is admitted. The paralegals can keep on top of these.

Discovery leads to more discovery deep into the rabbit holes and paralegals can filter through the data and find the crucial information for him. Often discovery comes digitally and the paralegal is responsible for printing, sorting and numbering it. She also coordinates the Discovery Letter to the master or the judge indicating what discovery was received which is needed for trial to ensure the opposing side does not try to slip in more information last minute than was provided.

Chain of discovery details are another area where the paralegal can be a crucial team member. This is when evidence is produced and then logged where ever it goes to ensure nothing is tampered with. For example, blood samples should never be sent via fed ex because there is no log on who has had access to the package. In one case a young man killed his friend in an automobile accident while driving under the influence. Despite his horror at killing his own friend he was charged with homicide by vehicle. Mr. Farrell represented this young man. He requested discovery and his paralegal reviewed it to find that the young man had blood drawn at the hospital and while it was waiting to transport it was stored in that wing's lunch refrigerator. Totally lost chain of custody because anyone had access to it. So the young man pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter and ended up serving eight months.

Paralegals can also do research on witnesses. They can use the CJ portal to see what their records are, check convictions for theft etc.

To summarize paralegals are key to the success of the law firm for their attention to detail, their document control, their professional treatment of clients and being the go-to-person. He gives his paralegals respect and free reign to excel where their skills are.

His recommendation to paralegals – be professional at all times, dress appropriately, be self-motivated, be a buffer to the clients and get to know the judges. Getting to know the judges is golden.

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A great time was had by all at the annual MCPA holiday social held on December 10th at PJ Whelihans. A huge shout-out to our sponsors for this event:



And let's not forget everyone's favorite tarot reader, Harry Reichner!



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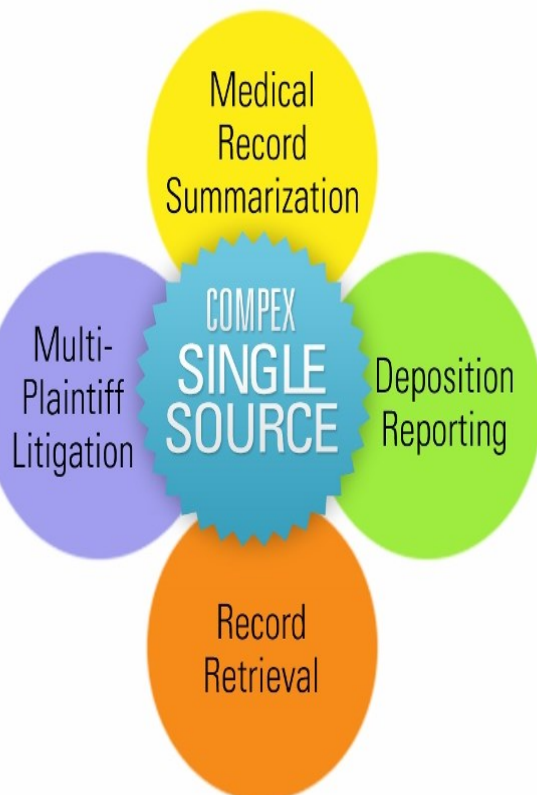


SAVE THE DATE:

**Thursday, January 24, 2019
6:00 p.m.**

**Kickoff
&
Induction Ceremony**

More information will follow soon!





MCPA is collecting donations for Operation Gratitude. This charity sends care packages to:

■U.S. Troops ■First Responders
■Veterans ■Military Families ■Wounded Heroes & Care Givers

DONATIONS BEING COLLECTED NOW ARE:

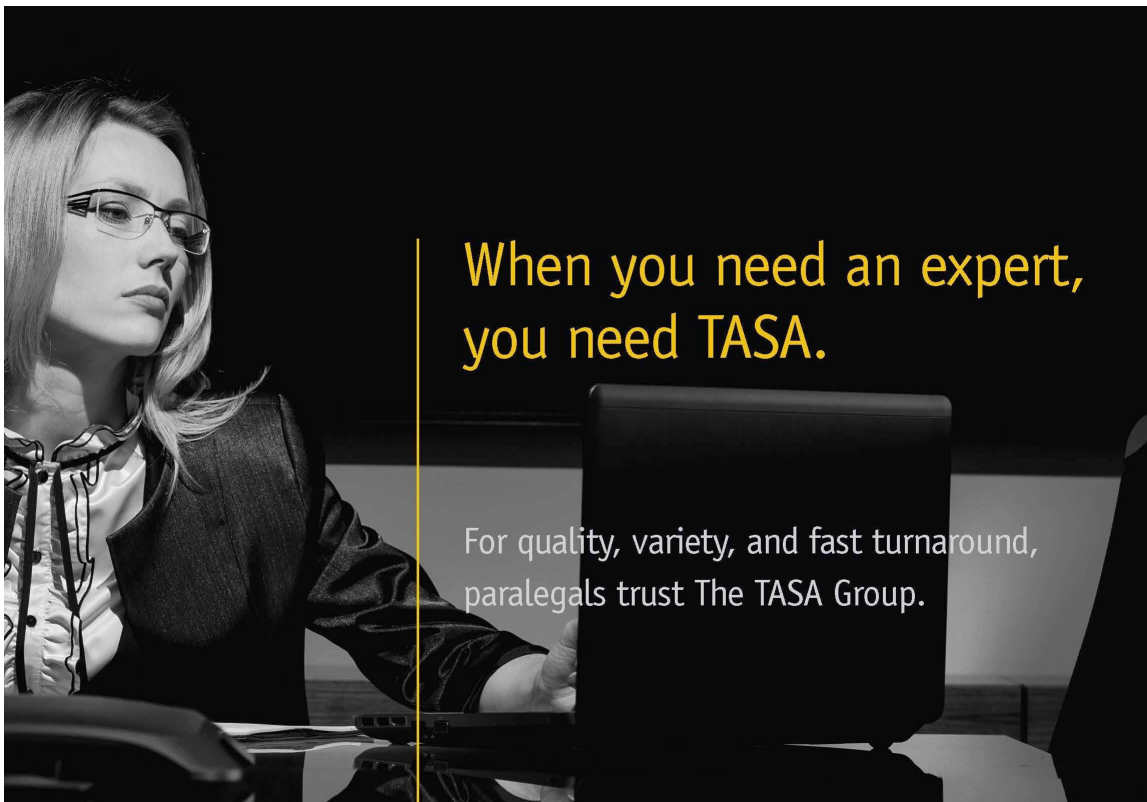
- All Purpose Wipes (single and 30 count packs or less)
- Batteries (AA and/or AAA)
- Deodorant (travel size; non-aerosol)
- Drink Mix (individual serving packets)
- Foot Power (travel size)
- Gum
- Hand Warmers
- Jerky (individual bags)
- Lip Balm
- Pencils (mechanical preferred)
- Playing Cards
- Puzzle Books (7" x 10")
- Sewing Kits (travel size)
- Socks (men's black crew length)
- Sunscreen (travel size, non-aerosol)

Most members are sending this information to everyone in their firm. That way we can all get involved and start collecting!

To donate, simply bring your items to any board meeting, CLE event, or deliver it to any officer or board member.

Please help spread the word so that we can get all the donations possible. Tell your friends, family, firms and everyone you know about this collection!

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Nancy is a Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy also sits on 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.

***Kelly Lightcap, Pa.C.P. —Vice President***

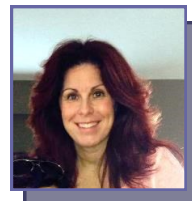
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Kelly is a Paralegal at the law firm of Bennett, Bricklin & Saltzburg LLC in its Blue Bell office. She currently serves as the Association Vice President having served as its Treasurer since 2013. She lives in Phoenixville with her husband and cat, Emmett J.

***Christopher Gregg—Treasurer***

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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.

***Jen Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa.C.P.—Secretary***

Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
(215) 675-5005
jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 at the firm at Sattin and Ronca, LLC. A long time member of MCPA, she currently serves on the Board and is the Webmaster. Shari lives in Eagleville with her husband and has two grown sons and three grown stepsons.



Dana Jorna, Pa. C.P.
(2018—2020)

Dana has been an active member since 2013. Dana assists in the areas of Civil Defense Litigation, Medical Malpractice, Legal Malpractice and Personal Injury defense at the Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer, LLP law firm since 2013.

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