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SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P.

Dear members,

I would like to use this time to update you on a change that will be coming to our Listserv very soon. The MBA recently informed us that they are changing their Listserv service and can no longer host our Listserv account. While we have appreciated their assistance over the last several years, we believe that this change will be good for our association.

We looked at a few different options and decided to use Google Group as our Listserv. We created a new Gmail account that will host the group. Within the next week or so we will start importing active members' email addresses into the group. Once you are added, you should receive a confirmation email from the Group. You will then be able to post and or receive posts. Like the current Listserv, you will need to email a specific address. Each submission will be moderated, and once accepted, your message will be distributed to all members. You do not need a Gmail account to post or receive messages.

At the bottom of these messages, you can unsubscribe, however, please note that if you choose to unsubscribe from the Listserv, you will not receive important information from us, such as, CLE announcements and the monthly newsletter.

Starting on November 18th, please begin using the new Listserv address.

See Page 3.

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Editor

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thank you

President's Message Continued...

We will be sending that information out as we get closer to its launch. The current Listserv will be unavailable after November 19th. We ask for your patience while we transition to this new form of communication and work out any possible bugs. We tried to anticipate any issues we may run into but that can only go so far. While a learning curve is inevitable, we believe this is a good move and will give us a little more control over how it is managed.

Please keep an eye out for your confirmation email, as well as, the email address for the Group. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any Board Member for more information.

As this is the last President's message of the year, I wish everyone a peaceful 2021 holiday season. ♦

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Jessica Hartman—Law Office of Lester G. Weinraub

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Civil Rights Word Search Puzzle

Topic: - Find the Given Words hidden inside the puzzle and circle them

Words: human, rights, due, ensure, accuse, cultural, legal, Selma, creed, defiance, appeal.

G	R	B	A	S	K	E	T	D	R	X
P	C	U	L	T	U	R	A	L	U	A
A	P	P	E	A	L	U	G	I	C	E
O	F	D	E	F	I	A	N	C	E	N
U	C	U	N	I	T	Y	U	I	L	S
H	R	R	S	N	R	S	A	M	E	U
U	U	B	E	I	E	T	P	N	G	R
E	U	M	G	E	E	D	S	O	A	E
T	N	H	A	L	D	D	A	Y	L	K
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S	G	I	S	E	L	M	A	E	R	S



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How Failure Can Benefit Your Paralegal Career

By Rebecca Bach—October 28, 2021

Published by Paralegal Brief

Chances are that when you think of failure you immediately have negative associations. Failure is a word that causes anxiety, tension, stress, and just generally makes us feel bad. We are not rewarded for our failures, and we often think of them as holding us back from bigger or better opportunities in our paralegal careers.

Failure is one of the most important and underrated paralegal skills and learning how to reframe the way you view and talk about failure will help you thrive in any job. Failure is a chance to demonstrate your resiliency and engagement. Being able to respond and recover from failure and learning how to move forward after making a mistake is how you become a great paralegal. Learn from other paralegals that have gone before you in 50 Tips for New Paralegals.

Failure is only a temporary setback. Nobody was born knowing how to do their job perfectly and learning how to process feedback and criticism throughout your paralegal career gives you the tools to focus on problem-solving and creating solutions. Instead of viewing failure as a negative, think about failure as an opportunity to learn and grow as an employee. By implementing the feedback you receive you are strengthening your paralegal skills, your interpersonal office relationships, and showing your coworkers how committed you are to being your best.

10 Valuable Lessons From Failure

1. Failure is the best teacher.

If you have failed at a task this is a great opportunity to review what went wrong with your supervisor. This is the chance to ask for mentorship from your lead-

ers, or from another coworker who excels at this task. People enjoy sharing knowledge, and by listening and learning from your coworkers, you are showing your engagement and motivation to improve.

2. Failure teaches who to ask.

In addition to giving you the opportunity to ask for mentorship from your coworkers, you also learn who to ask in the future. When you inevitably struggle with something in the future, you will know who to go to for a template or question. This helps you to be proactive and keep projects moving forward even when you feel out of your depth.

3. Failure teaches you how to learn from criticism.

Failure inevitably comes with criticism, but criticism can be a valuable form of feedback. Criticism can be uncomfortable, but it can help you to identify the areas where you need to improve your performance. Use criticism as an opportunity to engage with your supervisor and ask them for feedback on how they would approach a problem. If you listen to and engage with your critique, it will help your paralegal career in the long run.

4. Take ownership of your failure.

Taking ownership of a failure is difficult. Nobody wants to be responsible for a mistake, but accepting responsibility shows your supervisor that you are willing to learn and grow as a paralegal. Taking ownership of a mistake allows you to move forward with a solution.

5. Take a failure and create a solution.

It is common to come to a supervisor with a problem, but an exceptional employee comes to a supervisor with a solution. Everyone has a different thought process, so coworkers will come up with different ideas for how to approach the same problem.

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- Surveillance
- Process/Courier Services
- Background Checks
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- Witness Statements
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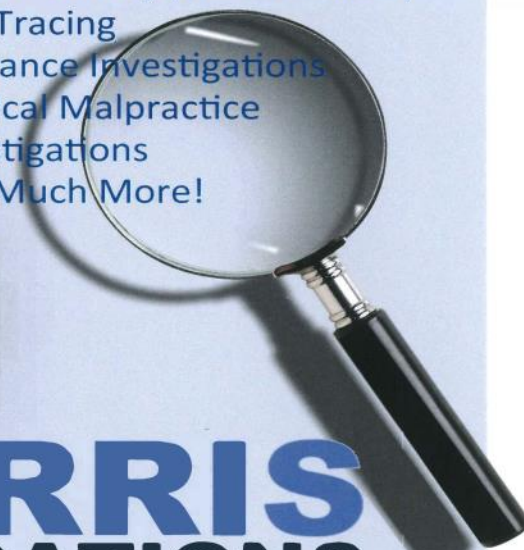
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Sharing an idea for a solution or starting a conversation about how to approach a problem is a valuable paralegal skill for employers. It is so important to keep your paralegal skills sharp and marketable. Instead of coming to your supervisor with a problem, try proposing an action plan, or start a conversation about how you can improve your process. Coming up with a solution shows that you are engaged and trying to understand a problem instead of giving up.

6. Failure is subjective.

When you feel like you are struggling with an assignment, ask for feedback immediately. Discuss the assignment with a coworker and ask them how they would approach the problem. Stepping away from the assignment and having another person explain how they would approach it can often point you in a better direction. It is easy to get caught up in feeling like a failure but do not become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you take action as soon as you feel a project getting away from you, you can avoid a bigger problem down the road.

7. Failure helps you identify what you (do) in your career.

Failure can help you identify what you do or do not enjoy doing. All jobs come with tasks that you would rather not do, but failure can help you to identify the things you excel at and that you struggle with. Here are 15 alternative paralegal career options to explore. When you are applying for a promotion or another job in the future, you will know what openings will fit your skill sets, and which ones to avoid.

8. Failure teaches you how to advocate for yourself.

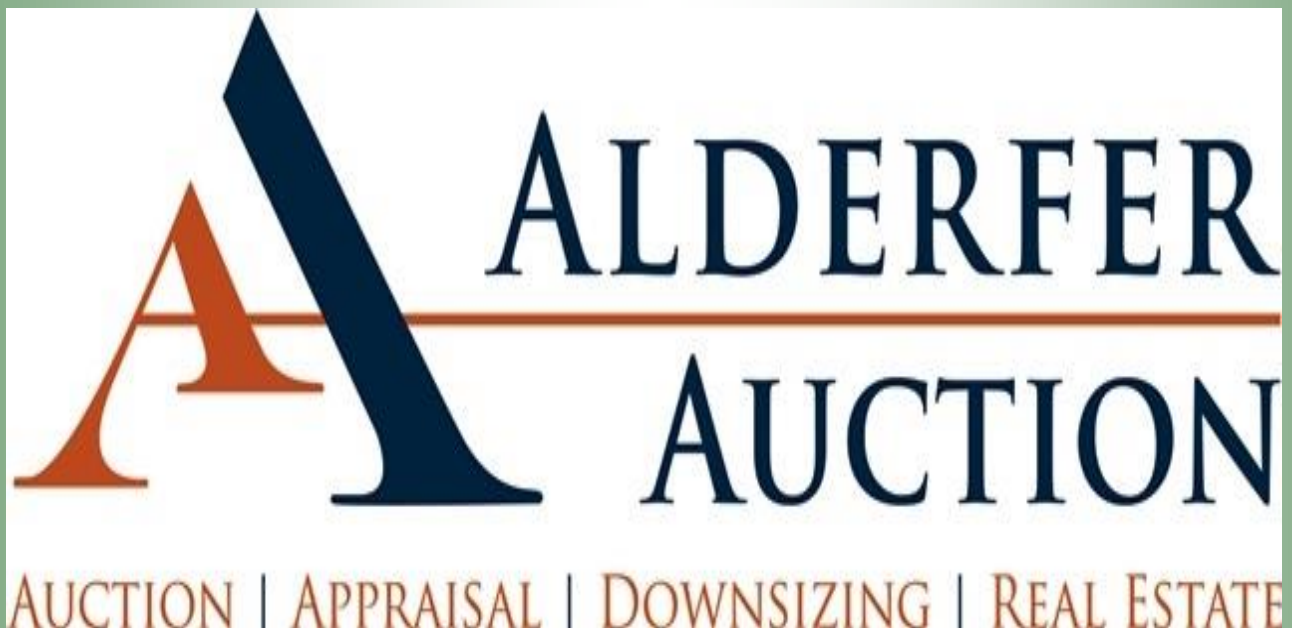
Failure teaches you about what went wrong with a project, and what you need to do differently to be successful. The next time you have a similar project discuss what you need to be successful with your supervisor. Do you need input from coworkers? More hours to complete the project? Do you need access to different tools or software?

See p. 14.



NOVEMBER

Jessica Hartman
Mary Fuchs
A Lynn Scott
Kathleen Zamorski
Deborah Arbuckle
Sara Rankin



9. Failure is about recovery.

Nobody is perfect, and nobody was born knowing how to do their job perfectly. Failure gives us an opportunity to show our coworkers how we respond to criticism, how we implement feedback, and how we learn from our mistakes. If you implement the feedback you received you will continue to improve.

10. Failure is not a reflection of your worth.

Everyone has failed, be kind to yourself. It is important to remember that just because you failed at something, it does not mean that you are not a valuable employee, or that you are unable to perform your job as a paralegal. Failure is a learning opportunity, embrace the chance to grow and learn, and know that next time you will be better. ♦



50 Tips for New Paralegals

By Ann Pearson May 10, 2021
paralegal-bootcamp.com

We asked paralegals across the country “What one tip would you give to a new paralegal that you wished someone told you early in your paralegal career?” Here are their answers that we want to share with new paralegals. Note: We only added names if the person specifically checked the box “ok to share your name with the tip.”

These tips are not listed in any particular order. Thank you to all of the paralegals who submitted their tips! As one of the paralegals said: Share the knowledge! Well said. All paralegals benefit from sharing knowledge with others to make the profession better as a whole.

1. Don't give up on being a paralegal!

If you don't like your first job as a paralegal, don't give up! It might just be that the practice area is not the best one for you...or it might be the people you work with. If you find yourself not happy, ask if maybe there's another area you want to work in. For example, I started out in real estate and I hated it. I almost quit my paralegal job. Then there was an opening in the litigation department. I'm so happy I did it! I've enjoyed being a litigation paralegal now for almost 20 years.

2. Stay Focused! It will get easier as you go along, don't let one bad day ruin your experience.

3. Never EVER give an Attorney an original copy of anything!

4. Always have a steno pad/notepad with you when you walk into your attorney's office. Always keep a to-do-list with follow-ups either electronically or on paper.

5. Microsoft Excel is your friend! If you don't know it already, learn how to use it. If you're already familiar with it, become an expert. From tracking time and expenses on a client matter to tracking pleadings, discovery, and deadlines – it will help you stay organized and present your data in an efficient way.~ Victoria Ellsworth

6. There are no stupid questions. If you don't know or are not sure, ask.

7. Billable hours are a lot more important than you think they are. If you work in a defense firm, do what you can to meet or exceed those hours. When times get slow, many firms use those billable hour numbers to determine who stays and who goes.

8. The grass isn't always greener on the other side.

You're usually just trading one set of problems for another.

9. Double and triple-check your work. Small mistakes will start to erode the attorneys' confidence in your work. (Watch our video blog on this topic!)

10. Most attorneys are procrastinators and their procrastination will lead to you working long weekends.

11. Don't be “that paralegal” who has to do CYA emails for everything. When mistakes happen, a good team pulls together and fixes it. A bad team points fingers and blames others, but attorneys just don't care. They just want it fixed and not to happen again.

12. Be prepared to work long hours.

Especially if you're in a busy litigation firm, but really this can apply to any practice area.

See p. 16.

You really cannot have the 9-5 mindset as a new paralegal. Be known as the person who is willing to do what it takes to get the job done.

13. If you don't know the answer to something, say so. Don't guess.

14. Dress professionally.

15. Schedule time every day to respond to non-urgent email messages. If you stop what you are doing to reply to each non-urgent email as it comes in, you will never have time to complete any other task that you are working on.

16. When under pressure, maintain your cool. A stressed attorney does not need a stressed Paralegal – keeping your cool will assure your attorney that you can handle whatever task they are throwing your way, it may even help them become calmer in the situation and in future hot issues they encounter.

17. Communicate, communicate, communicate – with the client, boss, and other staff members – constantly.

18. Don't ever go for more than 6 months without taking some kind of continuing education. Even if it's only a 1-2 hour course or something. Otherwise, you will fall behind where you should be in your career.

19. Tip for new paralegals – The money will come. Be patient and stay happy.

If you work with a group of people who you truly enjoy working with...that's worth more than the \$3,000 raise you could get if you left.

20. Develop a solid rapport with your attorneys as well as getting to know their working styles. Each attorney will have a different personality, communication style, and preference in the final work product. It is so important for new paralegals to understand this and understand they will need to adapt to each of the individual

styles for the attorneys they will support.

21. Use technology to your full advantage. If you are in litigation, know Lexis Nexis and Westlaw like the back of your hand. Whatever technology is applicable to your practice area, know it better than anyone else on your team.

22. Update your resume every single year, even if you're happily employed. That way you can add skills that you might forget about if you were to wait 5 years and try to remember all the great accomplishments you had a few years ago.

23. Don't get involved in the gossip group.

Attorneys pay more attention to that kind of stuff than you think they do. You don't want them to associate you with that group of people at the office.

24. Take every opportunity to learn as much as you can. Listen and take notes. I cannot emphasize that too much.

25. Don't burn the candles at both ends. You need sleep, food, and water to survive. Without those things, you're more likely to make mistakes.

26. No two attorneys are the same. Get to know the pet peeves of each one.

27. It is critical to stay up-to-date on court document filing requirements because they change the formats often.

28. Always begin with the END result in mind, taking time to weigh out the best and most effic

See p. 17.

efficient way to accomplish something the attorney is asking for oftentimes yields a healthy discussion and possibly even changes what the attorney thought he/she wanted. This also helps boost confidence in your skillset and shows an Attorney you are invested in a good work product which ultimately makes them look good.

29. Tip for new paralegals in litigation: start putting together your trial notebook as soon as the complaint comes in. You can add to it throughout the discovery phase and use it throughout the life of the case, even if the case doesn't end up going to trial.

You can fast-track your career with our 3-Step Roadmap to Manage Cases Like a Rockstar Paralegal! If you are new (or fairly new) to litigation, this free guide will help you get a handle on your cases and be able to anticipate what the attorney needs before they ask for it.

30. For the sake of the team and/or the case, and no matter who asks, don't take your position so seriously that you are unwilling to give assistance when it's asked of you.

31. Start applying for jobs sooner!

32. Never assume anything!

Be willing to take a couple of minutes to pick up the telephone, call and verify! Especially if you're getting information off the internet because this simple tip will save you a ton of time, unnecessary work, and frustration down the road. Contrary to what some people think, the internet is not the Bible.

33. Technology should be your friend. If it's not, you're not going to go as far as you could with your career.

34. Be able to read and interpret The Rules — Federal, State, Local, Administrative — where to go and how to find what you need to know.

35. You have to be flexible as a paralegal. Your "to-do" list will be constantly changing. When you walk in tomorrow morning, it's going to be a different fire that has to be put out.

36. Wait for your time to shine.

Don't be in a rush to volunteer yourself for work you're not as knowledgeable as you think you are. You don't want to leave this impression with the attorney in charge. You may not believe it, but we're learning constantly just being in the legal environment. Just be patient. The time will come and you'll be able to jump in and show them just how much you're capable of. That is your time to shine.

37. Whatever area of the law you choose, read the applicable statutes, laws, and regulations. Don't rely on summaries (though several are quite valuable). Read first for understanding, and one more time for comprehension. I work in Securities and have read the 1933 and 1934 Act at least four times.

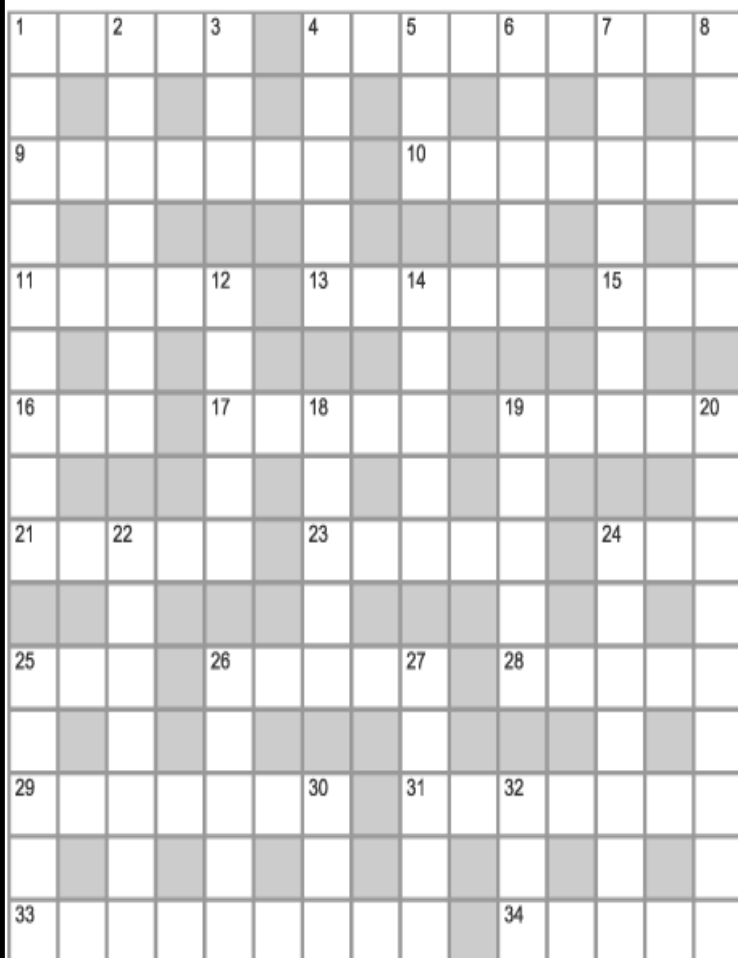
38. Interview more. Practice makes perfect.

39. Learn as much as you can about e-discovery if you plan to go into litigation. It's going to be nearly impossible to get a job as a litigation paralegal without at least a basic knowledge of e-discovery.

40. Don't waste your money on a Master's Degree! No one is going to pay you any more money or give you a better "title" than a paralegal. All you need is an undergraduate degree and a paralegal certificate — unless you just have a personal goal of getting that graduate degree and being in debt for many years.

41. Perhaps, more than anything else or any other professional skills, paying attention to detail is critical.

See p. 19.

**ACROSS**

1. A legal case (Latin)
 4. Not micro
 9. The life of Steve Zissou, e.g.
 10. Search paper
 11. Ha-ha
 13. Like some questions
 15. ___ and tuck
 16. Zip
 17. "Good job!"
 19. In ___
 21. Make law
 23. The best
 24. Take to court
 25. Went with feathers, in old days
 26. Samuel ___
 28. Goes bad
 29. Rough reading

31. Fiasco

33. Sonia ___

34. Throng

DOWN

1. Go against
 2. Cruel and ___
 3. Bit of legislation
 4. They speak for themselves, in a cliché
 5. Order often follows it
 6. Type of poker
 7. Opposed
 8. Bar, legally
 12. Hard to break
 14. Came to
 18. Cover story
 19. Mr. Bates, e.g.
 20. Ignore the alarm
 22. Series of '70s disaster movies
 24. Warm wind from Africa
 25. Justices have them for life
 26. Many a robber's undoing
 27. Judge's yell, on TV
 30. Hear a case
 32. Tom Hanks movie

There should never be any shortcuts or outright elimination of proofreading, cite-checking and overall ensuring that the final legal document is accurate, compliant with applicable court rules and procedures. That same care should also extend to the e-filing of court documents otherwise it will all for naught and the client's interests will be negatively impacted.

42. There are so many tips for new paralegals! If I had to limit it to one, it would be: Ask questions if you are unclear about the task(s) you are given.

43. Remember you always have to start from the bottom to get to the top. Don't go in thinking you know it all. There is always something new to learn.

44. Try to work out your conflicts with attorneys personally. Don't go talking to colleagues or HR about it and expect that they will magically fix it. It usually just makes things worse. Talk to them yourself!

45. Sometimes it's the least "sexiest" practice areas that are the most rewarding. So many graduates look to litigation because they think they will be going to trials and depositions, etc. And they only go to trial once every 5 years. I went into commercial real estate at a time when no one thought it was interesting. I have such a challenging and rewarding career!

46. I wish I'd stayed at the mid-size boutique firm I first started at years ago. I left for more money to go to a big firm and it was a mistake. Mid-sized firms treat their paralegals more like real professionals and you feel more like you're part of the team.

47. Be aware of your presence on social media.

48. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

49. 'No' is a very important word. You're allowed to use it. Say no to jobs that don't entice you. Say no to people who bring out the worst in you. Say no to all the opportunities that prevent you from pursuing the bigger, braver, bolder life course that you'd rather be on. Say no confidently, strategically, and as regularly as you need to. It is your right and in some cases, your greatest asset.

50. Own your career!

No one is going to care as much about your paralegal career as you do. Not your attorneys. Not your managers. And not your colleagues. It's up to you how far you want to advance your paralegal career. Don't wait for someone else to do it for you...you could be waiting for a very long time. ♦

Paralegal Skills to Keep You Sharp & Marketable

By Ann Pearson May 18, 2019
Paralegal bootcamp

Even if you are already employed at a firm or organization that you love, keeping your paralegal skills sharp and keeping yourself marketable is important.

You work in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment that requires continuing education specific to the legal profession. In order to continue to be a valuable employee, you need to continue to expand your skillset throughout your paralegal career. Even more importantly, you want to continually find training for paralegals that will advance your paralegal career.

Those who believe that education stops when they graduate from college will likely hit a wall in their career growth.

If you want to progress in your paralegal career, you are going to need to invest in advancing your paralegal skills on a regular basis. And we're not just talking about meeting those annual paralegal CLE requirements. Instead, look at this as an investment in your career, regardless of whether you get CLE credits or not. Here are just some of the other reasons you should invest in learning new things and refreshing your paralegal skills:

1. You'll make yourself more valuable to the firm.

The more knowledge you have, the more skills you have, the more valuable of an asset you are going to be to your employer. If you want to take on more responsibilities, you should work on building your paralegal skills and acquiring new knowledge.

2. You'll be more confident.

The better you are at your job, the more confidently you can do it. This will also make you better at fighting stress. So even in high-intensity, high-pressure situations, you will be able to stay calm and get your work done. The attorneys will notice that you work well under pressure and they can rely on you, even when the going gets tough. When you are more confident in your knowledge of your practice area and your ability to do your job, work becomes more enjoyable.

3. You will learn about tools that make your job easier.

Technology is changing the face of the paralegal profession. If you are able to learn new technology skills, you will find your job becoming much easier and you will become more efficient. E-discovery is one of these technologies that has made a paralegal's job easier – if you are comfortable with the technology. But what is going to be the technical skill that will make your job easier in the coming years? Whether that is AI or some other technology, set aside time to research what paralegal technology skills you can add to your skillset to keep you sharp and marketable into the future.

4. You can branch into a new practice area.

Many paralegals find themselves stuck in an area of law where they found their first job, simply because it is the area of the law they know the most about. If you want to branch into family law, for example, continuing education is an opportunity to train for that practice area and become knowledgeable about this area, before you even start to look for a job in that area. This can also be extremely helpful to the lawyer you work with if they are also trying to branch into a new area.

See p. 21.

5. *You can stay on top of changes.*

With technology now, there is an app for just about everything, including apps that can make your job easier and more efficient. Even if you work at a small firm that does not have expensive case management technology, you now have access to those things at an affordable price. If you have not had exposure to some of this technology, it is worth looking into. When you attend events focused on paralegal skills, whether live or online, you are bound to learn at least one new technology tool or tip.

6. *You will become a better communicator.*

Communication is a huge part of a paralegal's job. You are required to communicate with attorneys, clients, the courts, witnesses, experts, co-workers, etc. Expanding your communication skills will only ever help you as a paralegal. Here's a recent blog article we published on the 7 C's of Paralegal Communication Skills.

7. *You will stay competitive.*

It can feel difficult to stay competitive as more paralegals enter the job market. If the new paralegals have more training and more paralegal technology skills, they might start to look like a better option for some employers. A good example of this is when graduates come out of school with a background in technology. A paralegal who graduated 10 years ago didn't have access to the hundreds of online courses on technology. However, if you're the experienced paralegal who is also the go-to technology person for your team, you become an indispensable paralegal.

A quote from Stewart Brand sums it up.

Once a new technology rolls over you, if you're not part of the steamroller, you're part of the road.

Just like the annual performance review that you receive from others, try setting an annual performance goal for your paralegal career. Training for paralegals shouldn't stop after you get your paralegal degree. Ask yourself, what paralegal skills do I want to work on this year? How much time can I invest in advancing those skills? How much will it cost? ♦

OFFICERS***Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P.—President***

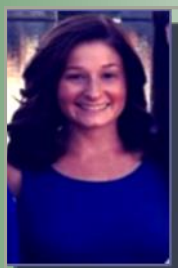
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Dana is a Litigation Paralegal at the law firm Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer, LLP. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2013, and a board member since 2018. More recently, she has become the MCPA's Job Bank Coordinator and co-chair of the Community Outreach & Pro Bono committee.

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Tracey is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She has been an active member since the organizations inception in 1999 and has been a Board Member, Secretary, Treasurer, and President. She is currently the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations Credentialing Chair. In 2017, she was appointed as the CLE-Associations Co-Coordinator for the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

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Trista is an Trust and Estate Paralegal at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP in its Malvern office. She attended Central Pennsylvania College completing the Paralegal Program and graduated in 2009. In 2014, she received her Pa.C.P. certification through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association. Trista lives in Douglassville with her husband and son.

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Deb is a Paralegal at the law firm Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein in its Blue Bell office. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2003, serving as a board member from 2007 through 2011. Debbie has also co-chaired the MCPA Marketing Committee and currently co-chairs the Pro Bono and Community Outreach Committee. She has served as the primary delegate for the MCPA to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations for 10 years.

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Noreen Messmer, Pa.C.P.



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.

Lisa Effrig Lagreca



Lisa is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from BCCC Paralegal Program and currently attends Pierce College. Lisa is a mother of four and grandmother of two. She has been a member of the MCPA since 2018 and is its newsletter editor.

Jennifer L. Echikson, Pa.C.P.



Jenn is a Family Law Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She graduated from Peirce College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies. She became a certified paralegal through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association in 2015. Jenn is on the planning and outreach committees for the MCPA and is also membership chair of the Family Law Paralegals of Pennsylvania.

Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P.



Nancy is a Certified Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy sits on the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She was the past Vice President of Keystone Alliance and is the Primary Delegate to the Keystone Alliance for Montgomery County Paralegal Association. Nancy also served as the past President of the MCPA.

Karen D. Manzanares



Karen is a Law Clerk for Attorney Michelle A. Fioravanti and recently became a realtor. After graduating from

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