

MCPATODAY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022

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Editor: Lisa Lagreca <u>llagreca@dbdlaw.com</u>

The Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association www.montcoparalegals.org

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



As spring is arriving it's time for some Spring cleaning, not only at home but at work too. It is always so refreshing to have a clean and organized work area. I personally go through my files, organize, scan, and label them so they are easier to find. As I am organizing each file I make sure contact information is updated.

Keeping contact information up to date makes it easier for everyone in the office, including yourself. For example, when it is a very busy day and a attorney asks you to contact someone and if your contact information is not up to date, you are wasting valuable time for both you and your attorney.

Keeping electronic files organized is also important when considering time management. If you can't look at something you saved on your system and know what it is right away, you definitely need to do some spring cleaning.

How you organize your working area and files is totally up to you. This is the perfect time of the year to get organized and get that cleaning done.

HAPPY SPRING AND HAPPY SPRING CLEANING!!! You won't regret the little extra time you spend cleaning at work!

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HAPPY RETIREMENT

WE WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER TO

DEBORAH A. ARBUCKLE



FRIEND MENTOR COLLEAGUE FORMER MCPA VP AND SECRETARY NFPA DELEGATE SINCE 2009

Published Tuesday, November 16, 2010

Professional Profile: Debbie Arbuckle, Pa.C.P.



Debbie Arbuckle, Pa.C.P. answers my Thirteen Questions this week. Debbie is employed by Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein, PC in Blue Bell Pennsylvania. She is a Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal (Pa.C.P.) and a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association, as well as the National Federation of Paralegal Associations.

You'll enjoy reading how association membership has benefited her. Thanks, Debbie, for taking the time to share!

1. Where do you work and what is your job title? I work at Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein, PC, Blue Bell, PA as a paralegal in the

Land Use, Zoning and Development Department.

2. What prompted you to choose a paralegal career? One of my first jobs out of high school was working for a sole practitioner in Philadelphia. I had basic secretarial skills and was placed through an agency.

Those who have worked for sole practitioners know that you do everything! I typed pleadings (back in the days of carbon paper), made copies, figured out the required forms and filings fees, and then took the document across the street to City Hall to file it.

Because it was such a "hands on" position, I really got to see a case from beginning to end and became curious as to the WHY's of the practice of law and went back to school, obtaining my paralegal certification from Penn State in 1994.

3. What is your favorite part of your job? Being a part of a team in accomplishing a goal for a client.

4. What professional associations do you belong to? I have been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association (MCPA) for approximately 7 years. I have been on the Board for 3 years, currently as First Vice President. I am also a member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) and serve as MCPA's primary representative to NFPA.

5. How has your membership benefited you? The obvious, most quoted answer is, of course, "networking." Another benefit has been the personal friendships that have developed. I take great pride in being part of these organizations that are comprised of other professionals in my field.

6. Do you have any professional certifications? I am a Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal.

7. What has been the highlight of your career? Up until this point, I think obtaining my Paralegal Certificate has been one of the highlights. I went back to school at night after being out of school for 15 years. My ex-husband told me that the night before my first mid-term I was talking Latin in my sleep! Of course, I was also still working full time and raising a daughter. The process, due to various reasons, took almost 10 years.

8. What do you see as hot trends in the paralegal industry? Keeping up to date with new and expanding technology is not only a trend, but sometimes a challenge in this day and age .I truly believe, however, if you stop learning, you stop growing!

9. Have you dipped your toes in the social media waters? I did finally start a Facebook page earlier this year. I was home after knee replacement surgery and my recuperation period encompassed 3 major snow storms this past winter. I could not get out to drive and finally got curious about Facebook; now I'm hooked.

10. If someone contemplating a paralegal career asked you for career advice, what would your answer be? Find someone who is passionate about their paralegal career to take you under their wing. Make sure you really want this to be your profession, don't go into it unless fully engaged.

11. Is there a quote that inspires you? "I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." This quote is attributed to Ettiene De Grellet. I found it on a card in an eclectic shop many years ago, framed it and it has inspired me ever since.

12. You've enjoyed a successful paralegal career. To what single event or person do you attribute that success? I would have to say my first employer, Robert Rosin, Esq. Learning from the ground up working for a sole practitioner was an invaluable experience...one that I did not fully appreciate until many years later.

13. What is the most important step a paralegal can take to keep his or her career interesting? Never stop learning.

Bonus...just for fun question: I understand you make a mean Pomegranate Martini. What's your secret? This recipe goes to the grave with me!

http://www.paralegalmentorblog.com/2010/11/professional-profile-debbie-arbuckle.html

MCPA Today Newsletter

June 2009 Board at MCPA Summer Social





Community Outreach Committee at the 2009 Special Olympics at Villanova University.

1st row - Warren and Judy Gima; Debbie Arbuckle; Brenda and John Mahoney 2nd row - Harry Reichner and Terri Hall--Not Shown: Coleen Abbott

MCPA Today Newsletter

2005 Special Olympics Event hosted by Villanova

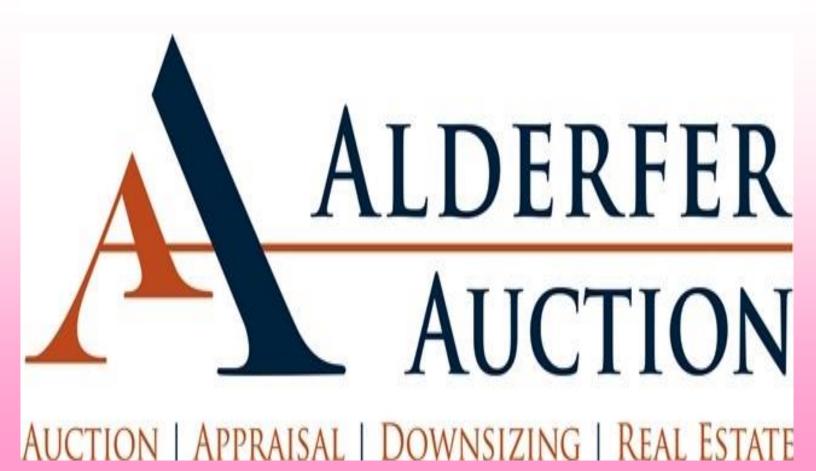


Deb loved to participate in the Special Olympics every year. She also contributed her time helping out at Wills for Heroes events.





Business Lawyers Serving Business People®



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MCPA Today Newsletter



Region IV-2011 NFPA Convention, Minneapolis, MN

2007 Election





2011 Induction Ceremony





Deb Arbuckle, Deb Long, Harry Reichner, Dawn Cignalia

MCPA's 10th Anniversary at Best Western in Kulpsville, Pennsylvania.



MCPA Today Newsletter

The MCPA at the Delaware Valley Legal Expo By: Mary Kay Alt

On November 17, 2010, the Montgomery County Paralegal Association made its appearance as an official exhibitor at the Delaware Valley Legal Expo held at the Presidential Caterers in Norristown. The Legal Expo is a joint venture between the Montgomery County Bar Association (MBA) and the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA), Independence Chapter. Among this year's 70+ exhibitors were faces familiar to the MCPA - Ernie, Pat and Rachel from Morgan Wentworth, LLC, a long time supporter of the MCPA; Karen Strehlow from Strehlow & Associates, one of our newest sponsors; and Jeffrey Love and Victoria Stavish from Love Court Reporting.

The MCPA booth proudly featured our banner and was filled with literature about our Association as well as NFPA and KAPA. Also on display were our impressive give-aways, which included a \$100 William Penn Inn gift certificate and two gift bags with MCPA shirts and coffee mugs. Michael Eric Seehermann, Esquire, was the lucky recipient of the William Penn Inn gift card, with the MCPA bags, shirts and mugs going to Bonnie Vandenberg and Mike Reid.



The MCPA was honored by the invitation to participate in and help promote this year's Expo. We proudly donated several boxes of our tote bags to be distributed to all attendees for their use as they visited each booth. It was a sea of blue tote bags showcasing the Association's good name for all to see. The event was an excellent opportunity for the MCPA to highlight its accomplishments, further its relations with the MBA, and develop new contacts in the legal community.

The MBA has already expressed an interest in continuing to work with the MCPA in 2011, including next year's Expo. If you were unable to attend this year, please keep the Legal Expo on your radar for next year. It is an exceptional networking opportunity, with lots of exhibitors from all segments of the legal community – and the food is pretty good too!



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

Learn the Five Legal Ethics in Your Paralegal Studies



Always be careful about your legal ethics: Learn why in your paralegal studies.

In the legal world, ethical behavior is of the utmost importance. Lawyers and paralegals must represent the highest ethical standards so they can realistically claim to uphold the law.

If paralegals breach legal ethics, serious sanctions can result, including suspension

or revocation of your paralegal license, a fine, loss of your job, or, if there was criminal activity, referral to the appropriate authorities.

Legal ethics for paralegals are similar to those for lawyers. Paralegals must comply with the following standards, which you'll learn about in your paralegal studies.

Demonstrate Professional Competence and Personal Integrity

What this means: Paralegals are representatives of the legal profession, so they should keep their conduct above reproach, perform all assignments efficiently, and constantly seek to improve their legal knowledge and skills.

How this may be violated: Accepting gifts can give the impression that you have been unduly influenced in your work. Accepting a coffee mug with a client's logo may be appropriate, but if that client offers you a \$100 gift certificate or a weekend on his yacht, you must politely refuse.

Avoid Unauthorized Practice of the Law

What this means: Your paralegal studies will teach you that—like lawyers you are also responsible for avoiding unauthorized practice of the law. Each state defines what constitutes the "practice of the law," but paralegals must avoid the following tasks, which can be performed only by lawyers:

- Establishing an attorney-client relationship
- Setting the fee to be charged for legal services
- Offering a legal opinion

How this may be violated: In 2001 an Ohio paralegal represented a client in a personal injury case without attorney supervision. A judge found him in contempt for unauthorized practice of the law, and sentenced him to pay all legal fees of the case.*

Always Respect Client Privilege

What this means: Attorney-client privilege (or paralegal-client privilege) is the confidentiality under which clients can talk to their legal representatives without fear that information will be shared with people outside the legal team.

How this may be violated: If you share what you learn about a client with any outside person, as neutral as that person might seem, this violates client privilege. It is particularly important in the era of cyber communications. Remember that texting and email are not secure forms of communication.

Avoid or Disclose Conflicts of Interest

What this means: You can protect yourself <u>on your first day of employment</u> by asking your supervising attorney for a list of legal cases that the firm is handling. Review that list to identify the clients that you recognize from your previous paralegal jobs. If there is a potential conflict, you can ask for a waiver from one party, or excuse yourself from working on the case in question to protect both clients' interests.

How this may be violated: If you work for two clients with opposing interests since you may have information that could be detrimental to one or the other. This is the case even if you no longer work for one of those clients.

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Patricia has some interesting opportunities for you...

Disclose Your Paralegal Status

What this means: Never assume that people know that you are a paralegal, not a lawyer. If you work for a law firm or in a corporate legal department, you'll be surprised to see how often people assume that you are a lawyer.

How this may be violated: When talking with others (whether on the phone or in person), if you don't preface conversations with disclaimers such as "I'm a paralegal, not a lawyer, so I can't give legal advice," you may not be protected from the claim that you have inadvertently participated in unauthorized practice of the law.

Take Legal Ethics Seriously

You should never take legal ethics and professional behavior for granted. If you have questions about legal ethics <u>during your paralegal studies</u>, ask your professor. You may find that after a few years of paralegal work, you are inclined to let some ethical considerations slide. This is precisely the moment when you must be the most vigilant about your legal ethics.

If you are ever in a situation where you suspect that legal ethics might be breached, listen to your inner voice. If you do, you will maintain your professional integrity, escape the penalties for violating ethical rules, and enjoy a long and successful paralegal career.

All Criminal Justice Schools. (n.d.). Learn the Five Legal Ethics in Your Paralegal Studies. https://www.allcriminaljusticeschools.com/legal -and-paralegal/paralegal-studies-ethics/

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kharissa Donahue—Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer, LLP Ryan D. Patterson—McEldrew Young Purtell & Nerritt Grace Buetikofer—Kane, Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer Nina F. Arnone—Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer Trisha Rooney—Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer Lauren Raikowski—County of Montgomery Roberta Fedorka—O'Brien & Ryan, LLP Karen Fleming—HP Law, LLC

MCPA Professional and Student members enjoy the benefits of:

The MCPA's bi-monthly newsletter <u>MCPA Today</u> Access to the MCPA job bank

Access to other professional paralegals for advice and assistance in all areas of practice Monthly meetings and CLEs dealing with topics that affect paralegals today Network with paralegals and other members of the legal community Stay on top of local and national trends in your career Obtain the annual MCPA Membership Directory Automatic membership in the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) Subscription to the National Paralegal Reporter, the official bi-monthly magazine of the NFPA

> Join MCPA today by visiting www.MCPA-BECOME A MEMBER.org

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2009 Holiday Social





When You Need:

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FEBRUARY

JENNIFER ECHIKSON

MARCH

MICHELLE CALKINS JESSICA D'AMICO JANICE FRARY VICTORIA GUARRASI NORMA GUNNING VICTORIA MOLLOY MAUREEN STANKIEWICZ DENISE WALLACE

EDITOR'S CORNER—WORD OF THE MONTH

Amicus Curiae

A Latin term for the phrase "friend of the court." It is advice formally offered to the court in a brief filed by someone interested in, but is not a party to the case.

<u>Used in a Sentence</u>

The Office of the Secretary for Human Rights has been very active in this regard, and has even presented amicus curiae to support some cases.



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GOOD LUCK IN RETIREMENT DEB YOU WILL BE MISSED!



2009 Board at our Summer Social in June

NFPA IS SEEKING TO FILL THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS

NFPA Marketing Director

Certification Ambassador Coordinator - Assists with drafting annual goals, developing guidelines, reviewing reference material and resource documents, etc.

Corporate Partners Program Coordinator - Maintain a database of corporate partners, coordinate renewal of partner agreements, communicate with corporate partners and conduct annual marketing campaigns to promote corporate partners.

Public Relations Coordinator - maintain calendar for advertising deadlines, propose themes and content for publications, draft press releases for events and announcements and maintain contact list.

Social Media Coordinator - Manage all social media accounts, post on all social media accounts and market membership benefits.

Technology/Webinar Coordinator - Work with and coordinate speakers and topics for webinars, maintain calendar of webinars, facillate and moderate webinars and maintain a database of presented webinars and topics.

NFPA Committee Members:

Highest need: Government Affairs Committee- this committee receives ongoing reports of new case law and legislation for monitoring and reporting, engages in special research projects, and receives requests for government engagement to filter the request to the correct committee or coordinator. We need another 3-5 engaged committee members. Time commitment: 5(ish) hours per month.

2nd Highest need: Advocacy Committee- this committee is building out resources for NFPA member associations to engage in local advocacy, including webinars and a resource bank for the new website. Additionally, the committee's 2022 goal is to put together the initial advocacy plan (which will be a roadmap on how NFPA engages in advocacy). We need another 3-5 members, preferably with public policy experience, or really wanting to learn public policy advocacy. An experienced co-chair would be appreciated. Time commitment: 3(ish) hours per month.

Position Statement Review- this committee is in progress of reviewing the position statements and making recommendations and could use additional eyes that are not from Region II. Time commitment: 4 hours per month until statements are reviewed/updated/sunsetted.

Access to Justice Committee- this committee is working on an initial position statement right now. Other projects will come up. Time commitment: 2 hours per month.

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MCPA Today Newsletter

Family Mediation

Presented by:

Lynn MacBeth, Esquire

Approved for CLE 1.0 (S) by NFPA and Keystone Alliance

April 20, 2022

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Via Zoom

To register please visit:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUsfuisrzgtEtPO2M2GJ7gQhBRMxV91orQ8

Jennifer Echikson, Pa.C.P.

jechikson@dbdlaw.com

Free for MCPA Members

\$10.00 for Keystone Alliance and NFPA affiliated members

\$20.00 for non-members

This month, MCPA will be collecting for the Senior Law Center.

SeniorLAW Center Protecting the Rights of Older Pennsylvanians

Please visit this link to learn more and to donate: <u>https://seniorlawcenter.org/</u>

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MCPA Today Newsletter

OFFICERS



Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P.—President

Mannion Prior, LLP MCPAPres@gmail.com

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.

Tracey Barnes, Pa.C.P.—Vice President



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).

Trista Davis—Treasurer

Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP MCPAbursar@gmail.com

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.

Jennifer L. Echikson, Pa.C.P.—Secretary



Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. MCPAsteno@gmail.com

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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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

to

three

Noreen Messmer, Pa.C.P.



Jennifer Kozlowski

Jennifer is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley.Jen Kozlowski earned her Associates Degree in 2011 from LCCC's Paralegal Studies Program. She has worked for Children and Youth and worked for a solo attorney specializing in zoning, real estate, estate planning and estate administration. Jen is also the mother of 2 boys as well as newly married to her best friend Andy and dog-mom to Ruby.

Lisa Lagreca, Pa.C.P.

Nana

granddaughters.

and



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 three. She has been a *member of the MCPA since* 2018 and is its newsletter editor.



Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P.—President

Dana is a 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. Former President 2020-2022

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TRS	
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PRO BONO	Annette M. Long-Tulio, CRP, Pa.C.P. amlong83@gmail.com
CLE COORDINATOR	Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa.C.P. <u>tbarnes@dbdlaw.com</u>
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PRO BONO	Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P. <u>DJorna@kanepugh.com</u>
HOSPITALITY & EVENTS PLANNING	Jennifer Echikson jechikson@dbdlaw.com
JOB BANK COORDINATOR	Victoria Molloy <u>vmolloy@eastburngray.com</u>
KEYSTONE ALLIANCE DELEGATES	Primary: Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P. <u>npiechota@mannionprior.com</u> Secondary: Deborah Long, Pa.C.P. <u>deblong420@gmail.com</u>
MARKETING	Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P. <u>npiechota@mannionprior.com</u>
MEMBERSHIP	Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa.C.P. <u>tbarnes@dbdlaw.com</u>
NEWSLETTER	Lisa Effrig Lagreca <u>llagreca@dbdlaw.com</u>
STUDENT AFFAIRS & MENTORING	Laura O'Halloran lpohalloran520@gmail.com
NFPA DELEGATES	Primary: Deborah A. Arbuckle, Pa.C.P. <u>Darbuckle@kaplaw.com</u> <u>Secondary:</u> Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P. <u>DJorna@kanepugh.com</u>
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Jennifer Echikson jechikson@dbdlaw.com
SOCIAL MEDIA	Christopher Gregg <u>cgregg@kanepugh.com</u>
STUDENT LIAISONS	Peirce College: Bucks County Community College: Lisa Effrig Lagreca <u>llagreca@dbdlaw.com</u>
WEBMASTER	Shari Weber Bradley, Pa.C.P. <u>swbradley@delucalevine.com</u>